

**AN INVESTIGATION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE  
LEARNING IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF  
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**



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STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**

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Approval of the Graduate School of Educational Sciences



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## **ABSTRACT**

### **AN INVESTIGATION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS AND TEACHERS**

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The primary purpose of the current study is to find out if B2 level EFL students enrolled at a private (non-profit, foundation) university are ready for autonomous learning in an English preparatory programme. In this regard, this study attempts to examine the overall perceptions of the participants of learner autonomy as well as the differences between them and how the concept of learner autonomy is perceived by the student and teacher participants regarding some variables, namely, student responsibilities and abilities, teacher responsibilities, and the differences between the students and teachers in their perceptions of the aforesaid variables. Besides, the present study sets off to investigate the challenges faced by both groups when they try to promote autonomous learning. Such being the case, a wide array of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was utilised in this study. The quantitative data were obtained through questionnaires administered to students and teachers while the qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. The findings found out that students are, to a certain degree, ready to develop autonomous learning behaviours, however; they are still teacher-dependent. Furthermore, it was quite apparent that students and teachers need to be introduced to the importance of learner autonomy in language education at tertiary level so as to promote such autonomy. The findings of the present study have also identified certain obstacles to promoting learner autonomy in tertiary education. In particular,

the exam-oriented educational context poses significant challenges to teachers and students in their efforts to promote autonomous learning.

Keywords: Autonomy, Learner autonomy, Language Learning, Language Teaching, Tertiary Education, English as a Foreign Language



## ÖZ

### ÖĞRENCİ VE ÖĞRETMENLERİN GÖZÜNDEN YÜKSEKÖĞRETİMDE DİL ÖĞRENİMİNDE ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİNİN İNCELENMESİ

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Bu çalışmanın öncelikli amacı bir vakıf üniversitesinde kayıtlı olan B2 seviyesindeki Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce öğrenen öğrencilerin İngilizce Hazırlık Programında özerk öğrenmeye hazır olup olmadığını araştırmaktır. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışma ayrıca katılımcıların öğrenci özerkliği hakkında genel algıları ile birlikte, bu algıları arasındaki farklılıkları; öğrenci özerkliğinin hem öğrenci hem de öğretmenler tarafından bazı değişkenler yönünden nasıl algılandığını, ve bu değişkenler bazında katılımcıların düşüncelerinde herhangi bir farklılık olup olmadığını da incelemektedir. Bunun dışında, bu çalışma aynı zamanda her iki grup tarafından özerk öğrenmeyi teşvik ederken yaşadıkları zorlukları incelemektedir. Bu sebeple, mevcut çalışmada hem nitelik hem nicelik ölçeği envaiçeşit veri toplama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Nicel veriler öğrenci ve öğretmenlere uygulanan anketler ile toplanırken nitel veriler röportajlardan elde edilmiştir. Bulgular, öğrencilerin ne kadar hala öğretmenlerine bağlı da olsalar; belirli bir düzeye kadar özerk öğrenme davranışları geliştirmeye hazır olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, öğrenen özerkliğini destek ve teşvik etmek için, yükseköğretim dil eğitiminde öğrenen özerkliğinin ne kadar önemli olduğu hususunun öğrenci ve öğretmenlere tanıtılması gerektiği aşikar bir şekilde görülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın bulguları aynı zamanda öğrenen özerkliğinin teşvik edilmesini engelleyen bazı durumlar tespit etmiştir. Özellikle, sınav bazlı eğitim durumu hem öğrencilere hem de öğretmenlere öğrenen özerkliğini destekleme konusunda önemli güçlükler oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenen Özerkliği, Dil Öğrenimi, Dil Öğretimi,  
Yükseköğretim, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce







To My Family and Dear Friends

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| ETHICAL CONDUCT.....   | iii |
| ABSTRACT.....  | iv  |
| ÖZ.....  | vi  |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....   | ix  |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS.....   | x   |
| LIST OF TABLES.....  | xiv |
| Chapter 1: Introduction.....   | 1   |
| 1.1 The Impact of Teacher Autonomy on Learner Autonomy.....  | 1   |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem.....  | 3   |
| 1.3 Purpose of the Study.....  | 4   |
| 1.4 Research Questions.....  | 5   |
| 1.5 Significance of the Study.....   | 5   |
| 1.6 Definitions.....   | 6   |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review.....  | 7   |
| 2.1 Introduction.....  | 7   |
| 2.2 Learner Autonomy.....  | 7   |
| 2.2.1 Learner Autonomy in Foreign Language Education.....  | 8   |
| 2.2.2 Principles of Learner Autonomy Promotion.....  | 9   |
| 2.3 Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning.....                               | 10  |
| 2.3.1 Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy.....   | 10  |
| 2.3.2 Studies on Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy.....  | 11  |
| 2.3.3 Studies on Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy... ..                           | 12  |
| 2.4 Conditions for the Development of Learner Autonomy.....  | 13  |
| 2.5 Challenges of Learner Autonomy.....  | 16  |
| 2.6 Teacher Autonomy.....  | 18  |
| 2.6.1 Teachers' Role in Promoting Learner Autonomy.....  | 19  |
| 2.6.2 Promotion of Teacher Autonomy.....   | 20  |
| 2.6.2.1 Autonomy in Teacher Education: the Inter-Relationship between<br>Teacher & Learner Autonomy..... | 21  |
| 2.7 The Impact of Teacher Autonomy on Learner Autonomy.....  | 23  |
| 2.8 Conclusion.....  | 23  |
| Chapter 3: Methodology.....  | 25  |
| 3.1 Research Design.....   | 25  |
| 3.2 Setting and Participants.....  | 27  |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 3.2.1 Setting.....   | 27 |
| 3.2.2 Participants.....  | 28 |
| 3.3 Procedures.....  | 28 |
| 3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures.....  | 28 |
| 3.3.1.1 Types of Sampling.....   | 28 |
| 3.3.1.2 Data Collection Instruments.....   | 29 |
| 3.3.1.2.1 Questionnaires.....  | 29 |
| 3.3.1.2.1.1 Readiness for Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (RFAQ).....   | 29 |
| 3.3.1.2.2 Perspective on Learner Autonomy Questionnaire (PLAQ).....  | 31 |
| 3.3.1.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews.....  | 31 |
| 3.3.3 Data Analysis Procedures.....  | 34 |
| 3.3.4 Reliability and Validity.....  | 35 |
| 3.4 Limitations.....   | 38 |
| Chapter 4: Findings.....   | 39 |
| 4.1 Overview.....  | 39 |
| 4.2 Findings From the RFAQ Questionnaire.....  | 39 |
| 4.2.1 Findings of the Readiness of the Students for Learner Autonomy.....  | 39 |
| 4.3 Findings From the PLAQ Questionnaire.....  | 45 |
| 4.3.1 Students' and Teachers' Overall Perceptions of Learner Autonomy.....   | 45 |
| 4.3.1.1 Findings of the Differences between the Overall Perceptions of<br>Students and Teachers About Learner Autonomy.....                            | 49 |
| 4.3.2 Findings of the Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Students'<br>Responsibilities and Abilities.....  | 49 |
| 4.3.2.1 Findings of the Differences between the Perceptions of Students in<br>Terms of Student Responsibilities.....                                   | 52 |
| 4.3.2.2 Findings of the Differences between the Perceptions of Students and<br>Teachers in Terms of Student Abilities.....                             | 52 |
| 4.3.3 Findings of the Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Teacher<br>Responsibilities.....  | 53 |
| 4.3.3.1 Findings of the Differences between the Perceptions of the<br>Students and Teachers of Teacher Responsibilities.....                           | 54 |
| 4.4 Findings of the Challenges That the Students and Teachers Experience in<br>Promoting Learner Autonomy in B2 Level English Preparatory Classes..... | 55 |
| 4.4.1 Findings of Students' Interviews.....  | 55 |
| 4.4.1.1 Factors Affecting English Learning Experience.....   | 55 |
| 4.4.1.2 The Impact of English Classes on the Development of Autonomous<br>Skills.....  | 56 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 4.4.1.3 Perceptions of Teachers' Responsibilities. ....   | 57 |
| 4.4.1.4 Teachers' Control.....  | 58 |
| 4.4.1.5 Creating Opportunities for Oneself.....   | 59 |
| 4.4.2 Findings of Teachers' Interview. ....   | 60 |
| 4.4.2.1 Teachers' Understanding of Learner Autonomy.....  | 60 |
| 4.4.2.2 Teachers' Practice in Promoting Learner Autonomy.....   | 60 |
| 4.4.2.3 Teachers' View of Their Roles and Responsibilities.....   | 61 |
| 4.4.2.4 Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Expectation and Ability.....   | 62 |
| 4.4.2.5 Teachers' View of Learner Autonomy in Turkey.....   | 62 |
| Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions.....  | 64 |
| 5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions.....  | 64 |
| 5.1.1 Discussion of the Findings of RQ 1: How Ready Are the B2 Level<br>Turkish EFL University Preparatory Students for Autonomous Learning?64  |    |
| 5.1.2 Discussion of the Findings of RQ 2: What Are the Overall Perceptions<br>of the Students and Teachers of Learner Autonomy and the Differences<br>Relating to the Perceptions Of Learner Autonomy? .....            | 66 |
| 5.1.2.1 Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy. ....   | 66 |
| 5.1.2.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy .....   | 66 |
| 5.1.2.3 Differences between the Overall Perceptions of Students and<br>Teachers of Learner Autonomy.....  | 68 |
| 5.1.3 Discussion of the Findings of the RQ 3: How Is Learner Autonomy<br>Perceived By the Students and Teachers in Terms of Student<br>Responsibilities and Abilities As Well As the Differences between<br>Them? ..... | 69 |
| 5.1.3.1 Student Responsibilities.....   | 69 |
| 5.1.3.2 Student Abilities.....  | 70 |
| 5.1.3.3 Differences between the Perceptions of the Students and Teachers of<br>Student Responsibilities. ....   | 72 |
| 5.1.3.4 Differences between the Perceptions of Students and Teachers of<br>Student Abilities. ....  | 73 |
| 5.1.4 Discussion of The Findings of RQ 4: How Is Learner Autonomy<br>Perceived By the Students And Teachers in Terms of Teacher<br>Responsibilities?.....   | 73 |
| 5.1.4.1 Differences between the Perceptions of the Students and Teachers<br>in Terms Of Teacher Responsibilities. ....  | 75 |
| 5.1.5 Discussions of the Findings of the RQ 5: What Are the Challenges<br>That Both EFL Teachers and Students Experience When Promoting Learner<br>Autonomy in B2 Level Preparatory Classes?.....                       | 76 |
| 5.2 Practical Implications.....   | 77 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 5.3 Conclusions .....  | 78  |
| 5.4 Recommendations for Further Research.....  | 79  |
| REFERENCES.....  | 81  |
| APPENDICES .....   | 94  |
| A. READINESS FOR AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE (RFAQ) .....                                     | 94  |
| B. PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE (PLAQ<br>– Version For Teachers) ..... | 97  |
| C. PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE (PLAQ<br>– Version For Students).....  | 100 |
| D. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....   | 101 |
| E. CURRICULUM VITAE.....   | 103 |



## LIST OF TABLES

### TABLES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Table 1 Overview of Research Questions and Corresponding Procedures.....      | 33 |
| Table 2 Readiness of the Students for Learner Autonomy .....                  | 40 |
| Table 3 Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy .....                       | 46 |
| Table 4 Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy .....                       | 47 |
| Table 5 Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Student Responsibilities ..... | 50 |
| Table 6 Students and Teachers Perceptions of Students' Abilities.....         | 51 |
| Table 7 Perceptions of Students and Teachers of Teacher Responsibilities..... | 53 |



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**FLE:** Foreign Language Education

**LA:** Learner Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning, which is specified as to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

**TA:** Teacher Autonomy

**TL:** Target Language in this study refers to the English Language.





## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents an overview of the current study investigating the perceptions of students and teachers of learner autonomy in tertiary education. The chapter also emphasizes how teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are interrelated. In this regard, the chapter provides relevant information about learner autonomy being an important educational goal of tertiary education in Turkey. Following this, the chapter discusses some possible approaches to foster learner autonomy in the aforesaid context to better help learners be autonomous learners of the English language. The chapter, then, proceeds with the purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Finally, the key terms used in the current study are briefly explained.

#### **1.1 The Impact of Teacher Autonomy on Learner Autonomy**

It would have to be rather unwise to gloss over the absolute importance of the English language becoming one of the main sources of humankind to communicate with each other or, in a broader sense of understanding, with people from varying backgrounds and cultures under different circumstances and/or within various contexts. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for language learners to prepare themselves accordingly and take the control of their own learning process at a certain point independent from what is provided in the classroom and/or with a little guidance. With the reform movements away from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness taking place in Foreign Language Education (FLE), learner autonomy (hereafter LA) has gained greater attention and popularity amongst scholars (e.g. Little, 1995; Broady and Kenning, 1996; Benson, 1997; Smith, 2003; Allford and Pachler, 2007) and language teachers. As a consequence of changed views in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), the language practitioners has, accordingly, started to put their students at the centre of what they do in their own classroom settings, laying particular emphasis on their needs, interests, and styles.

Given the above mentioned changes, teachers' role in helping language learners to develop autonomy is fundamental, meaning language teachers themselves need to be autonomous, either 'in the sense of being free to organise learning in new ways' or 'in the sense of having experience of the demands of learning autonomously' (Lamb and Reinders, 2008). In fact, the development of learner autonomy, as was pointed out by Little (2000), depends on teachers being autonomous, in other words, they are inextricably interwoven. Specifically speaking, teacher's autonomy has been defined as the ability to improve one's own teaching through one's own efforts (Lamb and Reinders, 2008). In this regard, Benson (2011) pointed out that 'in order to foster learner autonomy, teachers themselves must display a degree of autonomy in their approaches to teaching learning' (p.185), which might as well be regarded as the ability that teachers need to possess so as to foster their learners' autonomous skills (Thanasoulas, 2000).

Considering the needs and interests of language learners, the very first thing that needs to be taken into consideration meticulously is that students need to take control over their own learning process at a certain point as there would not be a 'teacher' helping them out with what they need. Hence, they need to develop a sense of being on their own, i.e. autonomous, to survive both through their learning processes and the possible communicative exchanges that they would encounter during their lives respectively. Such being the case, the role of teachers and how they reflect on their students in terms of autonomy is of utmost importance.

It has also been discussed for long that autonomy is in close relation with motivation. Specifically speaking, as is pointed out by Murray (2011), motivation is an ever-changing concept like autonomy and it depends on the context where it is performed and is socially mediated. In this regard, Dickinson (1995) stated that learner autonomy and learners' active involvement helps increase motivation to learn, thus; enabling a more effective learning environment. According to Little (2002), learner autonomy undoubtedly solves the problem of learner motivation, viz., in order for students to develop autonomous skills, they also need to be motivated intrinsically. To be precise, this idea is formed because autonomous learners get motivated on integrative level when they take on responsibility for their own learning. It might as well be seen as a cycle in which motivation brings success and in turn success brings with it motivation, all of which promote autonomy in language learning. As such, internally motivated students are known to perform

deep information processing, they are expected to be more autonomous in their actions compared to their externally motivated peers. Such being the case, no learning and classroom setting can be dissociated from motivation and to what extent the learners are motivated because it has a vital impact on students to foster their autonomous skills. Therefore, in an attempt to do so, it is essential to understand the motivational levels of students regarding learner autonomy as well as teachers' perceptions of themselves being ready to perceive autonomy and students' readiness in regard to autonomy.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Students at tertiary level in Turkey, mainly due to their backgrounds, struggle to develop an understanding of, or in this case, to conceptualise what it actually is to be an autonomous learner. Specifically, in order for a student to take the control of their own learning 'to be successful not just in class, but also to learn independently without a teacher outside the class' (Reinders and Balçıkanlı, 2011), they need to develop a sense of autonomy. As such, university students spending a whole academic year getting ready for their departmental studies in the hopes of sustaining a desired level of English command need to, first of all, raise their awareness of being autonomous learners and secondly, maintain to do so throughout their academic studies.

In light of what has been mentioned thus far, teachers themselves play a key role in fostering the concept of autonomy in language learners (Smith, 2008; Joshi, 2011; Benson, 2012). Therefore, it might be assumed that teachers need to have the independency to make decisions that they think would best suit their students' needs in order for them to create their own understanding of being autonomous as well as knowledge of themselves as teachers and of learners in the hopes of knowing how to make such decisions. In fact, teacher autonomy constitutes the ability to understand and relate to students' learning needs and the ability to support their learners in their development towards autonomy.

In accordance with teachers' role in developing learners' autonomous skills, the present study aims to contribute to the ways of fostering learner autonomy at tertiary level in Turkey as well as laying particular emphasis on the views of both learners and teachers in the aforesaid contexts. Such being the case, it would have to

be rather unwise if the relationship between learner and teacher autonomy is neglected since many EFL classrooms all around the globe have wended their ways of teaching English from a teacher-centred atmosphere to a more student-centred one, where the learners are also responsible for their own learning procedure. Accordingly, perceptions of learners and teachers concerning the phenomenon of autonomy are crucial for us to gain further insights into the issue.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

First and foremost, given that students at tertiary level need to develop their autonomous skills as they will begin their departmental studies and as they will be on their own to cope with their language-related needs from then onwards, the current study will help gain insights into the issue. In this regard, students need to know how to do build and develop such autonomous skills and also teachers' role in this process cannot be glossed over. This being the case, the primary purpose of the current study is to delve into the issue and to find out if B2 level students are ready for autonomous learning in an English preparatory programme. That said, this study seeks to investigate, first of all, the overall perceptions of the participating students and teachers about learner autonomy. In this regard, this study attempts to examine if there are any differences between the overall perceptions of the students and teachers about learner autonomy. Furthermore, the present study aims at exploring how the concept of learner autonomy is perceived by students and teachers in terms of student responsibilities and abilities. Therefore, the current study also seeks to find out if there are any differences between the perceptions of students and teachers regarding student responsibilities and abilities. Yet another purpose of the current study is to enquire into the perceptions of students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities. This being the case, it is also sought to examine if there are any differences between the perceptions of students and teachers regarding teacher responsibilities. Finally, based on the previously discussed arguments, the present study also sets off to examine the challenges that both teachers and students experience when promoting such autonomy in B2 level preparatory classes.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

Following the focus of the present study, it will be sought to find answers to the following questions:

- 1- How ready are the B2 level Turkish EFL university preparatory students for autonomous learning?
- 2- What are the overall perceptions of the participating students and teachers about learner autonomy?
  - 2a. Are there any significant differences between the overall perceptions of students and teacher about learner autonomy?
- 3- How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of student responsibilities and their abilities?
  - 3a. Are there any significant differences between the perceptions of students and teacher in terms of student responsibilities?
  - 3b. Are there any significant differences between the perceptions of students and teacher in terms of student abilities?
- 4- How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?
  - 4a. Are the any significant difference between the perceptions of the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?
- 5- What are the challenges that both EFL teachers and students experience when promoting learner autonomy in B2 level preparatory classes?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Recently, there has been an increased appreciation of the interrelationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy and one striking impact on learners' autonomy is their teachers' understanding of what autonomy is, and their ability to bring the best out of their learners to foster and promote autonomy (Benson 2004; Allford and Pachler, 2007; Jiménez Raya and Lamb, 2008). In this regard, the findings of this study may not only reveal the extent to which students' autonomous skills are promoted by their teachers and also the participating teachers may become more aware of the concept of LA as well as TA and accordingly end

up paying more attention to their students' needs so as to help them acquire the target language (TL) the best way possible. Similarly, the current study might as well raise students' awareness of autonomy and its importance in language learning. Ultimately, the study may promote the concept of LA and TA in the preparatory programme, or in a broader sense of understanding, it might provide an overall idea how preparatory programmes in Turkey perceive the concept of autonomy.

## **1.6 Definitions**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**FLE:** Foreign Language Education

**LA:** Learner Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning, which is specified as to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

**TA:** Teacher Autonomy

**TL:** Target Language in this study refers to the English Language.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the definition of concepts and terms related to learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in foreign language teaching. It also refers to the previous research studies conducted abroad and in Turkey on promoting learner autonomy as well as the impact of teacher autonomy on learner autonomy.

#### 2.2 Learner Autonomy

First and foremost, it has always been quite problematic to come up with a commonly-held view on the definition of learner autonomy because any possible definition of the phenomena is likely to be rather subjective (Han, 2014). Gardner and Miller (2002), for instance, proposed three reasons why it is difficult to define the concept of autonomy:

First, different writers have defined the concepts in different ways. Second, they are areas of ongoing debate and therefore definitions are continuing to mature as more discussion takes place. Third, these concepts have developed independently in different geographical areas and therefore they have been defined using different (but often similar) terminology (p.5).

The origins of the research on learner autonomy in language teaching and learning can be dated back to mid-1970s (Holec, 1981; Gremmo and Riley, 1995; Broady and Kenning, 1996; Benson and Voller, 1997; Littlewood, 1999; Lamb and Reinders, 2008; Smith, 2008). Initially, the term learner autonomy and practice of autonomy in EFL contexts arose out of relevant research into the issue, laying particular emphasis on self-directed learning. Holec (1981), being the by far most cited scholar in terms of definition of the concept of learner autonomy, defined learner autonomy as ‘‘to have and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning’’ (p.3). Several subsequent definitions tended to build up on this early definition rather than dispute it, such as that of Knowles

(1975), who defined learner autonomy as a process in which individuals take responsibility for all the decisions regarding their own learning. Similarly, Little (1991) stated that autonomy is ‘‘a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action’’ (p.4).

Based on the aforesaid definitions of learner autonomy, it might as well be argued that Holec’s (1981) early definition may be said to exemplify the required skills of an autonomous learner as well as the technical aspect of learner autonomy, but that of Little (1991) delves into the issue from a psychological perspective, i.e. whether the learner is capable of using such skills, and therefore it leads to a situation where psychological aspect of learner autonomy may be regarded as utmost importance. Both of these definitions, however, are related to ‘‘the view of learner autonomy as a mental attribute of the learner that must be trained and developed’’ (Knaldre, 2015, p.18).

**2.2.1 Learner autonomy in foreign language education.** There have been numerous attempts to define the role of learner autonomy in foreign language education (Littlewood, 1996). Such being the case, scholars have defined LA from different perspectives, taking different conditions into consideration. Joshi (2011) for instance, states that ‘‘it is the complete responsibility for one’s learning carries out without the investment of a teacher or pedagogic materials’’ (p.13). In parallel, Benson (2006) claims that autonomy is the ability of people taking control over their own lives as individuals, and within the context of learning, autonomy is regarded as the individual learner’s control over their own learning process inside and outside the classroom. Benson (2006) also suggests that autonomy in language learning stands for control and decision-making with regards to language acquisition, including methods and techniques used to acquire the targeted and desired language.

In addition, another worthy-to-mention aspect of LA is to be able to see and measure whether or not students have actually become autonomous learners, therefore; learner autonomy should also be promoted as an explicit goal of teaching and learning (Little, 1995). Kessler (2009), in this regard, examined language students’ autonomy as they interacted through collaborative writing in classroom wikis. Upon completing the analysis of the findings, Kessler (2009) found out that so as to promote autonomy, teachers need to set up an atmosphere where their role as a teacher is de-emphasised, instead, students should be encouraged to take control



over their own learning process.

Similarly, Cotterall (1995) mentions that autonomous learners can manage to take responsibility in setting their own goals, planning practice opportunities, or evaluating their progress. Also, Hedge (2000) claims that learners can take responsibility for their learning processes independent of the teacher, meaning they can plan and evaluate themselves as individuals. This, however, raises several important issues. For instance, Sinclair (2000) argues that autonomy must be taken in as it is bound up with learners' capacity. As such, degrees of autonomy vary from one student to another and even in the same student it may vary, depending on the topic. Secondly, giving learners complete autonomy is rather unrealistic. Lastly, what matters at the end of the day is to create an environment in which students are made aware of and self-conscious about making decisions on their learning, to wit; they need guidance towards how to promote and foster autonomy innately.

**2.2.2 Principles of learner autonomy promotion.** The first point to be made clear in promoting learner autonomy should be to figure out what kinds of aims learner autonomy encompasses and why it is of great importance to the learners. In this regard, it would have to be quite unwise to assume that a person becomes autonomous out of the blue, with no guidance whatsoever; rather, a person can only work towards autonomy, along which comes a variety of conditions that might actually foster autonomy. The very first fundamental principle concerning the issue of promoting autonomy has to do with the responsibility in the hands of the individual learner. To illustrate, Dam (1995) suggest that such a responsibility requires a certain amount of capacity as well as willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others as a socially responsible person. As was mentioned by (Scharle and Szabo, 2000), responsible learners monitor their own learning process and progress. In this regard, another way to promote learner autonomy within EFL contexts is to design courses tailored to students' needs and interests in terms of fostering their abilities as autonomous learners. Specifically, a shift of responsibilities from teachers to learners in almost all aspects of learning process, whether they be learning goals or evaluating student progress, is what is deemed to be necessary. In this regard, Cotterall (2000) proposed five principles to be able to design language courses promoting learner autonomy in classroom settings. These principles 'relate to (a) learner goals, (b) the language learning process, (c) tasks,

(d) learner strategies, and (e) reflection on learning'' (p.110). Also, Illes (2012) argues that learners in classrooms need to find solutions to problems on their own, work in collaboration with their peers in pairs or groups, and to develop tools to assess their own work and work of their peers respectively. Therefore, she suggests that 'presenting learners with problems that have no ready-made answers forces them to activate their problem-solving capacity and to work out solutions for themselves'' (p.509). Similarly, Dang (2012) states that a combination of both collaborative tasks (i.e. debates and group projects) and individual activities (i.e. journal writing, reading) helps promote learner autonomy in the classroom.

### **2.3 Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning**

As for the studies in the existent literature regarding the perceptions of autonomy within the context of language teaching and learning, it would come in handy to divide the studies into three different subsections to gain better insight into the issue. The first section focuses on students' perception, the second will delve into the issue from teachers' perceptions, and the last one will be more based on studies on both students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy.

**2.3.1 Students' perceptions of learner autonomy.** Chan (2001) conducted a study with 20 English language students enrolled at a university in Hong Kong to examine the perceptions of students on learner autonomy. To do so, she utilised a questionnaire and in order to compliment the findings emerging from the questionnaire she also conducted interviews in the hopes of gathering further information concerning students' views of the concept. Specifically, the aforesaid study aimed to explore students' perceptions of language learning, teacher and learner roles. In this respect, the study concluded that the participating students showed high level of autonomy but they still dependent on their teachers to guide them towards such autonomy. Similarly, Koçak (2003) administered a questionnaire to 186 English language preparatory students at a private university in Ankara, Turkey. The purpose of the study was to explore students' readiness for autonomous learning as well as their perceptions of teachers' roles in learning the English language. Upon completing the data analysis, she found out that while students used metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring, self-instruction and self-evaluation, they still considered their teachers as more responsible for their learning processes.

Moreover, in a study by Mineishe (2010) with 219 first year students, the researcher focused on differences between perceptions of successful and relatively less successful students regarding the concept of learner autonomy. In this regard, he revealed that the success of learners was somehow linked to their perceptions of learner autonomy, i.e. the vast majority of the participants were more inclined to learn the target language autonomously rather than passively.

Porto (2007), however, carried out a study with 95 students at tertiary level to investigate the perceptions of learners of lessons and fostering learner autonomy. The researcher found out that if the students are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own learning, the better aware of the concept they will become.

Lastly, Chan et al. (2010) administered a questionnaire and interviews to 508 students in order to explore the beliefs of students about their teachers' role in language learning, their attitudes towards learner autonomy. The results of this study concluded that teachers were more responsible for classroom management as well as promoting learner autonomy in a classroom setting. In addition, the heavy dependence on teacher and the workload were found to be preventing the teachers from fostering learner autonomy in their own teaching practices.

**2.3.2 Studies on teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy.** Considering the importance of the role of teachers in promoting learner autonomy, it would be rather unwise to gloss over the teacher's role in promoting learner autonomy as well as their perceptions regarding learner autonomy. Despite three decades spent on researching into the issue of learner autonomy, very little attention has been paid to the beliefs and perceptions of teachers (Borg and Al Busaidi, 2012). However, it is of paramount importance to explore teachers' perceptions because it is the teachers who shape their students as well as their practices accordingly. As was said by Wedell (2009), ‘‘ an understanding of teachers' beliefs needs to be an integral part of initiatives that aim to promote change in what teachers do in the classroom’’ (p.283). In this regard, Borg and Al Busaidi (2012) did a study with 61 EFL teachers through a questionnaire and interviews. The researcher revealed that the participating teachers were in favour of the idea of promoting learner autonomy, however, they also stated that lack of enthusiasm and understanding were the greatest barriers amongst students, inhibiting them from thinking out of their comfort zones onto new territories in terms of learner autonomy and fostering such

autonomous activities to help them be better aware of the concept.

Similarly, Balçıkanlı (2010) conducted a study at a state university in Ankara, Turkey with 112 student-teachers so as to examine the perceptions of the participants regarding learner autonomy. He found out that the prospective teachers favoured the promotion of learner autonomy in their own classroom settings, laying particular emphasis on the fact that students should be involved in decision-making process on their own learning both inside and outside the classroom, to wit; students' needs and interests should be taken into consideration before the objectives of courses are set, the selection of materials, and homework tasks.

Moreover, the research into the issue suggests that teachers wishing to promote learner autonomy in their classrooms are suggested to set up an autonomous learning environment, making sure that students are given small responsibilities and that the responsibility level gradually increases over time as there may be some students who are not ready for a sudden change in such a responsibility shift compared to other students (Asim, 2013; Yıldırım, 2012). Specifically speaking, students need to see their teachers as guides and facilitators of their own learning rather than being the purveyors of knowledge provided by their teachers.

Lastly, Ürün et al. (2014) conducted another study to identify the practices of EFL high school teachers to foster learner autonomy and it was found out in the study that teachers were relatively motivated to promote learner autonomy through some activities such as activity-based practices, material-based practices, student-centred practices, and objective-based practices. Also, the results of the present study concluded that there were some problems in promoting learner autonomy, which stemmed from, generally, motivation levels of students, lack of facilities in language learning contexts, and relations of teachers and administration.

**2.3.3 Studies on students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy.** It would go quite awry if it is neglected to comprehend and appreciate the interrelationship of teachers' and students' perceptions of learner autonomy. This being the case, there are a lot of studies conducted on the perception of both learners and teachers. In one of them, Phan (2012) did a study with both students and teachers at a university in Vietnam in order to find out how the concept is perceived by the participants. In an attempt to do so, the researcher collected the data through questionnaires, interviews and observations. The findings of the study

yielded very similar results to those of other East Asian societies. Specifically, he found out that the participants were highly unfamiliar with the concept of autonomy. However, another study, which applied a mixed-method approach, was done by Joshi (2011) to investigate the autonomous activities of the students in learning English and to explore their beliefs about the role of teachers and their own in learning so as to find out their teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy. Such being the case, he administered a questionnaire to 80 students and a semi-structured interview were done to gather data. Having analysed the relevant data and the findings, he concluded that 80% of the respondents were aware of the goals and the process of learning English and the vast majority of the students perform autonomous activities outside the walls of the classroom such as use of libraries, listening and watching audio-visual materials in English.

Finally, Shahsavari (2014) conducted a study with the same instrument adopted from Borg and Al Busaidi (2012) but she also included learner views in the hopes of making a comparison between learners' and teachers' perception. The results indicated that all teachers and students agreed that learner autonomy may enhance language learning, and learner autonomy had a positive impact on being an achiever. Yet again, based on the findings of the aforesaid study, the participating teachers explicitly stated that learners did not take the control over their learning processes and did not act autonomously due to the fact that they considered their teachers as the main figure in classrooms and the main role in learning was theirs. She also claimed that if the teachers attempted to give the students more responsibilities, the students thought these teachers were not active nor well-experienced and that's why they tried to hand over their responsibilities. Therefore, it can be argued that classroom culture and dynamics in society play a key role in perceptions of both teachers and students.

## **2.4 Conditions for the development of learner autonomy**

One does not become autonomous out of the blue, one only works towards autonomy. In view of the previously presented belief, there are some conditions for the development of autonomous skills.

The very first fundamental condition to be met is the notion of responsibility

in the hands of the individual learner. Dam (1995), in this regard, suggests that such responsibility requires a capacity and willingness on the part of the learner to act independently and in cooperation with others as a socially responsible person. Specifically, responsible learners are the ones who are in favour of the idea that their own efforts are of great importance to progress in learning. In other words, responsible learners monitor their own learning progress and they voluntarily try their hardest to use available opportunities to their advantage (Scharle and Szabo, 2000).

Similarly, Sutton (1999) claims that learners' having locus of control, which helps them chose the content, method, medium, reward, feedback, pacing, etc., will also help them feel confident in their learning process.

Autonomy and responsibility are very much interwoven. Holec (1981) suggests that learners should be given the voice to speak up their minds and have a say in what and how to do things, if none. Traditionally, the teacher is in charge of learning and language learners have the role of what is asked of them, to wit; they act like 'passive receivers' of the knowledge provided by their teachers. However, it would have to go quite awry if the fact that the transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the student will yield rather beneficial outcomes is glossed over. To be precise, first and foremost, as learners will get to set the agenda, learning will be inevitably more purposeful and more effective both in the short and the long term. Secondly, because responsibility for learning lies with the learner, the barriers between learning and living – which is often found traditional teacher-centred – will not arise. Thirdly, if there are no barriers between learning and living, learners will have little difficulty in transferring their capacity for autonomous behaviour to all other areas of their lives. Therefore, they will be able make choices and decisions regarding their lives by accepting responsibility and learning to do things for themselves. In parallel, Malcolm (1990), who tried to design flexible learning programmes, reports that moving students from spoon-feeding to autonomy is possible with flexible learning where students take responsibilities.

As a second condition, motivation plays a crucial role in learners' readiness for autonomous learning. Most scholars seem to agree that motivation determines the degree of effort learners tend to put into learning the target language, which

leads to a successful language learning process in the end. A strong link between motivation and autonomy can be perceived in the article of Dickinson (1995) who concluded that enhanced motivation is a conditional on learners wanting to take responsibility for their own learning, laying a particular emphasis that their successes or failures are mainly related to their own efforts rather than to the factors over which they have no control. This belief are very popular amongst a variety of scholars, for example Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) compiled a concise set of 10 motivational macro strategies from 200 Hungarian teachers of English and in the 7<sup>th</sup> strategy, they emphasised the importance of promoting learner autonomy and its inevitable existence with autonomy amongst language learners.

In addition, a similar relationship was found in another study by Deci and Ryan (1985) who highlighted that intrinsic motivation is a necessary pre-requisite for autonomous learning. They also reported that intrinsic motivation, where learners are interested in learning tasks and outcomes for their own sake rather than for rewards, is to be supported for the development of autonomy, meaning that students would act more like self-determined learners rather than controlled only if they are provided with such support.

As a third factor, it would not be very wise not to highlight the unifying role of using metacognitive strategies for the promotion of learner autonomy. Metacognitive strategies are considered to be crucial in the learning process for a variety of reasons. Oxford (1990), in this regard, views the metacognitive strategies as the type of actions which enable the student to coordinate their own learning process and she adds that foreign language learners are exposed to a lot of new vocabulary items, confusing grammar structures and different writing strategies and techniques, which is why they need to get used to using metacognitive strategies so as not to their control over their own learning, i.e., possessing such metacognitive skills would help language learners develop and build even more up on their autonomous skills, whereby they would not have difficulties in taking control over their own learning.

Simply put, according to Wenden (1991) metacognitive strategies involve planning of learning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. Wenden (1991) also states that the planning strategy is related to discovering the nature of the language

in question, organising to learn, establishing aims and goals, considering task purposes, planning tasks and looking for chances and opportunities to practice, thus; being better prepared to make conscious decisions about what it is they can do to improve their learning with the help of this strategy. Also, monitoring their use of learning strategies, students would be better at keeping themselves on track to meet their learning goals. Specifically, once they have started and begun implementing and making use of such specific strategies, they need to ask themselves periodically whether or not they are still using these strategies as is intended. Lastly, at the implementation of the evaluation stage, language learners are expected to attempt to evaluate if what they are doing is effective. They evaluate their strategy use by seeking answers to these questions: 1- What am I trying to accomplish?, 2- What strategies am I using?, 3- How well am I using them?, 4- What else could I do?. Finding answers to these four questions integrates all of the previously mentioned aspects of metacognition, allowing the language learner to reflect through the cycle of learning.

To conclude, teachers aiming to sustain autonomy in their students need to bear in mind that there are some preliminary conditions to be met in order to foster and promote the development of autonomous behaviours and skills, hence; they need to pay utmost attention to how and why by integrating such conditions into their daily teaching contexts and settings, not to mention how utterly important it is to actually prepare learners for a swiftly changing future, where independent learning will be indispensable for effective functioning in society (Knowles, 1975).

## **2.5 Challenges of Learner Autonomy**

Shifting the focus from teaching to learning may bring along problems with itself during the implementation phase. Both students and teacher may encounter problems in a movement towards teacher-independence. According Turloui and Stefansdotir (2011), the kinds of problems that students may encounter due to this shifting can be classified into two categories, namely, discouraging environment and reluctant teachers. An example of a discouraging environment, as is pointed out by Holden and Usuki (1999), is where a teacher-centred class depends on the grammar-translation method where the student is required to memorise and learn about mechanical approaches. Such a classroom environment would discourage learners to



get involved in the learning process and would also discourage to develop their own learning strategies, meaning students would not be able to put their learning strategies into practice. In this regard, Holden and Usuki (1999) concluded that ‘‘these learners are not less autonomous, but the educational and behavioral norms and the goals of language study had the effect of discouraging learner autonomy’’ (p.64).

Besides a discouraging environment, another challenge that students may have to encounter in becoming autonomous would be related to the problem with reluctant teachers. As is widely known and accepted in the field of Foreign Language Education, one simple and very effective way of promoting learner autonomy is through group work activities where students are required to work collaboratively with their peers. However, according to Little (2000), teachers are not aware of the advantages of such activities and they think that they do not have time for this kind of activities and that they have to cover the objectives of their weekly-syllabi. This brings up the concern of the teachers on how to cover all the materials without following the textbook framework (Seeman and Tavares, 2000). Therefore, teachers tend to be rather reluctant in promoting and fostering autonomous behaviours of their students. In a similar vein, all these insecurities on the part of the teachers arise from the necessity to fulfil all the curricular demands and tests (Dam, 2000). To go in details, special concerns are to do with the exam system: ‘‘Am I keeping pace with other classes?’’, ‘‘Do my learners feel that they are making progress?’’, ‘‘How do I know that they are learning enough?’’(Turloui and Stefansdotir, 2011). Teachers are also concerned about the reaction of weak and difficult-to-handle students. The weak kind of learner would be the losers, and it might be quite demanding for learners to take hold and assume responsibility, which might be the reason why the teacher might find it difficult to let go and take risks with a new approach (Little et al., 2002).

Yet another study carried out by Alibakhshi (2015) to investigate the perceptions of EFL teachers about learner autonomy with a particular emphasis on the challenges that they face with while attempting to promote learner autonomy. To do so, a qualitative research design was used to collect data from 23 Iranian EFL teachers working at different universities in Iran. Upon completing the data analysis, the researcher came up with three themes, namely, institution – related challenges,

learner – related challenges, and teacher – related challenges. This being the case, the study concluded that teachers and students should get rid of the factors which block learner autonomy in EFL settings, knowing that learner autonomy does not lead to the teachers' lack of respect and authority.

## **2.6 Teacher Autonomy**

Thus far the discussion of teacher autonomy has centred on generic issues of autonomy even though Hoyle and John (1995) considered this issue to be a crucial matter for education and suggested that it is paramount to pay particular attention to the nature of teacher autonomy. It is, however, quite challenging to come up with one concrete definition of teacher autonomy as it is a “constantly evolving concept” ( Pearson and Moomaw, 2005) considering the current pace of reform in education ( Grenville-Cleave and Boniwell, 2012). Ever since Little (1995) defined teacher autonomy as “the teachers’ capacity to engage in self-directed teaching” (p. 176), there has been a growing consensus that teachers are entitled to have autonomy (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005; Wilson, 1993), with Grenville-Cleave and Boniwell (2012) underpinning its raising status to that of a psychological need.

Research into teacher autonomy in the field of second language education has had a short history. One of the first to discuss the issue was Little (1995) and in his reference to responsibility, control, and freedom he drew clear parallels with learner autonomy:

Genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploring the freedom that this confers. (Little,1995, p179)

Building up on the above given definition of teacher autonomy, another early attempt made to define teacher autonomy was that of Smith’s (2001). He defined the concept of teacher autonomy as “the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher in cooperation with others” (Smith, 2001, p.1). Also, teacher autonomy can be defined as teachers’ planning,

implementing their professional activities within certain constrictions, making preferences in terms of the organisation of the working environment and participating in administrative processes (Pearson and Moomaw, 2005). As can be seen, since early on, users of the term ‘teacher autonomy’ have focused on different dimensions, all of which, undoubtedly, reflects that teachers need to take control over their own teaching process through continuous reflection and analysis (Benson, 2006; Little, 1995; Lamb, 2008; Smith, 2002).

**2.6.1 Teachers’ role in promoting learner autonomy.** As the decision of involving autonomy within the context of foreign language education stems from the teacher, fostering autonomy, in this sense, mainly depends on the teachers’ re-definition of their own role (Hill, 1994). Crabbe (1999), for example, argues that ‘‘a re-examination of teacher role is needed in helping students to become more autonomous’’ (p.2). Considering the fact that students are expected to take more responsibility of their learning, teachers, in this regard, need to play the role of facilitator or counsellor (Riley, 1997). Gardner and Miller (1999) teachers need to equip themselves with necessary strategies in order to take on new roles such as counsellor, organiser, material developer, evaluator, and manager. Dam (2008) also suggests that teachers’ role in an autonomous learning environment is that of a facilitator.

Based on the above mentioned roles of teachers, according to Voller (1997), teacher as a facilitator is a term frequently used in the existing literature on communicative language learning, autonomous language learning, and self-instruction language learning. Dornyei (2001), similarly, describes the role of the teacher in a language learning classroom as a facilitator or counsellor. To clarify, Chiu (2005) elaborates on the issue, claiming that a facilitator of learning is usually considered to be a ‘helper’ who makes learning easier to happen, that is to say, by acting like a facilitator, teachers help make the development of the concept of autonomy more flexible and successful (Yan, 2012). Simply put, a facilitator provides the psycho-social support by being supportive, helping students overcome obstacle or difficulties on their own, being prepared to encourage and appreciate autonomous learning environment whenever needed, making sure it turns into a constantly evolving situation.

On the other hand, teacher as a counsellor is another role that is widely used in the relevant discussion of language learning autonomy. Etymologically, a counsellor refers to a person who provides advice to those who need. Richard and Rodgers (1986), for instance, claim that “a teacher-counselor is supposed to be an effective communicator seeking to maximize the learner engagement through the use of interpretation, confirmation, and feedback”. In other words, when a teacher plays the role of a counsellor, they give advice and accordingly help students so that they can become more efficient learners. Similarly, according to Kongchan (2008) counselling in foreign language education is a term used to define teachers who are able to assist learners to talk to someone about their achievements, problems, and the possible ways to solve these problems.

Moreover, the role of the teacher as a manager and organiser is considered as the first role the teacher needs to play in an autonomous learning setting (Yan, 2012), which means that the teacher should design various types of activities to foster learner autonomy such as role-play, group discussions, debates, etc., by, of course, assuring that these activities are appropriate for students’ needs and interests and that they actually help them develop their autonomous skills.

**2.6.2 Promotion of teacher autonomy.** With all the different dimensions of term of teacher autonomy in mind, it can be seen that teacher autonomy and (the promotion of) learner autonomy are interrelated. This being the case, in order to, first of all, promote learner autonomy teachers should have (1) “ a capacity for self-directed teaching” (Aoki 2000; Little, 2000; McGrath, 2000; Vieira, 2000); (2) “freedom from control over control over their teaching” (Benson, 2000, Bren and Mann, 1997; Smith, 2008); (3) “a capacity for self-directed teacher-learning” (Little, 2000; Savage, 2000; Smith, 2000). When it comes down to answering the question ‘how’, there has not been much research into this issue for us to fully comprehend and find better ways of promoting autonomous skills of teachers, yet, there has been an emphasis on the relativeness of teacher-education, whether in- or pre-service, in terms of the promotion of teacher autonomy. For instance, Smith (2000) pointed out that:

“...the promotion of these capacities is highly relevant, I would argue, because they are fully consistent with, indeed are a sine qua non of teachers’ own

development of appropriate methodology in and for their own classrooms, in other words they lie at the heart of what it means to teach ‘appropriately’, in any context’’ (p.8).

He further advocates that teacher autonomy might as well be promoted in relation to teachers’ life-long language learning and through in-service teacher education tailored to their needs and interests.

To conclude, without the promotion of teacher autonomy, it would be rather impossible to ask for a learning/teaching atmosphere where students are expected to take control of their own learning (Benson, 2000; Smith, 2008).

**2.6.2.1 Autonomy in teacher education: The inter-relationship between teacher & learner Autonomy.** The question of if learner and teacher autonomy is related to one another has attracted much scholarly attention and has, since early on, been a heated debate amongst scholars and language practitioners respectively. For instance, Little (1995) emphasised that these two terms are closely related for two reasons, the first of which is that in order for teachers to have the courage to actually encourage their students to develop autonomous skills, they are to be made aware of the importance of learner autonomy when they go through training as student-teachers. Secondly, if they are given the opportunity to learn autonomously throughout their training activities, they will end up being more self-reflective, autonomous teachers in the end. In other words, it is not realistic to expect teachers to become autonomous without guiding them towards what they need in terms of autonomy.

With regard to fostering teacher autonomy in such programmes, Balçıkanlı (2010) suggests that ‘teacher autonomy is an essential aspect of successful language teacher education in a way that it enables teachers to conduct their own teaching more effectively, become more aware of whats and whys of teaching processes, and follow new trends in language teaching/learning’’ (p.11). In parallel, Smith and Erdoğan (2008) pointed out that self-directed teacher-learning is deemed to be necessary to encourage teachers’ willingness to figure ways out to learn for themselves and to develop their own expertise. They also reported that teacher autonomy is not important per se that it is a pedagogical tool that can be used to promote autonomy amongst language learners, but also it is rather significant to

promote the professional development of the teachers themselves.

Barkhuizen and Hacker (2008), however, claim that language practitioners are to be aware of their own perceptions concerning teaching and learning so as to ‘meet the challenges of autonomy’ (p.161). They also add that “language teacher education programmes, therefore, should create opportunities for participants to examine and develop their personal theories of teaching” (p.161). In a similar vein, Smith (2008) also argues that as teaching is an intrinsically self-directed process, teacher education programmes need to promote teacher autonomy in pedagogical, attitudinal and content-related areas. To go in details, Balçıkanlı (2010) stated that ‘student teachers’ beliefs on learner autonomy are very important components of their future teaching practices. Therefore, teacher educators play a salient role in student teachers’ experience with learner autonomy by allowing more room for greater motivation, negotiation and decision making’ (p.99). In addition, Shahsavari (2014) in a study of hers investigated teachers’ perceptions of autonomy and the results showed that student-teachers view learner and teacher autonomy as inextricably interwoven.

Smith and Erdoğan (2008) argue the need for a knowledge base for “teacher education for the promotion of learner autonomy” (p.15) and further proposes that an “experiential approach”, with teachers learning autonomously on their own, is the most effective way of supporting teachers in the development and improvement of pedagogical aspect of second language teaching/learning in terms of autonomy.

In order to make the link between those components, according to Lamb (2008), “the teacher needs to reflect on his/her own autonomous learning behaviour and consider its implications for his/her learners’ learning” (p.279). Acting this way, the teacher might as well help his/her learners develop autonomous skills and behaviours accordingly.

To conclude, Balçıkanlı and Çakır (2012) reported that the earlier language instructors are introduced to the concepts of learner-teacher autonomy, the readier they may become to integrate such approaches into their own future teaching practices.

## **2.7 The Impact of Teacher Autonomy on Learner Autonomy**

Granting autonomy to teachers and equipping them with the required skills to maintain such autonomy seem to be highly beneficial and important to find solutions to school problems (Short, 1994). To clarify, the first thing to be done is to give the learner the chance to develop their autonomous skills and for this, teacher autonomy happens to be a pre-requisite for learner autonomy (Little, 1995). In other words, the motivation level of teachers showing less autonomy is generally low (MacBeath, 2012). Therefore, as is pointed out by Yazıcı (2016), it can be argued that teachers having low motivation are not expected to “display learner autonomy support behaviours” (p.4). In this respect, it is clear that teachers’ perceptions, awareness levels and/or behaviours are of utmost importance in terms of the promotion of learner autonomy to enhance the quality of language education. If neglected, it can lead to a situation where students’ autonomous skills are ignored and what is aimed to be accomplished at the end of the day would be rather unrealistic and surreal.

When literature reviewed on the issue of teacher-learner autonomy (e.g. Ayral et al., 2014; Bryk et al., 1998; Ingersoll, 1996; Vieira, 2010), it can be seen that when teachers exhibit autonomous behaviours, they can help their students behave autonomously in the learning environment (Benson, 2007; Little, 1995; Luthans, 1992; Çankaya, 2009). In this regard, students whose autonomy is supported end up developing with the effect and support of social milieu (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Specifically talking and doubtlessly, students need to be both supported and encouraged in the classroom setting and the person who should provide such support is the teacher. To do so, the teacher in constructivist learning environments need to have the responsibility for supporting their learners. As such, the teacher needs to demonstrate “autonomy behaviours of their own” (Yazıcı, 2016, p. 4). To this end, it can be concluded that teachers, when they train to be in-service teachers or when they participate in INSET activities, are to be provided with the opportunities to empower themselves in order to help their students maintain autonomous behaviours as well as their own autonomous behaviours as teachers.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Upon reviewing the literature on autonomy, it would appear that learner-teacher autonomy is needed to enhance better language education. Also, the relevant literature would imply that the promotion of learner autonomy is somehow dependent on the promotion of teacher autonomy. To illustrate, unless teacher autonomy is promoted, the student demonstrates relatively less autonomy (MacBeath, 2012; Yazıcı, 2016). In other words, teacher autonomy, undoubtedly, has an impact on learner autonomy. In this chapter, it has also been presented that conditions for learner autonomy are also of paramount importance simply because otherwise would have to be rather difficult and challenging to be able to foster learner autonomy. Therefore, it might also be argued that required conditions for autonomous learning play a remarkably salient role in promoting autonomous behaviours as well as sustaining such autonomy. Such being the case, this chapter also suggests that it is possible to foster autonomy in any context provided that the required conditions are met within a particular context.

Based on what has thus far been mentioned, it can be argued that, to the best of my knowledge, there is not much research in Turkey investigating both teachers' and students' perceptions of learner autonomy nor is there much research focusing on the readiness of tertiary level EFL students for autonomous learning. Even though multiple studies have been carried out within Turkish context to investigate the perceptions of learners regarding learner autonomy, not many studies have been done to explore the perceptions of teachers of learner autonomy. Such being the case, the present study aims not only to look into perceptions of both teachers and learners at tertiary level regarding learner autonomy, but also to investigate the promotion of learner autonomy at tertiary level, i.e. if it is promoted at all and/or if autonomy is somehow sustained within the same context as well as the challenges that they might have to face trying to promote and foster such autonomy. In doing so, the researcher is committed to contributing to the existent literature on learner autonomy.



## Chapter 3

### Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methods used in completing this study by describing the research design of the study, setting, participants along with the data collection tools and procedures, reliability and validity, and lastly, limitations. In this regard, the procedures include types of sampling, data collections instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

In this study, the following research questions were investigated:

- 1- How ready are the B2 level Turkish EFL university preparatory students for autonomous learning?
- 2- What are the overall perceptions of the participating students and teachers about learner autonomy?
  - 2a. Are there any significant differences between the overall perceptions of students and teacher about learner autonomy?
- 3- How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of student responsibilities and their abilities?
  - 3a. Are there any significant differences between the perceptions of students and teacher in terms of student responsibilities?
  - 3b. Are there any significant differences between the perceptions of students and teacher in terms of student abilities?
- 4- How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?
  - 4a. Are the any significant difference between the perceptions of the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?
- 5- What are the challenges that both EFL teachers and students experience when promoting learner autonomy in B2 level preparatory classes?

#### 3.1 Research Design

A mixed method approach employing quantitative and qualitative elements was utilised in this study in order to *a-* provide insights into if students at B2 level in an English preparatory programme are ready for autonomous learning *b-* investigate

the overall perceptions of the participating students and teachers about learner autonomy and the differences regarding the perceptions of the participants of learner autonomy *c-* find out how students and teachers perceive autonomy in the preparatory EFL classrooms at tertiary level in terms of students responsibilities and abilities, and the differences concerning the perceptions of the participants as regards students responsibilities and abilities, *d-* examine the perceptions of the students and teachers of teacher responsibilities, and the differences pertaining to the perceptions of the participants of teacher responsibilities and *e-* find out if there any challenges that students and teachers experience when promoting learner autonomy in these classes. As such, Johnson et al. (2007) defined mixed methods research as “the type of research in which research or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative data approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (p.123). Moreover, such approaches to research provide balance, breadth and depth to the answers to the research questions in the form of general trends, meaning these trends are compared and contrasted with qualitative findings which offer illustration, explanations, and elaboration for quantitative findings. Based on the purpose of the present study, the rationale for such a research design was to provide a deeper comprehension for and to triangulate quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires and with qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews.

Furthermore, mixed method research strategies, *au fond*, fall into four main groups, namely; convergent, explanatory, exploratory, and embedded design (Clark and Creswell, 2011; Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009). Specifically, studies which happen to be convergent in design gather and analyse both quantitative and qualitative data all at once, but individually without prioritising either. However, in explanatory design, quantitative data collection and analysis is followed by qualitative data, that is, they are carried out consecutively. As for studies employing exploratory design, first of all, quantitative is to be handled, and then qualitative data endorse quantitative data. Lastly, in embedded design studies, either qualitative or quantitative set of data play primary role and the other set is analysed within the prioritised research design.

Considering the purposes of the current study, it can be specified that convergent design mixed method research is adopted in this study. To go in details, the quantitative data were obtained from questionnaires, as quiet whereas qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews from students and teachers respectively so as to triangulate the study. Hence, the aforementioned strands of data collection and analysis were conducted independently with equivalent priority.

### **3.2 Setting and Participants**

**3.2.1 Setting.** The study was carried out at the English Preparatory School of a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. At the beginning of the academic year, students are to sit the proficiency exam (with an average of 60), the TOEFL exam (with an average of 74), IELTS (with an average of 6) or YDS (with an average of 60) in order to be eligible to start their undergraduate studies at their respective departments. However, if they fail the proficiency exam, they are required to take the placement exam which measures their level of English proficiency to be studied in the preparatory school. The placement of the students is fixed according to the standardised levels of CEFR, namely, A1 (breakthrough or beginner), A2 (way stage or elementary), B1 (threshold or intermediate), B2 (vantage or upper intermediate), and C1 (effective Operational Proficiency or advanced) levels. Therefore, the academic year in this program is comprised of a total of 5 eight-week modules and 5 levels. Students enrolled in the program are required to successfully complete each module with an overall grade of at least 65% before they can proceed to the next level. The assessment components include weekly achievement tests (i.e. assessing and checking weekly improvement and testing the relevant grammar subject matter covered within a particular week), a mid-term exam, an end of module exam, homework, one speaking and two written exams. At each level, they receive a total of 24 hours of English instruction, which encompasses main course and integrated-skills and which, at this level, vary as 15 hours of main course and 9 hours of integrated-skills. The basic subjects of English (grammar and vocabulary) are focused on in the main course. As for the skills instruction, four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) are the main focus. This particular English Preparatory Program aims to complete the language learning process in a 12-month-period.

**3.2.2 Participants.** The sample employed in this study consisted of 140 students enrolled at Upper-Intermediate level and 10 Turkish EFL teachers working at a Preparatory Programme of an English-medium Turkish, private (non-profit) university. The participating students are obliged to complete 4 single-modules and take the proficiency exam at the end of the academic year in order to continue their academic studies in their respective departments. Also, out of 140 student respondents, 73 were male and 67 were female. The participants whose age ranged from 18 to 20 constituted the largest group of the participants (92%), whereas, the ones over the age of 21 constituted the smallest group (7%). Moreover, the vast majority of the student participants were of Turkish nationality coming from diverse backgrounds and cultures, and 26 students were from different nationalities. In addition, the participating students come from different backgrounds, meaning the vast majority of the students completed their secondary education at different Anatolian high-schools whereas some of them (15%) graduated from different private high-schools all across the country.

In addition, 6 out of 10 teachers who participated in this study have up to 5 years of total teaching experience, whereas 2 of them have 6 to 8 years, 2 of them have been involved in teaching for 9 to 11 years. Besides, all the participating students teach at the same level with exactly the same teaching workload, namely, main course (15 hours) and integrated-skills (9 hours). Their ages ranged from 25 to 33, and 2 of them were male while 8 of them were female.

### **3.3 Procedures**

In this part of the study, the sources of data, the types of sampling, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, reliability and validity of the study as well as the limitations of the present study will be presented in detail respectively.

**3.3.1 Data collection procedures.** In this section, types of sampling and data collection instruments were provided.

**3.3.1.1 Types of sampling.** Sampling, by its very nature, refers to choosing participants to take part in and provide relevant data for the research (Doherty, 1994). There are different techniques for sampling, and they can be categorised in two as probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling, on one hand, is regarded as the technique focusing on random selection; however, non-probability

sampling has four types; convenience, sequential, quota, and judgemental sampling and is used when sampling units are not selected by chance yet according to certain purposes.

Since quantitative and qualitative research methods differ from one another in nature and in terms of their aims and so sampling techniques happen to be different. More specifically, types of sampling used in quantitative research are barely convenient or applicable for qualitative research (Marshall, 1996). Denver and Fraenkel (2000) advocates that purposive sampling enables the researcher to interrogate and investigate data provided by the samples more thoroughly. As each person is not as good at noticing, understanding and expressing what is asked of them as others, purposive sampling helps researchers, in this case, choose the participants who are more likely to contribute more and come up with more comprehensive and detailed interpretations, which, inevitably makes data collection process more productive and sound, if none (Marshall, 1996). This being the case, in this study non-probability sampling, mainly judgemental/purposive, was used, which might as well mean that the participants were chosen according to certain benchmarks engaged in the study (Balbach, 1999).

**3.3.1.2 Data collection instruments.** In this study, data were gathered through a wide array of both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods: 2 different student questionnaires and 1 teacher questionnaire to gather quantitative data and qualitative data were obtained from both students and teachers through semi-structured interviews.

**3.3.1.2.1 Questionnaires.** For the purposes of the current study, the questionnaires were partially adapted from Le 's (2013) dissertation study which aimed to gain more understanding of the development of learner autonomy in English language learning amongst students at a private university in Vietnam.

**3.3.1.2.1.1 Readiness for learner autonomy questionnaire (RFAQ).** The questionnaire, as is pointed out by Le (2013), is intended only for students and is based on questionnaires used in previous studies by Cotterall (1995; 1999), Broady (1996), Sprat et al. (2002), Hsu (2005), and Thang and Alias (2007). The RFAQ (Appendix A) centres on two different perspectives, namely learners' metacognitive knowledge and their general willingness to take responsibility for their own learning. The original questionnaire, as was used in the study by Le (2013), consisted of two parts: 'Attitudes' and 'Practice'. Part 1 has 50 items which are

randomly ordered. These items belong to six categories. Category 1 – Teachers’ responsibility – consisted of 15 items which focus on examining the participating students’ beliefs about the role the teacher. Category 2 – Acceptance and Desire for Responsibility – delves into the issue to investigate the students’ willingness to take more responsibility. Specifically, these items explore students’ perceptions regarding language learning in relation to self-study and the role of the teacher. The same category is tended to identify whether students are inclined to develop autonomous skills. Categories 3 to 6 examine the four aspects of learners’ metacognitive knowledge competence, whereas, categories 4 to 5 look into learners’ knowledge of the learning context and their language awareness. The items in the questionnaire are based on a 5-point Likert style scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) and 5 (Strongly disagree).

The second part of the questionnaire – ‘Practice’, has 15 items. In this part, students in the original questionnaire are asked about their language learning activities inside and outside class and they are all Yes/No questions to be able to check learners’ actual performance of the learning activities. As such, given the purposes of the current study and considering that there is no treatment nor is there any intervention whatsoever in the current study to find out if students carry out any type of practice-based activities, it was deemed necessary that this part of the original questionnaire was to be completely taken out in the hopes of collecting more reliable data.

However, some adaptations were deemed to be necessary for the first part of the questionnaire – Attitudes- in order for the questionnaire to better fit in the context of the present study. Specifically, the first adapted item was the 14<sup>th</sup> statement. Whilst in the original item it was read as ‘‘People in Vietnam who can speak English well have a better social status (e.g., they make more money; they are more educated, etc.)’’, and it was changed to ‘‘People in Turkey who can speak English well have a better social status (e.g., they make more money; they are more educated, etc.)’’. This adaptation was found to be necessary due to context-related requirements since the participating students were enrolled in a Turkey-based non-profit, private university. Another adaptation that was required to be made was the 21<sup>st</sup> item, which originally states: ‘‘ There are a lot of opportunities to learn and practise English in Hochiminh city’’, and it was turned into ‘‘ There are a lot of

opportunities to learn and practise English in İstanbul’’. This particular item required adaptation owing to the same reason: context-appropriateness.

3.3.1.2.2.2 *Perspective on learner autonomy questionnaire (PLAQ)*. The questionnaire has two versions, one for teachers and one for students. As its name suggests, this questionnaire was designed to investigate the extent to which teachers and students are responsible for learning activities inside and outside class, from the perspectives of both students and teachers. Specifically, the version teachers investigates teachers’ perceptions of their own and students’ role in the classroom, their confidence in students’ capacity to take some control over their learning, their suggestions for teaching and learning activities to promote learner autonomy, and lastly their perceptions of context-related difficulties. The questionnaire for teachers consists of 4 sections and the primary purpose of this questionnaire was to be parallel the RFAQ, which is intended only for students. Section 1, ‘Responsibilities’, has 13 items which seek to explore teachers’ views as to who has the main responsibilities in- and out-of-class learning activities. The second section of the questionnaire, ‘Abilities’, inquires into how confident teachers are about their students’ ability to make important decisions in managing their learning, such as choosing learning activities and materials, evaluating their learning and identifying their weaknesses. Section 3, ‘Autonomy and your teaching’, aims to examine the extent to which teachers are conscious of learner autonomy as teaching goal and consider it to be important for effective language learning. The final section, ‘Activities’, encourages teachers to draw on their experiences and suggest teaching/learning activities that they consider contextually-suitable/feasible for use in promoting learner autonomy within the context they teach in.

Additionally, the version for students was a shorter one compared to the one designed for teachers. This questionnaire was prepared for students to investigate the topics above from students’ perspective, viz., it seeks to explore students’ view on the extent of their own and teachers’ responsibility for learning activities inside and outside class as well as their perceptions of their own ability take charge of these activities. To be precise, the main purpose of this questionnaire was to be parallel the RFAQ, which is intended only for students as well.

3.3.1.2.3 *Semi-structured interviews*. A semi-structured interview allows a researcher control over the line of questioning and participants can provide historical information (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1998).

Based on the aims of this study, both the participating students and teachers were interviewed. 30 students from different B2-level classes were randomly asked to provide answers to the questions in the interview, where they were encouraged to discuss their English language learning experiences by comparing the past with the present, their perceptions of autonomous learning, the types of activities they supposedly carry out, the challenges/difficulties they face in doing so, and their perceptions of teachers in terms of autonomy development.

As for the interviews in which 5 teachers participated, it consists of questions about teachers' awareness of learner autonomy and their attitudes towards promoting autonomous learning along with questions which encourage the participating teachers to share their experiences and concerns regarding their own teaching profession.

Moreover, for the purposes of this study and triangulation concerns, qualitative data obtained from students and teachers were compared to each other and to quantitative data collected through students' and teachers' questionnaires, which helped ensure a greater level of credibility in the findings of the present study.

The following table provides an overview of the research questions and the corresponding procedures:



Table 1

*Overview of Research Questions and Corresponding Procedures*

| Research Question  | Data Collection Instruments                       | Data analysis   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. How ready are the B2 level Turkish EFL university preparatory students for autonomous learning?   | Survey (RFAQ)                                     | SPSS Descriptive Analysis                                   |
| 2. What are the overall perceptions of the participating students and teachers about learner autonomy?<br>2a. Are there any significant differences between the overall perceptions of students and teacher about learner autonomy?  | Survey (PLAQ for students and Teachers)           | Spss Mann Whitney U<br>Spss Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test      |
| 3. How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of student responsibilities and their abilities?<br>3a. Are there any significant differences between the perceptions of students and teacher in terms of student responsibilities?<br>3b. Are there any significant differences between the perceptions of students and teacher in terms of student abilities? | Survey (PLAQ – version for students and teachers) | Spss Mann Whitney U Test<br>Spss Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test |
| 4. How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?<br>4a. Are there any significant difference between the perceptions of the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?   | Survey (PLAQ - version for students and teachers) | Spss Mann Whitney U Test<br>Spss Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test |
| 5. What are the challenges that both EFL teachers and students experience when promoting learner autonomy in B2 level preparatory classes?   | Semi- structured interviews                       | Inductive Analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)                 |

**3.3.3 Data analysis procedures.** In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed accordingly. Quantitative data were collected by the means of questionnaires using Survey Monkey Audience. Specifically, the participants were given a link to the questionnaires, which was created using Survey Monkey Audience ([www.surveymonkey.com/mp/audience](http://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/audience)). The findings of the questionnaires employed in this study were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 22, which provided well-founded and clear picture of the data obtained.

Moreover, to find out the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding teacher responsibility and to examine if there are any differences in the scores, the Mann-Whitney U non-parametric test was deployed. Also, so as to examine perceptions of teachers and students about taking responsibility for learning and developing autonomous skills thereunto, the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was deployed on both students' and teachers' responses to the items in the questionnaires. With regard to students' attitudes towards developing autonomous skills and taking charge of their own learning, the RFAQ survey was analysed using the same version of SPSS and the percentages were estimated through Frequency Counting (Table 2).

As for the qualitative part, the semi-structured interviews were subject to inductive analysis. (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Based on the iterative nature of the qualitative research (Dörnyei, 2007), it is known to be usual to move back and forth between data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation depending on the results emerging from the data obtained. Within the data analysis of the qualitative part of the present study, first off, the data was transcribed into textual forms. The transcriptions and the semi-structured interview forms were, accordingly, studied many times to analyse and categorise them under the same theme using an inductive approach to data analysis. More specifically, qualitative data in this study were gathered from both students and teachers, and the open-ended questions in the fourth part of the PLAQ (version for teachers) questionnaire. As the first step, labels were determined considering the research questions by means of open coding. Following the open coding, the main themes were determined under relevant themes with regards to the purposes of the present study. This being the case, the categories and themes were also subject to the checking of inter-raters. To identify the degree of inter-reliability, one expert in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT)

identified themes from codes, which revealed that the raters achieved close agreement of .87 on the general themes apart from the different verbalisations of similar concepts.

**3.3.4 Reliability and validity.** Validity and reliability are significant factors to have faith in the results obtained for a study (Ary et al., 2010). Specifically, validity is defined as ‘‘the extent to which scores on a test enable one to make meaningful and appropriate interpretations’’ (Ary et al., 2010, p.224). Reliability, however, provides insights into how consistently a test measures whatever it intends to measure.

Validity is crucial to effective and worthwhile research. Ensuring validity is a complex matter which has to be continually dealt with throughout the course of research. In this regard, Cohen et al. (2007) list 18 different kinds of validity, ranging from content validity, criterion-related validity to theoretical validity and evaluative validity. As was stated in the study from which the RFAQ questionnaire was adapted, Le (2013) pointed out that ‘‘validity can be seen as the question of whether the questionnaire really does measure what it purports to measure’’ (p.109). In an attempt to answer this question, Le (2013) discussed three types of validity that he considers to be keys to the effectiveness of the RFAQ, which are content validity, construct validity and cultural validity.

To begin with, content validity requires that the instrument ‘‘fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover’’ (as cited in Le, 2013). To this end, the RFAQ questionnaire was designed by Le (2013) to investigate thoroughly the key aspects of learners’ readiness for autonomy. However, the questionnaire was consciously kept at a practical length in order to avoid the effects of respondents’ fatigue caused by a long questionnaire. Therefore, Le (2013) pointed out that the items in the RFAQ questionnaire were carefully selected and modified so as to highlight the demonstration of learners’ readiness for autonomy in the specific research context.

However, construct validity deals with the articulation of the constructs which are operationalised in the questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2007). The main construct in question in the RFAQ is ‘readiness for autonomy’, whose meaning and implications have been discussed in the existent literature. To be more specific, Le (2013) stated that the discussion of the background theoretical literature and approaches to measuring readiness for autonomy in previous studies ‘‘provide the

foundation for the construction of the underlying issues tackled in the questionnaire” (p. 110). Therefore, it can be argued that the main constructs of the RFAQ questionnaire are generally accepted and rooted in the literature in the field of language learning.

According to Joy (2003, cited in Cohen et al., 2007) cultural validity is “the degree to which a study is appropriate to the cultural setting where research is to be carried out” (p. 139). Le (2013) pointed out this type of validity has a significant role in his study because learner autonomy may be considered by some to peculiar to the western culture (Jones, 1995) and may be unusual in the context of research, which is why Le (2013) attempted to ensure the research is culture-fair and culturally sensitive by taking some measures, namely, “drawing of items from other studies conducted in similar contexts, i.e., East Asian cultures”, “adding new items or modifying items so that they are appropriate and relevant to the context of the research”, “ensuring that the translation of the RFAQ is culturally appropriate and meaningful to the respondents”, and “piloting the instrument to validate the quality of translation” (p.110).

In terms of quantitative methodologies and before statistical tests were deployed to analyse the quantitative data collected through the RFAQ, a reliability analysis of the items to obtain the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the whole questionnaire and each measuring scale was conducted to ensure internal consistency amongst the questionnaire items. The relevant analysis, as is pointed out by Le (2013), established “the level of reliability of the test scores produced by the collected data” (p.164). In this regard, Le (2013) obtained the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for each scale of the questionnaire. Specifically, in the original study, the questionnaire has two versions, a full-length questionnaire consisting of 65 items for intervention students and a shortened version of 55 items for non-intervention students. Because the shortened version of the RFAQ was administered to a considerably larger population ( $n=213$ ) compared with the full-length questionnaire ( $n=21$ ) in the study by Le (2013), the data obtained by the former were subject to the reliability analysis for the overlapping parts of the two version. However, from the results of the reliability analysis of all the items and scales, four items were left out by the researcher due to their negative influence resulting in low reliability level in some pre-factorised groups of items. Even so, the remaining 36 items of Section 2 of the shortened RFAQ produced a Cronbach’s coefficient of .731, which indicates

a satisfactory level of internal consistency amongst items and good statistical reliability.

Section 2 of the full-length RFAQ questionnaire was administered to intervention students, which has Likert-type 50 items, including 40 from the shortened version. In this regard, the reliability analysis of the items in this section of the full-length RFAQ resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .766, which represents good internal consistency amongst items.

Also, Le (2013) stated that of all the pre-factorised groups of items, the 'Teachers' Responsibility' scale achieves the best Cronbach's Alpha coefficient at .793.

In contrast to the 'Teachers' Responsibility' scale, the 'Acceptance and desire for responsibility' scale did not yield a good Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha = .589$  for 8 items). As such, Le (2013) specified that in order to achieve a better reliability coefficient, factor analysis was conducted on all questionnaire items, except for those belonging to the 'Teachers' responsibility' scale. In this regard, Le (2013) found that two items from another scales, namely, "I think I have the ability to learn English and "I try new ways/strategies of learning English" which were initially included in different scales, were added to the 'Acceptance and desire for responsibility' and another item found in the original scale, which was "I don't feel I could improve without a teacher" , was left out in order to increase the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of this group of items. Hence, with two items added and one removed, the reliability analysis of the scale resulted in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .627. Such being the case, Le (2013) pointed out that "this newly reliability coefficient is reasonably acceptable to the deployment of statistical tests and interpretation of the results of data handled by SPSS" (p. 166)

Moreover, the metacognitive scale of the RFAQ questionnaire originally consisting of 17 items, after some modifications, had 12 items in the end in the hopes of obtaining a good level of reliability. Therefore, it achieved a good overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .727. Lastly, as for the remaining items of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be at .677, indicating that this reliability can be considered to be acceptable.

As for the PLAQ questionnaire, Le (2013) stated that the same steps as in the RFAQ questionnaire was taken "in order to ensure the validity and reliability" (p. 115). Specifically, in terms of construct validity, the questionnaire was adapted from

a previous study which was theoretically based on the work of Holec (1981) and Littlewood (1999) (see Chan, 2003 as cited in Le, 2013). As far as reliability is concerned, data collected from this PLAQ allow triangulation between the two questionnaires as they both investigate learner autonomy in tertiary education from students' and teachers' perspectives.

### **3.4 Limitations**

Even though there is confidence in the emergent findings of the present study due to the fact that they replicate similar projects in different settings across the globe, there are some limitations that have to be pointed out. First of all, the present study is limited in its scope since it mainly focused on a particular group of students and teachers. Conducting the study with larger populations in different contexts and with the participation of students and teachers at different levels would have to yield more reliable and comparative results, which, accordingly, could be generalised to different groups and achieve, if none, higher external validity. This limitation, though, was minimised by using triangulation in data collection tools. Furthermore, mainly due to time constraints in the school programme and schedule, there was no treatment nor intervention in the present study to be better able to find out if there was any kind of difference in the results depending on the treatment that different groups of students receive regarding developing autonomous skills. Finally, considering the fact that not each student would encompass the same kinds of personality traits especially when it comes down to developing autonomous learning behaviours, the current study was not focused on comparing personality types of the participating students nor did it attempt to find out if they are somehow inter-related, thus; predictability of autonomous behaviours was not examined. This being the case, investigating the concept of learner autonomy by laying particular emphasis on personality traits would contribute to obtaining more generalisable and reliable findings.

## Chapter 4

### Findings

#### 4.1 Overview

This chapter covers the results regarding the perceptions of both Turkish EFL teacher working at a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Turkey and students enrolled in B2-level classes about learner autonomy as well as students' readiness to develop autonomous skills. In this regard, the relevant data were collected respectively through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The following section discusses the findings related to each research question addressed in the present study.

#### 4.2 Findings from the RFAQ questionnaire

In this section, the findings obtained from the RFAQ questionnaire to which 140 students responded are presented. Specifically, the most striking findings of the questionnaire are given below.

**4.2.1 Findings of the readiness of the students for learner autonomy.** The RFAQ questionnaire was employed in this study so as to examine if the student participants are ready for autonomous learning and to be able to answer the first research question. Such being the case, the table below presents the estimated frequency and percentage scores of the items that are intended to examine the perceptions of the participating students of autonomous learning. Specifically, the most striking results (i.e. the most widely agreed and disagreed items) emerging from the participants' responses are given in bold in the table below.

Table 2

*Readiness of the Students for Learner Autonomy*

| Item | Attitudes   |                    | Disagree     | Neutral      | Agree        | Total      |
|------|---|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1    | I know some differences between American English and British English.                       | Frequency          | 6            | 27           | 107          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 19.29        | 76.43        | 100.00     |
| 2    | <b>English is an important foreign language these days.</b>                                 | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>6</b>     | <b>10</b>    | <b>124</b>   | <b>140</b> |
|      |   | <b>Percent (%)</b> | <b>4.29</b>  | <b>7.14</b>  | <b>88.57</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 3    | In my opinion, the role of the teacher is to give me regular tests to evaluate my learning. | Frequency          | 15           | 26           | 99           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 10.71        | 18.57        | 70.71        | 100        |
| 4    | In English classes in my university, we speak a lot of English.                             | Frequency          | 18           | 26           | 96           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 12.86        | 18.57        | 68.57        | 100        |
| 5    | I am aware that there are some sounds in English which do not exist in my language.         | Frequency          | 13           | 29           | 98           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 9.29         | 20.71        | 70.00        | 100        |
| 6    | I like to be able to choose my own materials for English classes.                           | Frequency          | 19           | 36           | 85           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 13.57        | 25.71        | 60.71        | 100        |
| 7    | I can find my own ways of practicing.   | Frequency          | 9            | 32           | 99           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 6.43         | 22.86        | 70.71        | 100        |
| 8    | I need the teacher to set learning goals for me.  | Frequency          | 26           | 26           | 88           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 18.57        | 18.57        | 62.86        | 100        |
| 9    | I can identify my strengths and weaknesses.   | Frequency          | 8            | 23           | 109          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 5.71         | 16.43        | 77.86        | 100        |
| 10   | It's cool to have foreign English speaking friends.   | Frequency          | 6            | 15           | 119          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 10.71        | 85.00        | 100        |
| 11   | <b>A lot of language learning can be done without a teacher.</b>                            | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>64</b>    | <b>36</b>    | <b>40</b>    | <b>140</b> |
|      |   | <b>Percent (%)</b> | <b>45.71</b> | <b>25.71</b> | <b>28.57</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 12   | I like teachers who give us a lot of opportunities to learn on our own.                     | Frequency          | 12           | 18           | 110          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 8.57         | 12.86        | 78.57        | 100        |



Table 2 (cont. d)

| Item | Attitudes   |                    | Disagree    | Neutral     | Agree        | Total      |
|------|---|--------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------|
| 13   | It is the teacher's responsibility to create opportunities for me to practice.  | Frequency          | 15          | 35          | 90           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 10.71       | 25.00       | 64.29        | 100        |
| 14   | People in Turkey who can speak English well have a better social status (e.g., they make more money; they are more educated, etc.). | Frequency          | 8           | 14          | 118          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 5.71        | 10.00       | 84.29        | 100        |
| 15   | I am good at applying new ways/strategies of learning English.  | Frequency          | 11          | 41          | 88           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 7.86        | 29.29       | 62.86        | 100        |
| 16   | <b>I can explain why I need English.</b>  | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>3</b>    | <b>12</b>   | <b>125</b>   | <b>140</b> |
|      |   | <b>Percent (%)</b> | <b>2.14</b> | <b>8.57</b> | <b>89.29</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 17   | I enjoy learning English.   | Frequency          | 11          | 31          | 98           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 7.86        | 22.14       | 70.00        | 100        |
| 18   | <b>The university treats English as a very important subject.</b>   | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>4</b>    | <b>10</b>   | <b>126</b>   | <b>140</b> |
|      |   | <b>Percent (%)</b> | <b>2.86</b> | <b>7.14</b> | <b>90.00</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 19   | I need the teacher to stimulate my interest in learning English.  | Frequency          | 13          | 23          | 104          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 9.29        | 16.43       | 74.29        | 100        |
| 20   | Learning idioms and phrases by heart can improve my spoken English.   | Frequency          | 12          | 28          | 100          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 8.57        | 20.00       | 71.43        | 100        |
| 21   | There are a lot of opportunities to learn and practise English in İstanbul.   | Frequency          | 33          | 31          | 76           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 23.57       | 22.14       | 54.29        | 100        |
| 22   | The teacher needs to point out my weaknesses in English.  | Frequency          | 9           | 33          | 98           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 6.43        | 23.57       | 70.00        | 100        |
| 23   | I am not confident about my English ability.  | Frequency          | 52          | 41          | 47           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 37.14       | 29.29       | 33.57        | 100        |

Table 2 (cont. d)

| Item | Attitudes   |                    | Disagree     | Neutral      | Agree        | Total      |
|------|---|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 24   | I am good at measuring my progress.   | Frequency          | 13           | 48           | 79           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 9.29         | 34.29        | 56.43        | 100        |
| 25   | I'd like the teacher to help me make progress outside class.                      | Frequency          | 20           | 47           | 73           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 14.29        | 33.57        | 52.14        | 100        |
| 26   | I am good at language learning.   | Frequency          | 8            | 40           | 92           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 5.71         | 28.57        | 65.71        | 100        |
| 27   | I know some differences between spoken and written English.                       | Frequency          | 5            | 20           | 115          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 3.57         | 14.29        | 82.14        | 100        |
| 28   | <b>I dislike being told how I should learn.</b>                                   | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>33</b>    | <b>62</b>    | <b>45</b>    | <b>140</b> |
|      |   | <b>Percent (%)</b> | <b>23.57</b> | <b>44.29</b> | <b>32.14</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 29   | The role of the teacher is to make me work hard.                                  | Frequency          | 25           | 43           | 72           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 17.86        | 30.71        | 51.43        | 100        |
| 30   | I am good at using a dictionary to find information about new words.              | Frequency          | 22           | 32           | 86           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 15.71        | 22.86        | 61.43        | 100        |
| 31   | English is not my favourite subject.  | Frequency          | 63           | 27           | 50           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 45.00        | 19.29        | 35.71        | 100        |
| 32   | It is cool to speak English with native speakers (e.g., Americans) on the street. | Frequency          | 6            | 16           | 118          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 11.43        | 84.29        | 100        |
| 33   | I don't feel I could improve without a teacher.                                   | Frequency          | 34           | 44           | 62           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 24.29        | 31.43        | 44.29        | 100        |
| 34   | The teacher should set a good example and inspire me.                             | Frequency          | 5            | 22           | 113          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 3.57         | 15.71        | 80.71        | 100        |
| 35   | We all work hard on English.  | Frequency          | 20           | 46           | 74           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 14.29        | 32.86        | 52.86        | 100        |
| 36   | Success in English is regarded as very important in my family.                    | Frequency          | 9            | 38           | 93           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 6.43         | 27.14        | 66.43        | 100        |
| 37   | I am good at finding resources for learning.                                      | Frequency          | 6            | 50           | 84           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 35.71        | 60.00        | 100        |
| 38   | I know my learning style and use it effectively.                                  | Frequency          | 8            | 39           | 93           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 5.71         | 27.86        | 66.43        | 100        |

Table 2 (cont. d)

| Item | Attitudes  |             | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Total |
|------|--|-------------|----------|---------|-------|-------|
| 39   | I need the teacher to introduce different ways of learning to me.  | Frequency   | 10       | 33      | 97    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 7.14     | 23.57   | 69.29 | 100   |
| 40   | I am good at setting my own learning goals.  | Frequency   | 5        | 40      | 95    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 3.57     | 28.57   | 67.86 | 100   |
| 41   | I think teachers should give us opportunities to select what we like to learn.   | Frequency   | 8        | 24      | 108   | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 5.71     | 17.14   | 77.14 | 100   |
| 42   | In my opinion, the teacher is responsible for explaining why we are doing an activity.   | Frequency   | 5        | 26      | 109   | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 3.57     | 18.57   | 77.86 | 100   |
| 43   | I am good at planning my learning.   | Frequency   | 23       | 44      | 73    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 16.43    | 31.43   | 52.14 | 100   |
| 44   | I think the teacher's responsibility is to decide what I should learn in English lessons.  | Frequency   | 14       | 30      | 96    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 10.00    | 21.43   | 68.57 | 100   |
| 45   | I can check my work for mistakes.  | Frequency   | 18       | 30      | 92    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 12.86    | 21.43   | 65.71 | 100   |
| 46   | I need the teacher to help me make progress during lessons.  | Frequency   | 8        | 31      | 101   | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 5.71     | 22.14   | 72.14 | 100   |
| 47   | I think I have the ability to learn English well.  | Frequency   | 12       | 34      | 94    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 8.57     | 24.29   | 67.14 | 100   |
| 48   | I think the role of the teacher is to explain grammar and vocabulary.  | Frequency   | 18       | 24      | 98    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 12.86    | 17.14   | 70.00 | 100   |
| 49   | Stressing the right word in a sentence is important for the correct meaning/emphasis. E.g., "That's MY bicycle", not "That is my BICYCLE". | Frequency   | 16       | 45      | 79    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 11.43    | 32.14   | 56.43 | 100   |
| 50   | I need the teacher to choose activities for me to learn English.   | Frequency   | 15       | 37      | 88    | 140   |
|      |  | Percent (%) | 10.71    | 26.43   | 62.86 | 100   |

Table 2 (cont. d)

| Item | Attitudes   |                    | Disagree     | Neutral      | Agree        | Total      |
|------|---|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 51   | Stressing the right part of an English word is important for the correct pronunciation. e.g., banAna, not bAnana. | Frequency          | 11           | 30           | 99           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 7.86         | 21.43        | 70.71        | 100        |
| 52   | I can ask for help when I need it.  | Frequency          | 6            | 22           | 112          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 15.71        | 80.00        | 100        |
| 53   | In my opinion, the teacher should decide how long I spend on activities.  | Frequency          | 19           | 35           | 86           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 13.57        | 25.00        | 61.43        | 100        |
| 54   | I am above average at language learning.  | Frequency          | 11           | 45           | 84           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 7.86         | 32.14        | 60.00        | 100        |
| 55   | Language learning involves a lot of self-study.   | Frequency          | 7            | 32           | 101          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 5.00         | 22.86        | 72.14        | 100        |
| 56   | I think teachers should give us opportunities to decide where and how to learn.                                   | Frequency          | 6            | 38           | 96           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 27.14        | 68.57        | 100        |
| 57   | In my opinion, the role of the teacher is to provide answers to all my question                                   | Frequency          | 17           | 28           | 95           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 12.14        | 20.00        | 67.86        | 100        |
| 58   | I know that in order to speak English well, I have to listen to a lot of English.                                 | Frequency          | 6            | 31           | 103          | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 4.29         | 22.14        | 73.57        | 100        |
| 59   | I know the best ways to learn and practise English for me.  | Frequency          | 13           | 28           | 99           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 9.29         | 20.00        | 70.71        | 100        |
| 60   | <b>It's not cool to speak English in class.</b>   | <b>Frequency</b>   | <b>78</b>    | <b>26</b>    | <b>36</b>    | <b>140</b> |
|      |   | <b>Percent (%)</b> | <b>55.71</b> | <b>18.57</b> | <b>25.71</b> | <b>100</b> |
| 61   | I enjoy tasks where I can learn on my own.  | Frequency          | 12           | 41           | 87           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 8.57         | 29.29        | 62.14        | 100        |
| 62   | I think the teacher should decide what activities I do to learn English outside class.                            | Frequency          | 20           | 41           | 79           | 140        |
|      |   | Percent (%)        | 14.29        | 29.29        | 56.43        | 100        |

As is evident from the table given above and upon analysing the findings, it was found out that the vast majority of the students agreed that ‘the university treats English as a very important subject’, ‘I can explain why I need English’, and ‘English is an important foreign language these days’ (18, 16, 2). In other words,

this finding reveals that the student respondents are aware of the fact that English is an important subject, that they know the reason why they need English to improve themselves, and that English is an important foreign language.

However, the participating students were found to disagree with the items ‘It is not cool to speak English in class’, ‘A lot of language learning can be done without a teacher’, and ‘I dislike being told how I should learn’ respectively (60, 11, 28). To clarify, this finding that emerges from the responses to the RFAQ questionnaire reports that the students have positive attitudes towards speaking in English in class. Yet again, the students also think that it is difficult to learn a language without a teacher around them and that they are fine being told how they should learn.

In brief, scrutiny of the data and the careful analysis of the findings found out that students’ attitudes towards in- and out-of-class activities reveal that they are still teacher-dependent when it comes down to certain learning/teaching activities, however; they are also aware of the responsibilities that they need to have in order to learn the target language and it was also found that they are au fait with the importance of the English language.

### **4.3 Findings from the PLAQ questionnaire**

For the second research question of this study and in an attempt to find out the perceptions of the participating teachers and students regarding learner autonomy, the PLAQ questionnaire in two different versions – one for students and the other for teachers – was utilised. The following part reports the results of both versions in detail.

#### **4.3.1 Students’ and teachers’ overall perceptions of learner autonomy.**

In the hopes of determining whether the respondents to the PLAQ (i.e., teachers and students) allocated different level of responsibility to their own group and to the other, the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was deployed on teachers’ and students’ views on areas of responsibility in language learning. In this regard, firstly the test results from the perceptions of the participating students regarding learner autonomy are presented in the table below.

Table 3

*Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy*

| Item  | N   | Mean | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank | z      | p-value | sig     |
|---|-----|------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|--------|---------|---------|
| Students' progress during lessons?                            | 140 | 4,24 | 0,783          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 27,96     | -1,556 | 0,120   | p>0,05  |
| Students' progress during lessons?                            | 140 | 4,11 | 0,823          | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 29,40     |        |         |         |
| Students' progress outside class?                             | 140 | 3,51 | 1,103          | 3,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 29,90     | -4,398 | 0,000   | p<0,001 |
| Students' progress outside class?                             | 140 | 4,05 | 0,977          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 41,78     |        |         |         |
| Students' interest in learning English?                       | 140 | 4,21 | 0,886          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 31,89     | -1,773 | 0,076   | p>0,05  |
| Students' interest in learning English?                       | 140 | 4,03 | 0,974          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 28,42     |        |         |         |
| Students' working harder?                                     | 140 | 3,89 | 0,987          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 43,44     | -0,277 | 0,782   | p>0,05  |
| Students' working harder?                                     | 140 | 3,91 | 1,099          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 38,09     |        |         |         |
| Identifying students' weaknesses in English?                  | 140 | 3,95 | 1,055          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 35,40     | -1,560 | 0,119   | p>0,05  |
| Identifying students' weaknesses in English?                  | 140 | 3,80 | 0,991          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 32,05     |        |         |         |
| Setting learning goals for students for their English course? | 140 | 4,07 | 0,934          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 34,07     | -1,412 | 0,158   | p>0,05  |
| Setting learning goals for students for their English course? | 140 | 3,95 | 0,916          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 35,15     |        |         |         |
| Deciding what should be learned in English lessons?           | 140 | 4,27 | 0,821          | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 33,44     | -4,711 | 0,000   | p<0,001 |
| Deciding what should be learned in English lessons?           | 140 | 3,71 | 1,083          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 24,19     |        |         |         |
| Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons?     | 140 | 4,28 | 0,796          | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 36,81     | -4,763 | 0,000   | p<0,001 |
| Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons?     | 140 | 3,72 | 1,100          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 28,47     |        |         |         |
| Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class?         | 140 | 4,14 | 0,923          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 37,51     | -5,038 | 0,000   | p<0,001 |
| Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class?         | 140 | 3,54 | 1,153          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 29,86     |        |         |         |
| Evaluating students' learning?                                | 140 | 4,21 | 0,820          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 32,91     | -4,781 | 0,000   | p<0,001 |
| Evaluating students' learning?                                | 140 | 3,69 | 0,988          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 25,63     |        |         |         |
| Deciding what students learn outside class?                   | 140 | 3,61 | 1,197          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 26,76     | -3,869 | 0,000   | p<0,001 |
| Deciding what students learn outside class?                   | 140 | 3,99 | 1,011          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 42,33     |        |         |         |

Eight out of eleven items in the questionnaire found out that the students think that it is the teachers who should take more responsibility, whereas, three items revealed that the students themselves need to take more responsibility. This being said, the item ‘students’ progress’ outside class’ occurs to be the situation for which students are more inclined to take relatively more responsibility while they hold the teachers responsible for ‘choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons’. Moreover, the mean rank of the responses to the items related to students’ taking more responsibility, such as ‘students progress outside class’, and ‘deciding what students learn outside class’, happens to be statistically greater than those of teachers’ ( $p<.05$ ). However, the mean rank of the responses to the items concerning students’ holding their teachers responsible for ‘deciding what should be learned in English lessons’, ‘choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons’, ‘deciding how long to spend on each activity in class’, and ‘evaluating students’ learning’ is significantly lower than those of teachers’ ( $p<.05$ ). In other words, both students and teacher concurred that teachers had main responsibility in making in-class decisions related to the content of the lesson, time allocation, and assessment of students’ learning.

Furthermore, the perceptions of the participating teachers regarding the concept of learner autonomy are presented in the table below. Specifically, the table below, from the teachers’ viewpoint, exhibits their perceptions on learner autonomy.

Table 4

*Teachers’ Perceptions of Learner Autonomy*

| Item  | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank | Z      | p-value | sig    |
|---|----|------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
| Students’ progress during lessons? (T)      | 10 | 4,10 | ,568           | 4,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 3,50      | -1,897 | ,058    | p>0,05 |
| Students’ progress during lessons? (S)      | 10 | 4,70 | ,483           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 4,08      |        |         |        |
| Students’ progress outside class? (T)       | 10 | 3,00 | ,816           | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 0,00      | -2,754 | ,006    | p<0,01 |
| Students’ progress outside class? (S)       | 10 | 4,90 | ,316           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 5,00      |        |         |        |
| Students’ interest in learning English? (T) | 10 | 3,60 | ,843           | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 0,00      | -2,456 | ,014    | p<0,05 |
| Students’ interest in learning English? (S) | 10 | 4,60 | ,516           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 4,00      |        |         |        |
| Students’ working harder? (T)               | 10 | 3,20 | ,919           | 3,00   | 1,00    | 4,00    | 0,00      | -2,565 | ,010    | p<0,05 |
| Students’ working harder? (S)               | 10 | 4,60 | ,516           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 4,50      |        |         |        |

Table 4 (cont. d)

| Item  | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank | Z      | p-value | sig    |
|---|----|------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|
| Identifying students' weaknesses in English? (T)                  | 10 | 4,10 | ,876           | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 2,67      |        |         |        |
| Identifying students' weaknesses in English? (S)                  | 10 | 4,10 | ,876           | 4,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 3,50      | -,137  | ,891    | p>0,05 |
| Setting learning goals for students for their English course? (T) | 10 | 4,20 | 1,033          | 4,50   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 3,83      |        |         |        |
| Setting learning goals for students for their English course? (S) | 10 | 3,80 | ,789           | 4,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 6,50      | -,718  | ,473    | p>0,05 |
| Deciding what should be learned in English lessons? (T)           | 10 | 3,90 | ,876           | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 5,31      |        |         |        |
| Deciding what should be learned in English lessons? (S)           | 10 | 3,00 | 1,054          | 3,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 6,25      | -1,566 | ,117    | p>0,05 |
| Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons? (T)     | 10 | 3,90 | ,876           | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 3,80      |        |         |        |
| Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons? (S)     | 10 | 3,50 | ,850           | 3,50   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 4,50      | -,862  | ,389    | p>0,05 |
| Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class? (T)         | 10 | 4,50 | ,527           | 4,50   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 5,00      |        |         |        |
| Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class? (S)         | 10 | 2,60 | 1,075          | 3,00   | 1,00    | 4,00    | 0,00      | -2,687 | ,007    | p<0,01 |
| Evaluating students' learning? (T)                                | 10 | 4,40 | ,516           | 4,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 4,00      |        |         |        |
| Evaluating students' learning? (S)                                | 10 | 3,30 | ,949           | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 0,00      | -2,460 | ,014    | p<0,05 |
| Deciding what students learn outside class? (T)                   | 10 | 2,70 | ,483           | 3,00   | 2,00    | 3,00    | 0,00      |        |         |        |
| Deciding what students learn outside class? (S)                   | 10 | 4,50 | ,707           | 5,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 5,00      | -2,719 | ,007    | p<0,01 |

Five out of eleven items in this section of the questionnaire revealed that the teachers themselves take the main responsibility, however; other five items showcase that they allocate most of the responsibility to the students. Yet again, both groups had the same mean score in one item. Additionally, it was seen that teachers tend to give the responsibility to the students in situations, such as 'students' progress during lessons', 'students' progress outside class', 'students' interest in learning English', 'students' working harder', and 'deciding what students learn outside class', on the other hand, they hold themselves responsible for 'setting learning goals for students for their English course', 'deciding what should be learned in English lessons', 'choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons', 'deciding how long to spend on each activity in class', and 'evaluating students' learning'.



**4.3.1.1 Findings of the differences between the overall perceptions of students and teachers about learner autonomy.** In order to find out if there are any differences between the overall perceptions of students and teachers about learner autonomy and to gather data for the sub-question of the second research question in the present study, the non-parametric Man Whitney U Test was utilised. With regards to the results, it was found out that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the responses provided by the teachers and students to the items ‘deciding how long to spend on each activity in class’, and ‘evaluating students’ learning’ ( $p<.05$ ) (see table 3 & 4 above)

**4.3.2 Findings of the students’ and teachers’ perceptions of students’ responsibilities and abilities.** As for the third research question and its sub-questions, the mean scores and the descriptive statistics of the items in the PLAQ questionnaire which were used to measure the extent to which students are thought to be responsible for the English language classroom activities and their abilities. The results obtained from the relevant part of the questionnaire are given in the tables below.

To begin with, the perceptions of the teacher and student participants about the responsibilities of students are presented in the table below.

Table 5

*Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Student Responsibilities*

| Item  | Teacher (N=10) |                |        |         |         |           | Student (N=140) |                |        |         |         |           | p-value | sig    |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|--------|
|   | Mean           | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank | Mean            | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank |         |        |
| Students' progress during lessons?                            | 4,70           | ,483           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 103,50    | 4,11            | ,823           | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 73,50     | ,023    | p<0,05 |
| Students' progress outside class?                             | 4,90           | ,316           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 111,55    | 4,05            | ,977           | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 72,93     | ,004    | p<0,01 |
| Students' interest in learning English?                       | 4,60           | ,516           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 98,60     | 4,03            | ,974           | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 73,85     | ,064    | p>0,05 |
| Students' working harder?                                     | 4,60           | ,516           | 5,00   | 4,00    | 5,00    | 100,40    | 3,91            | 1,099          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 73,72     | ,048    | p<0,05 |
| Identifying students' weaknesses in English?                  | 4,10           | ,876           | 4,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 86,25     | 3,80            | ,991           | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 74,73     | ,396    | p>0,05 |
| Setting learning goals for students for their English course? | 3,80           | ,789           | 4,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 66,80     | 3,95            | ,916           | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 76,12     | ,490    | p>0,05 |
| Deciding what should be learned in English lessons?           | 3,00           | 1,054          | 3,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 48,60     | 3,71            | 1,083          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 77,42     | ,035    | p<0,05 |
| Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons?     | 3,50           | ,850           | 3,50   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 64,60     | 3,72            | 1,100          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 76,28     | ,393    | p>0,05 |
| Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class?         | 2,60           | 1,075          | 3,00   | 1,00    | 4,00    | 45,20     | 3,54            | 1,153          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 77,66     | ,018    | p<0,05 |
| Evaluating students' learning?                                | 3,30           | ,949           | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 59,25     | 3,69            | ,988           | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 76,66     | ,200    | p>0,05 |
| Deciding what students learn outside class?                   | 4,50           | ,707           | 5,00   | 3,00    | 5,00    | 95,70     | 3,99            | 1,011          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 74,06     | ,107    | p>0,05 |

In this part of the questionnaire, the teachers had greater mean scores in six out of eleven items compared to the students, whereas, the students had greater scores in 5 of the items. Specifically, while it was apparent that the teachers' responses to items, such as 'students' progress outside class', 'students progress during lessons', 'students interest in learning English', 'students working harder', 'deciding what students learning outside class' had a mean score greater than 4.5, which in this case means that, from the teachers' viewpoint, students are mainly responsible for working harder and making decisions related to learning outside the walls of a classroom. However, their responses to the items 'deciding how long to spend on each activity in class', and 'deciding what should be learned in English lessons' had a mean score lower than 3, meaning that students have fewer responsibilities concerning in-class activities and decisions. This result is demonstrated at the low end of the mean score spectrum with activities and decisions, which is corresponding with those at the high mean score spectrum in

table 7 presenting the perceptions of the participants about teacher responsibilities (see Table 7 below).

In line with the aforesaid findings, students' responses to the items 'students progress during lessons', 'students' progress outside class', 'students interest in learning English', which are about in- and out-of-class learning activities, revealed that they take the main responsibility, with a mean score greater than 4.0. However, the students' perceptions of classroom decisions, as is in the item 'deciding how long to spend on each activity class', are relatively less significant. Concerning the in- and out-of-class progress and learning, both groups agreed on the fact that students are more responsible than teachers.

Moreover, the second part of the PLAQ questionnaire aims to explore teachers and students' evaluation of the students' ability to perform several key learning decisions and activities that are of paramount importance to autonomous learning in a 5-point scale (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = OK., 4 = good, 5 = very good). The table below helps explain probable reasons behind the differences between teachers' and students' perspectives on the abilities of the students.

Table 6

*Students and Teachers Perceptions of Students' Abilities*

| Item  | Teacher (N=10) |                |        |         |         |           | Student (N=140) |                |        |         |         |           | sig   | p-value |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|-------|---------|
|   | Mean           | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank | Mean            | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank |       |         |
| Choose learning activities in class?                        | 3,10           | 1,101          | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 45,35     | 3,89            | 1,004          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 77,65     | 0,017 | p<0,05  |
| Choose learning activities outside class?                   | 2,10           | 0,994          | 2,00   | 1,00    | 4,00    | 28,30     | 3,55            | 1,020          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 78,87     | 0,000 | p<0,001 |
| Choose learning objectives in class?                        | 2,60           | 0,966          | 2,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 32,35     | 3,76            | 0,964          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 78,58     | 0,001 | p<0,01  |
| Choose learning objectives outside class?                   | 2,00           | 0,667          | 2,00   | 1,00    | 3,00    | 19,90     | 3,56            | 0,946          | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 79,47     | 0,000 | p<0,001 |
| Choose learning materials in class?                         | 2,70           | 1,160          | 2,50   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 39,40     | 3,76            | 1,070          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 78,08     | 0,005 | p<0,05  |
| Choose learning materials outside class?                    | 2,20           | 0,632          | 2,00   | 1,00    | 3,00    | 30,15     | 3,49            | 1,128          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 78,74     | 0,000 | p<0,001 |
| Evaluate their learning?                                    | 3,10           | 0,994          | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 39,10     | 4,04            | 0,852          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 78,10     | 0,004 | p<0,01  |
| Evaluate the course?  | 3,00           | 0,943          | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 37,70     | 3,91            | 0,809          | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 78,20     | 0,003 | p<0,01  |
| Identify their weaknesses in English?                       | 3,30           | 1,160          | 3,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 59,15     | 3,71            | 0,886          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 76,67     | 0,191 | p>0,05  |
| Decide what they should learn next in your English lessons? | 2,50           | 1,179          | 2,50   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 29,20     | 3,88            | 0,844          | 4,00   | 2,00    | 5,00    | 78,81     | 0,000 | p<0,001 |
| Decide how long to spend on each activity in class?         | 2,20           | 0,632          | 2,00   | 2,00    | 4,00    | 18,75     | 3,79            | 0,917          | 4,00   | 1,00    | 5,00    | 79,55     | 0,000 | p<0,001 |

As is evident from the table up above, out of all the items in this section of the questionnaire, the students had greater mean scores than the teachers. More

specifically, even though the student respondents are quite confident about their abilities in making in- and out-of-class related decisions, evaluating their learning progress as well as the learning activities, the participating teachers are inclined to disagree with the students on the aforesaid situations. The teachers, in particular, reported that students are not able to demonstrate their abilities in out-of-class learning activities with a mean score of approximately 2. In this regard, the teachers also stated that the students are particularly unable to 'identify their weaknesses in English'. As for the students, they considered themselves to be good at evaluating their learning, evaluating the course and choosing learning activities in class with a mean score of approximately 4. However, when it comes down to choosing learning materials outside class, the students had the lowest mean score ( $M = 3.55$ ).

**4.3.2.1 Findings of the differences between the perceptions of students in terms of student responsibilities.** In order to gather data for the first sub-question of the third research question, and to investigate whether there are any differences between the participating students and teachers in their mean scores of each item in the relevant part of the questionnaire (see table 5 above), the non-parametric Mann Whitney U test was utilised. In terms of student responsibilities, the test results revealed that there are 5 significant differences. Specifically, the mean rank of the responses provided by the teachers to the items 'students' progress during lessons', 'students working harder', 'deciding what should be learned in English lessons', and 'deciding what students learn outside class' are significantly greater than those of students' ( $p < .05$ ).

**4.3.2.2 Findings of the differences between the perceptions of students and teachers in terms of student abilities.** In order to gather data for the second sub-question of the third research question, the non – parametric Mann Whitney U test was deployed to examine whether there are any differences between the student and the teacher respondents in their mean scores of each item in the relevant part of the questionnaire (see Table 6 above). In terms of student abilities, the test results reveal ten out of eleven items are significantly different concerning the teachers' and students' perspectives ( $p < .05$ ). Based on the mean rank of the responses that the teachers and students provided, the only situation where there was no significant difference was that of identifying their weaknesses in English ( $p > .05$ )

**4.3.3 Findings of the teachers' and students' perceptions of teacher responsibilities.** In order to find out the perceptions of both the teachers and the students regarding teachers' responsibility and to answer the fourth research question, non-parametric Mann Whitney U test, which is used when data were obtained from ordinal scales, was deployed both on students' and teachers' responses to the items in the questionnaire and the results in details are displayed in the table below.

Table 7

*Perceptions of Students and Teachers of Teacher Responsibilities*

| Item  | Teacher (N=10) |                |        |         |         |           | Student(N=140) |                |        |         |         |           | sig  | p - value |
|---|----------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|----------------|----------------|--------|---------|---------|-----------|------|-----------|
|   | Mean           | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank | Mean           | Std. Deviation | Median | Minimum | Maximum | Mean Rank |      |           |
| Students' progress during lessons?                            | 4,10           | ,568           | 4,00   | 3       | 5       | 65,55     | 4,24           | ,783           | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 76,21     | ,417 | p>0,05    |
| Students' progress outside class?                             | 3,00           | ,816           | 3,00   | 2       | 5       | 54,80     | 3,51           | 1,103          | 3,00   | 1       | 5       | 76,98     | ,106 | p>0,05    |
| Students' interest in learning English?                       | 3,60           | ,843           | 4,00   | 2       | 5       | 47,45     | 4,21           | ,886           | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 77,50     | ,023 | p<0,05    |
| Students' working harder?                                     | 3,20           | ,919           | 3,00   | 1       | 4       | 48,30     | 3,89           | ,987           | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 77,44     | ,031 | p<0,05    |
| Identifying students' weaknesses in English?                  | 4,10           | ,876           | 4,00   | 2       | 5       | 79,80     | 3,95           | 1,055          | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 75,19     | ,733 | p>0,05    |
| Setting learning goals for students for their English course? | 4,20           | 1,033          | 4,50   | 2       | 5       | 82,75     | 4,07           | ,934           | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 74,98     | ,561 | p>0,05    |
| Deciding what should be learned in English lessons?           | 3,90           | ,876           | 4,00   | 2       | 5       | 58,05     | 4,27           | ,821           | 4,00   | 2       | 5       | 76,75     | ,155 | p>0,05    |
| Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons?     | 3,90           | ,876           | 4,00   | 2       | 5       | 57,80     | 4,28           | ,796           | 4,00   | 2       | 5       | 76,76     | ,148 | p>0,05    |
| Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class?         | 4,50           | ,527           | 4,50   | 4       | 5       | 88,75     | 4,14           | ,923           | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 74,55     | ,283 | p>0,05    |
| Evaluating students' learning?                                | 4,40           | ,516           | 4,00   | 4       | 5       | 81,40     | 4,21           | ,820           | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 75,08     | ,631 | p>0,05    |
| Deciding what students learn outside class?                   | 2,70           | ,483           | 3,00   | 2       | 3       | 40,35     | 3,61           | 1,197          | 4,00   | 1       | 5       | 78,01     | ,006 | p<0,01    |

So as to find out what teachers and students think about the extent to which the teachers are responsible for English teaching/learning activities both outside and inside the classroom, the PLAQ questionnaire was administered in two slightly different versions; one for students and one for teachers. The table above presents the descriptive statistics of the findings from the two versions of PLAQ and exhibits

the mean scores gained from the first section of PLAQ – ‘Responsibilities’ - , which has 11 five-level Likert type items. Even though it was revealed that students have a greater mean score than teachers in seven out of eleven items, teachers have greater mean scores in four items.

Moreover, it can be seen that both students and teachers agree that teachers have the main responsibility in terms of decision-making procedures and learning/teaching activities. It was also found that the participating teachers’ responses to the items ‘deciding how long to spend on each activity in class’, ‘evaluating students’ learning’, ‘setting learning goals for students for their English course’, ‘identifying students’ weaknesses in English’, and ‘students’ progress during lessons’ have a mean score greater than 4.1, which might as well mean that the teachers take the responsibility in such situations, whereas, their responses to the items such as ‘deciding what students learn outside class’ and ‘students’ progress outside class’ have a mean score of 3 and lower than 3.

However, it was seen that the participating students’ responses to the items ‘choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons’, ‘deciding what should be learned in English lessons’, ‘students’ progress during lessons’, ‘students’ interest in learning English’, and ‘evaluating students’ learning’ have a mean score greater than 4.2, indicating that students have higher expectations from their teachers based on their responses to the items related to out-of-class activities, such as ‘students progress outside class’, and ‘deciding what students learn outside class’, it was revealed that their expectations from the teachers are not as high when compared to in-class activities. Specifically speaking, it occurred that both the teachers and students agree on the fact that teachers have fewer responsibilities especially regarding out-of-class activities, which, accordingly, unearthed that the vast majority of the classes are teacher-centred and students are dependent on their teachers when it comes down to making classroom decisions and learning activities.

**4.3.3.1 Findings of the differences between the perceptions of the students and teachers of teacher responsibilities.** As for the sub-question of the fourth research question regarding the differences between the perceptions of the participants about teacher responsibilities, responses provided by the participating students and teachers were compared using the non – parametric Mann Whitney U

test. With regard to teachers' responsibility, it was found that there are 3 statistically significant differences between students and teachers (see Table 7 above). The mean rank of students' responses to the items 'students' interest in learning English', 'students' working harder', 'deciding what students learn outside class' is significantly greater than those of teachers' ( $p < .05$ ). Although it was revealed that the participating teachers were inclined to take fewer responsibilities in terms of 'students' interest in learning English' and 'students' working harder', the students hold their teachers responsible for the aforementioned two items. Even so, from both the teachers' and students' viewpoint, students are mainly responsible for 'deciding what students learn outside class', with a particular emphasis on the fact that both groups agree that teachers are not to be held responsible for out-of-class activities.

#### **4.4 Findings of the challenges that the students and teachers experience in promoting learner autonomy in B2 level English preparatory classes.**

In an attempt to gather in-depth information regarding the perceptions of the students and the teachers about the concept of learner autonomy and the challenges that they face when trying to develop and sustain such autonomy and to answer the last research question of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. In this part, firstly the findings of the interviews administered to the students and then the findings of the teacher interview are presented.

**4.4.1 Findings of students' interviews.** The findings of the transcribed interviews of the students were analysed under five main categories, namely, factors affecting English-learning experiences, the impact of English classes on the development of autonomous skills, perceptions of teachers' responsibility, teachers' control, and lastly creating opportunities for oneself.

**4.4.1.1 Factors affecting English learning experience.** This theme is mainly concerned with students' general motivation in learning English. Nevertheless, the topics categorised into this theme are examples of what students found most and least motivating in their language learning experiences. Specifically speaking, this theme provides an insight into students' learning preferences and ways to enhance their motivation in learning English, comparing the past with the present. The following excerpts support this finding:

[...] Back in high school, most of the teachers were more focused on getting us students to prepare in a better way for the university entrance exam, which is the reason why the English lessons were paid the least attention to and also the reason why I could not improve my English the way I would have liked to do so. (S1, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] We were never told that English would be an important aspect of our studies, so I did not consider English to be necessary for my future studies. (S13, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] English teachers back at high school was not really keen on guiding us towards what to do to learn better English nor did they integrate different methods or techniques to teach the target language, all of which demotivated us at the end of the day. (S6, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] As we were mainly focused on the other subjects in high school, English was not a priority, indeed, English lessons were the ones where we chit chatted with the teachers themselves. However, at the university, things are quite different compared to high school: we get the chance to do more task-based activities with real-life aims, which helps us improve our level of English in a better way and which motivates us all to a great degree.. (S9, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

The above statements indicated that there are different factors motivating students, either intrinsically or externally, in their language learner experiences. However it might as well be concluded that, especially when compared to their high-school years, students' past habits regarding their language learning process was formed in a bad manner as they were not made aware of the importance of the English language. Moreover, it is evident from the above given statements that students can be motivated by learning tasks that require them to work together and stretch their level to a certain extent.

**4.4.1.2 The impact of English classes on the development of autonomous skills.** Another worth-mentioning finding emerging from the interviews was found to be related to the impact of English classes on students' developing autonomous behaviours and skills. Specifically, when they were asked whether or not their English classes had any impact or effect on their development of autonomy, the vast majority of the participating students pointed out that English classes play a crucial role in order for them to develop autonomy mainly because they do not get to



practice English outside the walls of the classrooms. The following excerpts illustrate the relevant findings:

[...] ... a student figures out how to study properly, how to get ready for the exams in a better way, and most importantly how to improve their English within a classroom setting and, from then onwards; they apply what they have learnt in their own lives. (S11, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[... ] Most of my English classes at the university guided me towards what I need to develop autonomous skills so that I can more effectively study on my own. The activities done in the classes gave me a better idea of how I can practise what I learn in the class later on my own. (S4, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

As can clearly be seen from the statements given above, the students who participated in the present study are observed to be aware of the impact of their English classes on their autonomy development. In other words, the vast majority of the respondents stated that their English classes lead them to the path where they can take the initiative and later on the main responsibility and control over their learning process, which can be regarded as a sign for being ready for autonomous learning.

**4.4.1.3 Perceptions of teachers' responsibilities.** The findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews with the students revealed that they value the presence of teachers and expect them to play a significant role in their learning process. Also, similar to the findings provided by the quantitative data, the fact that this is one of the most mentioned topics might mean that the respondent students are teacher-dependent as they seem to rely on the teachers to facilitate their learning. In this regard, the responsibilities of teachers as perceived by the students cover a broad spectrum, which range from providing guidance to students to understanding their needs. The following extracts illustrate the findings regarding the aforementioned situation:

[...] Until after I make sure that I have enough confidence in my own abilities of learning English by myself, I always want to be guided by a teacher as I will have a clearer idea of the way to achieve my goals than trying to work on it all by myself. (S14, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] The fact that we need our teachers is pretty much because I do not think that us students can, for example, learn all these grammatical rules and

structures on our own without a teacher's guidance. (S12, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] ... I definitely need a teacher because teachers have a great impact on their students, for example, they can get them going in a better way, motivate them, and most importantly teachers would do anything and everything to create an atmosphere where each and every student has the chance to learn something. (S24, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

Taking the above given statements into account, it can be concluded the vast majority of the participants are teacher – dependent and they all stated that the least a teacher can do is to provide guidance, if not every time. Amongst the responsibilities that the students think their teachers should take is providing guidance – the most stated one, which might as well mean that no matter how independent the students think they should be regarding their learning processes at tertiary level, they still need their teachers to help them make this come true.

**4.4.1.4 Teachers' control.** Based on the findings emerging from the interviews, another theme that generated a heated debate amongst the participants is related to teachers' control. The students were actually evenly divided about whether there should be some form of teachers' control to enforce and ensure students' learning. Specifically talking, it was apparent from such discussions that teachers' control can be defined as their active involvement in deciding what students should learn. Almost half of the opinions were against such control because they thought being a university student means they should take responsibility for choosing what they want to learn. Moreover, they asserted that it is of great importance that students control their own learning at some point as this brings along motivation. The extracts below support the findings:

[...] Students should absolutely take some responsibilities, however; amongst the difficulties that they may encounter are finding the correct sources to help them study and if they are good enough to help them out with their desired goal of achievement, which is the reason why we need a (S8, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] I think as students we need to be responsible for our learning rather than expecting someone to tell us what to learn. I mean, this is what we should do as students; take reading for an example, a teacher can only help the student learn

the best way to read, but afterwards, the student can take more responsibility in terms of reading in English. (S27, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] In order for me to learn English properly, I need a teacher who can speak English well as this motivates me even more to put more effort into what I do. (S3, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

By contrast, those who supported teachers' control argued that this is needed because they believe they need guidance provided by their teachers as is proved by the extracts below:

[...] I think as students we need to be responsible for our learning rather than expecting someone to tell us what to learn. I mean, this is what we should do as students; take reading for an example, a teacher can only help the student learn the best way to read, but afterwards, the student can take more responsibility in terms of reading in English. (S27, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] In order for me to learn English properly, I need a teacher who can speak English well as this motivates me even more to put more effort into what I do. (S3, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

Based on the statements above, it can be concluded that those supporting teachers' control argued that students lack what it actually takes to take the main responsibility and the control over their own learning. For these students, even though they were aware of the need to take responsibility for their own learning at a certain point, excuses not to do so generally stem from the challenges that they think they might have to face with. On the other hand, others who suggested that they need to have more responsibilities regarding their learning processes revealed that they were in favour of the idea of having more freedom, to choose what they like to learn and how to do so.

**4.4.1.5 Creating opportunities for oneself.** In line with teachers' control, some students showed their willingness to share the responsibilities in creating for practising English. Specifically, the vast majority of the participating students stated that there are various activities that can help them practise the target language on their own. This finding is supported by the excerpts below:

[...] ... to be a better English learner, there are various activities we can make use of, such as reading and writing more, watching TV series with English subtitles, etc. Such activities would enable us students to get better at what we are trying to achieve. (S22, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

[...] Taking the initiative first, I think the very first thing that I can do is to surround myself in English, put myself in an all English speaking environment where I can be exposed to the language as much as possible , not to mention how utterly difficult it is to do that in a Turkish-speaking country. (S12, Interview Data, 13.03.2018)

To wrap up, the obtained results revealed that some students are aware of the importance of self-studying and taking responsibilities, which can also conclude that these students can be believed to be ready to develop autonomous skills.

**4.4.2 Findings of teachers' interview.** In the hopes of collecting data about the perceptions of the participating teachers and, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The findings obtained from the interviews were analysed under five main themes, which are teachers' understanding of learner autonomy, teachers' practice in promoting learner autonomy, teachers' views of their roles and responsibilities, teachers' perceptions of students' expectations and ability, and lastly teachers' view of learner autonomy in Turkey.

**4.4.2.1 Teachers' understanding of learner autonomy.** When the respondent teachers were asked what they perceived of learner autonomy, the most frequently occurring finding was that of the qualities students should possess to develop autonomous skills. The following extract supports this finding:

[...] I believe learner autonomy occurs when learning is directed by learners either independently or through teamwork. Learners have a variety of choices in terms of time, location, pace and resources when they learn in an autonomous way. (T1, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

In brief, it is apparent from the statement above that the vast majority of the teachers hold the view that students are to take the main responsibility in terms of developing autonomous behaviours and then build even more up on what they have developed, meaning it would have to be rather unwise if the fact that students need to chase after opportunities to take the initiative is neglected.

**4.4.2.2 Teachers' practice in promoting learner autonomy.** This theme is mainly concerned with the perceptions of the participating teachers regarding their role in promoting and fostering learner autonomy. In this regard, when asked whether they thought their teaching encouraged learner autonomy amongst students, the teachers asserted their practice supported learner autonomy because

they believed they ‘show’ students how to learn in their teaching practices. The following extracts support these findings:

[...] I generally encourage my students to make the most of the learning management system that we use in our institution. Thanks to the variety of the activities on this LMS, learners are guided to complete the activities at their own pace. As online learning is on the rise, students also enjoy benefiting from such materials and this contributes to their independent learning. (T2, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] ... I also make a great amount of use of pair and group work to let students control their learning. Ensuring collaboration in and outside the classroom underpins student engagement and cultivates creativity. (T1, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

As can clearly be seen from the statements up above, the vast majority of the teachers are aware of the fact that students need more freedom as to ‘discovering’ their own path concerning autonomous skills and behaviours. Moreover, in order to achieve the desired goal of autonomous learning, there are some methods and techniques that can be used to promote learner autonomy in a classroom setting. However, taking the views of the teachers into consideration, it might as well be concluded that a certain level of teacher control might be preferable for both students and teachers to develop the self-study habit and raise awareness about independent learning for students before asking them to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

**4.4.2.3 Teachers’ view of their roles and responsibilities.** In the interviews with the teachers, the most frequently mentioned responsibility was to motivate students and stimulate their interest in learning. These teachers were seen to hold the view that it is their responsibility to enhance students’ interest in learning English as is illustrated by the following excerpt:

[...] As a teacher, assuming the role of a facilitator and a guide is of paramount importance in my classroom as I plan and execute my classes. Teacher as a facilitator should make sure that the activities are “learning-centred” through fostering autonomy. (T2, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] I find pair or group work activities quite useful as students have the chance to exchange ideas by discussion and debates and the role of the teacher is mainly guiding them. Eliciting the objective of the lesson particularly while

teaching grammar, asking questions and making them think over some things rather than providing them with everything they need is what I mainly do in my classes. (T1, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

Overall, the statements above provide a concise summary of the teachers' shared perceptions of their responsibility in teaching. In this view, the fundamental goal of teaching is not to transfer knowledge to students but to inspire them and enable them to seek and obtain knowledge, laying a particular emphasis on the fact that they are not passive – receivers of knowledge. That being said, it can also be argued that this view reflects the teachers' awareness of the need to enhance students' motivation to help them to learn effectively.

**4.4.2.4 Teachers' perceptions of students' expectation and ability.** When the participating teachers were asked what roles they thought their students expected them to play, in contrast to the 'learning facilitator' role that the teachers themselves thought they should be playing, the vast majority of the teachers stated that students regarded them as 'the provider of knowledge'. The following extract supports this finding:

[...] Many students expect classes which are teacher - centred and they try to avoid autonomy during the activities. Since students are required to go through a learner training program in which they could be introduced to the steps of autonomous learning. (T2, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

In a nutshell, the interviewed teachers revealed that their students are relied on them for guidance and provision of learning skills. They were also strongly convinced that they played an important role in promoting learner autonomy among students since they assumed that students lack the capacity to learn autonomously, stressing the importance of students' effort for this promotion to be successful.

**4.4.2.5 Teachers' view of learner autonomy in Turkey.** Talking about promoting learner autonomy in the university classroom, most of the participating teachers shared the same view that even though they are quite eager to help students become more autonomous, their efforts are restricted mostly by institutional constraints, lack of teacher training programmes followed by 'tracer' activities, and educational policies. The following extracts support these findings:

[...] The teaching and learning environment absolutely hinder the development of autonomy due to the issues related to administration, educational policies and lack of teacher training opportunities and programs and follow-up activities to observe any particular impact of those training programs on the participants. (T1, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

[...] The central examinations prevent students from learning autonomously and also hinder teacher and learner creativity. Schools do not nurture the conditions for learner autonomy since it is regarded as a formidable challenge as students are expected to pass such kind of examinations until they can access to tertiary education. (T2, Interview Data, 14.03.2018)

Overall, it can be claimed that the participating teachers are of the opinion that there are some problems preventing learner autonomy from being promoted at tertiary level. Specifically, one of the most frequently mentioned problems was related to the teaching and learning atmosphere in general, whereas, the other one was about central examinations, all of which hinder the promotion of autonomous learning within the context of Turkey and its educational system respectively.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Conclusions

#### 5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The aim of this study was not only to look into perceptions of both teachers and learners at tertiary level regarding learner autonomy, but also to investigate the promotion of learner autonomy at tertiary level, i.e. if it is promoted at all and/or if autonomy is somehow sustained within the same context. Specifically, the present study attempted to provide insights into the promotion of learner autonomy in a preparatory programme of a private (non-profit) university in addition to the perception of both the teachers and the students as well as the readiness of the participating students for autonomous learning. In this regard, the relevant data were collected both qualitatively and quantitatively, and a mixed method research design was adopted for analysis. The following sections discuss the findings of each research question in details.

**5.1.1 Discussion of the findings of RQ 1: How ready are the B2 level Turkish EFL university preparatory students for autonomous learning?** The purpose of this research question was to find out if the participating students were ready for an autonomous learning environment and sustaining such autonomous behaviours on their own at a certain point. Specifically, students' readiness for learner autonomy can be investigated in terms of their beliefs about and attitudes towards taking responsibility for their own learning and their metacognitive knowledge about language learning. Therefore, the results indicated that although students believed that teachers have the main responsibility in making decisions about learning, there is plenty of evidence reflecting students' positive attitude towards taking more responsibility for learning. More specifically, the participating students are also willing to take the initiative and make decisions about learning, which concurs with the existent studies in the literature (Chan, 2001; Koçak, 2003; Mineishe, 2010). One of the reasons why students are unfamiliar with the concept of learner autonomy might be due to their backgrounds, viz., they might have never been introduced to autonomous learning activities nor might they have been given



the chance to act autonomously during their English-learning processes. However, there might be various factors affecting the existence and/or the integration of autonomy into teaching practices, one of which might have to do with the fact that the teachers already have the weight of the world on their shoulders and, as is pointed out by Chan et al. (2010), the heavy dependence on the teacher in terms of workload might prevent the teachers to foster such autonomous activities in their classroom settings.

However, data also revealed that there is obviously a need to improve students' capacity for autonomous learning. The findings from the RFAQ questionnaire concluded that only a handful of the participating students have the habit of using, for example, metacognitive strategies to manage their learning. In addition, it was also found out that the vast majority of the students need training in learning management. Specifically, it might be argued that they need to develop the ability to set realistic learning objectives, make an appropriate learning plan, monitor their progress, and assess their own learning. These arguments are in line with the research (Holec, 1981; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Cotterall, 1995; Sutton, 1999) which has shown that there are some preliminary conditions to be met in order for students to have a better understanding of the what and how of learner autonomy (Little, 1995; Benson, 2006).

To conclude, the results of the present study concluded that the students seemed to be psychologically ready for taking greater responsibility for learning. However, they still need to be encouraged and trained to become less dependent on the teacher (Lamb and Reinders, 2008; Smith, 2008; Knaldre, 2015). To expect such a change to happen over a night would have to be rather unwise but making sure it is a gradual process following teacher-guide/learner-decided approach would yield more positive outcomes as is unearthed by previous studies (Hedge, 2000; Sinclair, 2000; Kessler, 2009). In other words, it might as well be suggested that the teachers might need to help students develop metacognitive learning strategies to manage their own learning and gradually transfer the control of the learning process to the students, which in the end might enable the students to gain confidence in and capacity for taking greater responsibility in learning (Dam, 1995).

**5.1.2 Discussion of the findings of RQ 2: What are the overall perceptions of the students and teachers of learner autonomy and the differences relating to the perceptions of learner autonomy?** The purpose of the second research question was to delve into the issue and find out the overall perceptions of the student and teacher participants of learner autonomy. In this regard, the relevant findings that emerged from the PLAQ questionnaire are discussed in detail below.

**5.1.2.1 Students' perceptions of learner autonomy.** In terms of students' overall perceptions of the concept of learner autonomy, the findings revealed that the participating students are of the opinion that teachers should take more responsibilities especially for choosing the kinds of activities to learn English in the lessons. However, it was also seen that there are some other situations in which the students themselves are inclined to take more responsibility, such as their progress outside class. These findings might as well conclude that the students are not aware of the importance of autonomous learning given that they are still in need of their teachers especially when it comes down to in-class teaching/learning activities, whether they be the content of the lesson, time allocation, and assessment of learning. One possible reason why the students were found to be teacher-dependent would have to be related to the fact that they have never been explicitly introduced to the activities that might help them take control over their learning, viz., they have never been given the chance to act and perform autonomously, which concurs with another study conducted by Benson (2006) who claims that autonomy, within the context of foreign language education, can be referred to as the individual learner's control over their own learning, thus; being given the chance and the opportunity to discover the hows and whats of language learning process on their own.

To summarise, it might be concluded that students can be provided with activities that require them to work on their own so as to promote learner autonomy (Dang, 2012).

**5.1.2.2 Teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy.** As for how the teachers perceived learner autonomy, the findings obtained concluded that the vast majority of the teachers tend to give some responsibilities to their students. Specifically, it was seen that they were inclined to hold their students responsible for situations in which students are to trace their own progress during lessons and outside class, keep themselves interested in learning English, working harder, and deciding what

they learn outside class. However, the participating teachers were seen to hold themselves more responsible for setting learning goals for students for their English courses, deciding what should be learned in English lessons, choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons, deciding how long to spend on each activity in class, and evaluating students' learning, which might conclude that teachers assume the role of a leader rather than a guide given that they are not very much inclined to shape their teaching practices tailored to their students' needs and interests in terms of autonomous learning within a classroom setting which would inevitably inhibit the promotion of learner autonomy. These findings and arguments are in line with an existent study by Borg and Al Busaidi (2012) revealing that the teacher participants had a, if none, preference towards promoting autonomous learning. Even so, there were some other factors preventing them from doing so mainly because they lack enthusiasm and understanding of the importance of learner autonomy.

In brief, it might be concluded that the odds are stacked against the promotion of learner autonomy given the inhibiting circumstances, to wit; unless students are explicitly introduced to the concept of learner autonomy and are given some responsibilities, of which level gradually increases over time, it would have to be rather unwise to expect an autonomous learning environment. Specifically, the very first thing that needs to be done in order to foster and promote learner autonomy would be that of taking students' needs into consideration by making sure they are actually involved in the process itself. To be precise, as is suggested by Cotterall (2000), the courses should be designed to promote learner autonomy in a classroom, emphasising five important principles, which relate to '1- learner goals, 2- the language learning goals, 3- tasks, 4-learner strategies, and 5- reflection o learning'' (p.110). Also, it is not the students per se who needs to be trained to have a better understanding of what learner autonomy is all about, the teachers also need to be informed of learner autonomy and how they can actually promote it in their own classroom contexts. Even though teachers might be motivated to create an atmosphere where learner autonomy is promoted, they might lack the required knowledge how to do so. More specifically, teachers might undergo trainings pertaining and tailoring to their own needs so as to promote learner autonomy. Following such trainings, the teachers might take the initiative to give their students more responsibilities both in- and out-of-class learning activities and decisions. In

this regard, it might also be suggested that the teachers need to involve their students in decision-making process both inside and outside the classroom (Balçıklı, 2010). Finally, the teacher can set up an environment where their students see them as guides and facilitators of their learning processes (Asim, 2013) or they can be guided how to promote learner autonomy through, for instance, activity - based practices, material-based practices, student-centred practices (Ürün, et al., 2014).

**5.1.2.3 Differences between the overall perceptions of students and teachers of learner autonomy.** This sub question of the second research question attempts to gain insights into the differences between the student and teacher respondents' perceptions about learner autonomy. In this regard, the results reported that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean score of the responses provided by the teachers and students to two items, namely, 'deciding how long to spend on each activity in class', and 'evaluating students' learning' ( $p < .05$ ). Based on this finding, it might be argued that students happen to be teacher-dependent when it comes to in-class decision-making procedures, which echoes the findings of a study conducted by Koçak (2003) who concluded that students still considered their teachers as more responsible for their learning process even though they used some metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-evaluation. Also, another study by Chan et al. (2010) had similar results to the aforesaid study. Specifically, the study reported that teachers were more responsible for classroom management, making decision on what to do in class and evaluating students learning.

To conclude, based on the arguments above, it might be claimed that the reason why there are some differences between the perceptions of the students and teachers would have to do with some context-related issues. Specifically, students considering their teachers as responsible for in-class activities and learning progress might just as well mean that what they go through in their studies presumably throughout their whole student lives leads to a situation where teachers inevitably find it difficult to promote learner autonomy, thus; hindering and preventing students from developing autonomy as they also get used to the idea of a teacher being around them to help them with their studies.

**5.1.3 Discussion of the findings of the RQ 3: How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of student responsibilities and abilities as well as the differences between them?** For this research question, the participants were asked to share their perceptions and opinions about learner autonomy regarding student responsibilities and abilities. The results obtained from the PLAQ questionnaire are discussed in detail below.

**5.1.3.1 Student responsibilities.** Students' and teachers' perceptions of student responsibilities are of paramount importance regarding autonomous behaviours. In this section, the questions such as students' progress during and outside class, choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons, students' working harder, identifying students' weaknesses in English were addressed. The most outstanding finding was that the vast majority of the participating students agreed that they also have some responsibilities when it comes down to in- and out of class learning activities. Specifically, students' progress outside class was found to be the situation where students tend to take more responsibility, which concurs with the previous research (Joshi, 2011; Phan., 2012) showing that students perform autonomous behaviours specifically outside the walls of the schools. A possible reason why students seem to be more autonomous when they are engaged in learning outside the school is probably because they still think that their teachers are the main source of knowledge, to wit; they consider their teachers as the main figure in the main classroom to facilitate the learning process (Shahsavari, 2014). Specifically, it might be argued that students need the teacher to provide them with guidance and opportunities to practice, and press them to learn. Also, they need teachers' directions about the process of learning so as to achieve their learning goals.

Moreover, as for how the teacher respondents perceived learner autonomy in terms of student responsibilities, it was found out that from the teachers' viewpoint, students were mainly responsible for working harder and making decisions related to learning outside the walls of a classroom. However, the findings gathered also reported that when it comes down to the in-class decisions, students happened to have fewer responsibilities, which might argue that teachers are mainly responsible for making decisions concerning learning inside classroom. In their approach to English language teaching, however, the teachers agreed that they are 'learning facilitators', using their expertise to help students explore the language. To

illustrate, they can provide learning skills to students, ask guiding questions, help students set learning goals and make plans, and introduce learning resources in the hopes of helping students develop their autonomous learning skills. This argument confirms the previously discussed roles of a teacher in promoting learner autonomy. Riley (1997) suggested that teachers need to play the role of a facilitator or counsellor. Similarly, Gardner and Miller (1999) also claimed that teachers need to equip themselves with necessary strategies so as to take on new roles such as counsellor, organiser, material developer, evaluator, and manager.

To wrap up, it is quite apparent that when students are engaged in in-class language learning activities, they are mostly dependent on their teachers and, in the same vein, teachers tend to give less responsibilities to students regarding their in-class learning activities, which in this case means that unless students are given the opportunity to take charge of their learning and do things autonomously, it would be rather surreal to expect the promotion of learner autonomy.

**5.1.3.2 Student abilities.** Students' and teachers' opinions and evaluation of student abilities to perform several key learning decisions and activities are remarkably important to autonomous learning. In this regard, answers to the questions such as choosing learning activities in and outside class, choosing learning objectives in and outside class, choosing learning materials in and outside class, evaluating their learning and the course alike, identifying their weakness in English, deciding what to learn next, deciding how long to spend on each activity in class were sought. The highest point in this section were merited to the items relating students' making in- and out-of-class decisions, evaluating not only their learning process per se but also activities to promote learning, which might as well mean that the students were found to be quite confident about their abilities in making such decisions. As for the reason why the respondent students thought that they were good at such abilities might have to be due to the fact that they are still dependent on their teachers to guide towards autonomy in the class and they similarly consider their teachers as more responsible for their learning processes.

The above-mentioned findings are also in line with a study conducted by Chan (2001) to examine the perceptions of students on learner autonomy. In an attempt to do so, she gathered data by a variety of methods. The study concluded that the participating students showed high level of autonomy, however; they still dependent on their teachers to guide them to be better autonomous.

In another study, Koçak (2003) administered a questionnaire to 186 English language preparatory students at a private university in Ankara, Turkey. The purpose of the study was to explore students' readiness for autonomous learning as well as their perceptions of teachers' role in learning English. The results of the study indicated that even though the students used metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring, self – instruction and self – evaluation, they still considered their teachers as more responsible for the learning process.

As for the participating teachers' perceptions of student responsibilities, the data gathered reported that they were inclined to disagree with the students on the above given situations. The teachers, in particular, stated that the students are unable to identify their weaknesses in English. Also, the fact that responses to choosing learner materials outside class had the lowest mean score ( $M= 3.55$ ) suggests that students are unable to initiate learning on their own when there is no teacher around them to help them with their learning activities. In other words, although teachers envisage their roles as 'learning motivator' and 'learning facilitator', they are aware that what their students expect might be incompatible with their own perceptions. In fact, it might as well be argued that the teachers are convinced that their students regard them as a 'knowledge provider' who tells them about every single thing that they need to learn, an advisor who gives directions about what to learn and introduces learning materials to them, or a supervisor who assesses their learning progress. Therefore, based on the aforesaid arguments, it might be concluded that the teachers tend to have an authoritarian view of their role and believe that students rely on them for guidance and provision of learning skills to be able to learn on their own. These findings support another study in the existent literature by Kongchan (2008) who states that the role of a counselling in foreign language education is a term used to define teachers who are able to assist learners to talk to someone about their achievements, problems, and the possible ways to solve them, that is to say, by acting like facilitator, teachers help make the development of learner autonomy more flexible and successful (Yan, 2012).

To put it all in a nutshell, it might be concluded that there are some roles that the teacher need to take to be better able to promote and foster learner autonomy in English language learning, the first of which would have to be that of a manager and organiser, which means that the teacher need to design different kinds of

activities to foster learner autonomy such as role-play, group discussions, debates, etc., assuring that these activities are appropriate for students' needs and interests.

**5.1.3.3 Differences between the perceptions of the students and teachers of student responsibilities.** This sub-question of the third research questions deals with, in particular, the perceptions of the participating students and teachers of student responsibilities. This being the case, it was seen that there were 5 significant differences. Specifically, the mean rank of the responses provided by the teachers to the items 'students' progress during lesson', 'students working harder', 'deciding what should be learned in English lesson', and deciding what students learn outside class' are significantly greater than those of students'. Given the aforementioned differences, it might be claimed that there were various situations where the participants allocated different levels of responsibility to their own group and to the other. This argument is in line with a study by Scharle and Szabo, 2000) who claims that responsible learners are those who favour the idea that their own efforts are of great importance to be able to progress in learning. In other words, responsible learner monitor their own learning progress and try to use available opportunities to their advantage.

In parallel, in order for a successful promotion of learner autonomy to take place, Lamb (2008) suggests that " the teacher needs to reflect on his/her own autonomous learning behaviour and consider its implications for his/her learners' learning" (p.279), which means the teacher might help his/her learners develop autonomous skills and behaviours by acting this way. Therefore, the teachers are to be introduced to the concept of learner autonomy at an early stage of their career, i.e. possibly when they go through their practicum period or even earlier, so that they can actually take the initiative to act upon their learners hoping that they can also develop a sense of being on their own and be autonomous.

To conclude, there are different situations where students and teachers consider each other more or less responsible for learning/teaching process. The primary reason why, for example, students consider their teachers to be more responsible for in-class activities would be related to students' backgrounds, viz., students' learning experiences from lower level might have created a habit of teacher dependence and this argument substantiates other studies into learner autonomy (Benson, 2006; Sinclair, 2000; Smith, 2008).



**5.1.3.4 Differences between the perceptions of students and teachers of student abilities.** As for this sub-question of the third research question, it was found out that ten out of eleven items are significantly different concerning the teachers' and students' perceptions of student abilities. However, based on the mean rank of the responses, there is only one situation where there is no significant difference, which is related to that of identifying their weaknesses in English. These findings, therefore, might conclude that students are unable to demonstrate autonomous learning behaviours. To be more specific, it might just as well be discussed that students are not quite able to have what it takes to act autonomously and take the control over their own learning, which concurs with a study by Malcolm (1990) who claims that moving students from spoon-feeding to autonomy is possible with flexible learning where students are given the opportunity to take some responsibilities either in- or out-of-class activities. In other words, it would not be quite wise to expect students to acquire what is needed to be an autonomous English language learner. To make it clearer, it is a widely known fact that autonomy and motivation are interrelated, meaning motivation determines the degree of effort learners tend to put into learning which leads to a successful language learning process. In this regard, Dickinson (1995) stated that enhancing motivation is a conditional on learners wishing to take responsibility for their own learning, making sure that their successes or failures are mainly related to their own efforts rather than to the factors they have no control over. Simply put, both teachers and students are to be introduced to the concept of learner autonomy explicitly so that they can actually take the initiative to promote learner autonomy.

Briefly, there are some situations where teachers think that students are not able to take care of themselves and act autonomously, whereas, there are some other situations where students are thought to demonstrate some abilities. However, it was also quite obvious that both students and teachers are to be made aware of the importance of learner autonomy so as to take it all to a next level and actually integrate practices promoting autonomous skills and behaviours.

**5.1.4 Discussion of the findings of RQ 4: How is learner autonomy perceived by the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities?** In order to answer the fourth research question regarding the participants' perceptions of learner autonomy in terms of teacher responsibility, both students and teachers

were asked to respond to the relevant part of the PLAQ questionnaire, namely, 'responsibilities'. Such being the case, the participating students and teachers were asked to provide answers to the questions such as students' progress during lessons and outside class, students' interest in learning English, students' working harder, identifying students' weaknesses in English, setting goals for students for their English course, deciding what should be learner in English lessons, choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons so as to find out their perceptions about the extent to which the teachers are responsible for English teaching/learning activities both outside and inside the classroom. The results concluded that both students and teachers hold the view that the teacher has the main responsibility in terms of decision-making procedures and learning/teaching activities. This finding also revealed that the students have higher expectations from their teachers. Thus, it might be argued that the vast majority of the classes are teacher-centred and students are teacher-dependent especially when it comes to making classroom decisions and learning activities. Furthermore, it was also seen that the teachers themselves happen to take the main responsibility as to deciding how long to spend on each activity in class, evaluating students' learning, setting learning goals for students for their English course, identifying their weaknesses in English, and students' progress during lessons, which concurs with the aforementioned findings and which means that as hard as the teachers seem to try to give more responsibilities to their students, the classes are still mainly teacher-centred.

The findings of the fourth research question are consistent with Porto (2007)'s argument which asserts that if the students are provided with opportunities to reflect on their own learning, the better aware of the concept of learner autonomy they will become inevitably. These findings also echo the findings of another study by Cotterall (2000) who proposed five principles to be able to design course promoting learner autonomy, namely, (a) learner goals, (b) the language learning process, (c) tasks, (d) learner strategies, (e) reflection on learning.

In conclusion, it might be claimed that the participating students happen to be aware of autonomous learning to a certain degree as is evident from the discussion of the first research question, however; they need to be guided and motivated to take it all to a next level by their teachers and then take the control over their own learning accordingly at a certain point, regardless of in or out-of-class learning activities (Sinclair, 2000).

**5.1.4.1 Differences between the perceptions of the students and teachers in terms of teacher responsibilities.** This sub question of the fourth research question, however, attempts to shed lights on the differences between the perceptions of the students and teachers of teacher responsibilities. This being said, with regard to teacher responsibilities, it was found that there were three significant differences between students and teachers. More specifically, the mean rank of students' responses to the items 'students' interest in learning English', 'students' working harder', 'deciding what students learn outside class' is significantly greater than those of teachers ( $p < .05$ ). Although the teacher were inclined to take fewer responsibilities in terms of 'students interest in learning English' and 'students' working harder' , the data revealed that the students hold their teachers responsible for such situations. However, according to both groups and from their perceptions, teachers are not the ones who should be held responsible for out-of-class activities, which confirms the fact that teachers are regarded as the main source of knowledge, or in other words, 'knowledge provider' within a classroom setting and that students are still teacher-dependent even when it is about developing autonomous behaviours. These findings echo the discussions of the fourth research question where it was claimed that teachers regard themselves as knowledge providers and also reveals that the teachers need to be trained to be better aware of the importance of learner autonomy, which concurs with another study carried out by Smith and Erdoğan (2008) concluding that there is a need for a knowledge base for 'teacher education for the promotion of learner autonomy' (p.15) and proposing that an experiential approach where teachers get to learn autonomously on their own would be the most effective way of supporting teachers in the development and improvement of pedagogical aspect of second language teaching and learning in terms of autonomy.

Based on the discussion above, it might be concluded that in practice teachers are still thought to be mainly responsible for in-class situations, be it decision-making procedures, keeping students interested in learning, or having students work harder, which might confirm that the classes are teacher-centred and students' opinions and perception as to what to do within a classroom setting are not of great value. In this regard, it would not be wise to turn a blind eye to the need of training teachers to shape their teaching practices in order to meet the needs of their learners.

**5.1.5 Discussions of the findings of the RQ 5: What are the challenges that both EFL teachers and students experience when promoting learner autonomy in B2 level preparatory classes?** The last research question of the current study addresses the challenges that the participants experience when promoting learner autonomy. The findings based on the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the students and teachers indicate that there are some challenges regarding the promotion of learner autonomy at tertiary level in English preparatory classes.

According to the results, the main challenges were reported to be related to learners, teachers, and educational system in general though institute related factors were mostly cited by the participating teachers. Specifically speaking, one of the findings of this study was that institutions and policy makers are the main challenges for teachers to help learners become autonomous, unearthing that even though teachers are quite eager to help students develop their autonomous behaviours in language learning, their efforts are restricted mostly by institutional constraints, lack of teacher training programmes, and educational policies. This finding is line with a body of related studies (Balçıkanlı, 2010; Balçıkanlı and Çakır; 2012, Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012; Phipps and Borg, 2009) which claim that there are some constraining factors involved in the formal learning atmosphere which might be viewed as hindrances to the development of learner autonomy. Also, this argument concurs with another study conducted by Reinders and Lazaró (2011) who argues that teachers thought that learners did not understand the absolute importance of developing autonomy, lacked the skills to learn independently, and were not accustomed to being asked to take responsibility for their own learning procedures.

The results also showed that there are some institution related factors which hinder the promotion of learner autonomy. One possible reason for institution-related challenges would be that education system is centralised and institutions make all the decisions about different components of a curriculum such as types of materials used and assessment system, which is in line with Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) who claimed that institutions force the teachers to follow their own policies and teach in line with the guidelines which were developed for teachers.

Another challenge related to the promotion of learner autonomy was seen to be related to learners themselves. The participating teachers believed that they find

it quite challenging to promote learner autonomy because students are not motivated, they are teacher-dependent. As the learners were trained to develop their own language proficiency through exposure to language outside EFL classrooms, it might be asserted that it is rather difficult for teacher to develop learner autonomy in crowded EFL classrooms which consist of heterogeneous students. These findings are in line with the findings of some other related studies (e.g. Benson, 2011; Balçıkanlı, 2010).

Moreover, as for the challenges that students might experience when trying to promote learner autonomy, one of the most widely stated challenges was that of not being aware of the whats and hows of developing autonomy. Specifically speaking, based on the findings of the last research questions, it was quite apparent that the vast majority of the students were teacher – dependent, and they needed their teachers to decide what they need to do both in and out of class, which supports a study carried out by MacBeath (2012) who suggested that teachers need to motivate themselves in order to promote their students' autonomous behaviours and skills. In this regard, Yazıcı (2016) also reported that teachers having low motivation levels are not expected to display ‘‘learner autonomy support behaviours’’ (p.4).

Overall, it can be argued that when teachers exhibit autonomous behaviours, they can help their students behave autonomously in the learning environment (Benson, 2007; Little, 1995; Luthans, 1992; Çankaya, 2009). In this regard, students whose autonomy is supported end up developing with the effect and support of social milieu (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Specifically talking and doubtlessly, students need to be supported and encouraged in the classroom setting and the person who should provide such support is the teacher. To do so, the teacher in constructivist learning environments need to have the responsibility for supporting their learners. As such, the teacher needs to demonstrate ‘‘autonomy behaviours of their own’’ (Yazıcı, 2016, p. 4).

## **5.2 Practical Implications**

The present study offers some practical implications for practitioners, course/materials designers, and researchers respectively. First of all, the common perception of learner autonomy amongst teachers and students at a private,

foundation non-profit university identified by this study underlines the need to promote the role of metacognitive knowledge about language learning. In other words, the study revealed that it is essential that teachers recognise and notice the importance of metacognitive knowledge, especially metacognitive strategies for the management of learning, in developing students' capacity for greater autonomy in English language learning and focus on providing students with this knowledge in teaching. Furthermore, this study unearths the discrepancy between students' expectations and teachers' lack of confidence in the students' ability for becoming autonomous. In this regard, it would be rather unwise to turn a blind eye to the fact that an integrated learner training programme with a teacher-guided/learner-decided approach would have to be quite suitable and effective in terms of promoting learner autonomy within the context of the current study. Finally, the findings of the study reiterate the important role of teachers in maintaining students' motivation and monitoring their progress in fostering learner autonomy. As such, the initial direction set by teachers and accordingly their guidance would provide students with the required starting point for them to take more active role in learning, if none. Additionally, teachers' regular monitoring and supervision would be instrumental in maintaining the momentum for students' self-directed learning.

Overall, the findings of the present study can be taken for granted in future studies for a comprehensive promotion of learner autonomy in English preparatory programmes at tertiary level.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The present study contributes to the literature by investigating the perceptions of teachers and students of learner autonomy. Such being the case, the results, first of all, indicated that the participating students enrolled at a private, non-profit foundation university seem to be ready for an autonomous learning with a bit of guidance provided by the teachers. However, the results also demonstrated that the teacher and student participants perceive the concept of learner autonomy differently. Specifically, there are some situations where students think that their teachers should have the main responsibility, however; there are some other situations where it is quite the opposite; teachers thinking that students should take the initiative to learn on their own. Nevertheless, the findings found out that both

teacher and students are inclined to promote and foster learner autonomy if the necessary conditions are met and if they are introduced to the importance of learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. Besides, it was also quite obvious that the promotion of learner autonomy is restricted due to some challenges and problems. In particular, the exam-oriented educational context poses significant challenges to both teacher and students in their efforts to promote autonomous learning.

In a nutshell, the findings of the present study concluded that teachers' being aware of the importance of learner autonomy and then leading the way would yield positive outcomes in terms of the promotion of such autonomy. Therefore, making sure that learners are motivated and supported to develop a sense of autonomy would enhance and, above all, whip the learning and teaching process into a better shape with a particular emphasis on learners acquiring the target language the best way possible independently.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

This study has several recommendations for future research. First of all, the present study was conducted with students all of whom were at upper-intermediate level and teachers teaching at the same level. Therefore, further studies can be conducted to extend the scope in terms of participants, settings, and locations so that comprehensive and far-reaching results can be obtained.

In addition to expanding the scope of the research, in the present study there was no treatment nor was there any intervention of any kind whatsoever. As such, future studies can also aim at investigating an, for example, an intervention programme and its impacts on the promotion of learner autonomy.

Finally, as this study did not attempt to find out the relationship between students' linguistic achievements and learner autonomy, future studies can focus on the investigation of the effects of a learner training programme of students' linguistic competence and motivation in language learning through a prolonged period. This can be done by employing a mixed-method approach to data collection

procedure in the hopes of measuring the changes that the programme brings about in the students' language competence and motivation in a longitudinal study design





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## APPENDICES

### A. READINESS FOR AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE (RFAQ)

This questionnaire aims to identify your beliefs about learner autonomy and it consists of 2 parts. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers and all information provided will be treated strictly as confidential and purely for academic purposes only. Such being the case, I would like to ask you to help by answering the following questions. Please give your answers sincerely. This will guarantee the success of research.

#### ***Background information***

Course title: \_\_\_\_\_

Course type: \_\_\_\_\_

Year of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M / F

How long have you been studying English? \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Section I: ATTITUDES**

| Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements about your language learning by blackening the number which matches your answer. Number 0 is an example. |   | <i>Strongly disagree</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Neutral</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Strongly Agree</i> |
|---|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 0   | <i>I like English food.</i>   | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 1   | I know some differences between American English and British English.                       | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 2   | English is an important foreign language these days.  | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 3   | In my opinion, the role of the teacher is to give me regular tests to evaluate my learning. | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 4   | In English classes in my university, we speak a lot of English.                             | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 5   | I am aware that there are some sounds in English which do not exist in my language.         | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 6   | I like to be able to choose my own materials for English classes.                           | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 7   | I can find my own ways of practicing.   | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 8   | I need the teacher to set learning goals for me.  | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 9   | I can identify my strengths and weaknesses.   | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 10  | It's cool to have foreign English speaking friends.   | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 11  | A lot of language learning can be done without a teacher.                                   | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 12  | I like teachers who give us a lot of opportunities to learn on our own.                     | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 13  | It is the teacher's responsibility to create opportunities for me to practice.              | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |
| 14  | People in Turkey who can speak English well have a better                                   | ①                        | ②               | ③              | ④            | ⑤                     |

|    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|    | social status (e.g., they make more money; they are more educated, etc.).         |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15 | I am good at applying new ways/strategies of learning English.                    | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 16 | I can explain why I need English.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 17 | I enjoy learning English.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 18 | The university treats English as a very important subject.                        | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 19 | I need the teacher to stimulate my interest in learning English.                  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 20 | Learning idioms and phrases by heart can improve my spoken English.               | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 21 | There are a lot of opportunities to learn and practise English in İstanbul.       | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 22 | The teacher needs to point out my weaknesses in English.                          | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 23 | I am not confident about my English ability.                                      | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 24 | I am good at measuring my progress.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 25 | I'd like the teacher to help me make progress outside class.                      | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 26 | I am good at language learning.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 27 | I know some differences between spoken and written English.                       | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 28 | I dislike being told how I should learn.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 29 | The role of the teacher is to make me work hard.                                  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 30 | I am good at using a dictionary to find information about new words.              | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 31 | English is not my favourite subject.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 32 | It is cool to speak English with native speakers (e.g., Americans) on the street. | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 33 | I don't feel I could improve without a teacher.                                   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 34 | The teacher should set a good example and inspire me.                             | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 35 | We all work hard on English.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 36 | Success in English is regarded as very important in my family.                    | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 37 | I am good at finding resources for learning.                                      | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 38 | I know my learning style and use it effectively.                                  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 39 | I need the teacher to introduce different ways of learning to me.                 | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 40 | I am good at setting my own learning goals.                                       | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 41 | I think teachers should give us opportunities to select what we like to learn.    | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |

|    |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 | In my opinion, the teacher is responsible for explaining why we are doing an activity.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 43 | I am good at planning my learning.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 44 | I think the teacher's responsibility is to decide what I should learn in English lessons.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 45 | I can check my work for mistakes.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 46 | I need the teacher to help me make progress during lessons.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 47 | I think I have the ability to learn English well.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 48 | I think the role of the teacher is to explain grammar and vocabulary.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 49 | Stressing the right word in a sentence is important for the correct meaning/emphasis. E.g., "That's MY bicycle", not "That is my BICYCLE". | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 50 | I need the teacher to choose activities for me to learn English.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 51 | Stressing the right part of an English word is important for the correct pronunciation. e.g., banAna, not banana.                          | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 52 | I can ask for help when I need it.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 53 | In my opinion, the teacher should decide how long I spend on activities.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 54 | I am above average at language learning.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 55 | Language learning involves a lot of self-study.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 56 | I think teachers should give us opportunities to decide where and how to learn.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 57 | In my opinion, the role of the teacher is to provide answers to all my questions.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 58 | I know that in order to speak English well, I have to listen to a lot of English.  | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 59 | I know the best ways to learn and practise English for me.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 60 | It's not cool to speak English in class.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 61 | I enjoy tasks where I can learn on my own.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |
| 62 | I think the teacher should decide what activities I do to learn English outside class.   | ① | ② | ③ | ④ | ⑤ |



## B. PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE

### (PLAQ – Version for teachers)

We are interested in your views of the roles of learners and teachers in second language learning. Please give your opinions on the questions below. Answer each question in relation to both the teacher AND the students.

#### *Section 1: Responsibilities*

(Blacken both 'Teacher & Students' circles)

To what extent do you think the teacher and students are responsible for ...:

|   |                 | <i>Not at all</i> | <i>A little</i> | <i>Some</i> | <i>Mainly</i> | <i>Completely</i> |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Example:<br>0. maintaining an English speaking environment in class | <i>Teacher</i>  | ①                 | ②               | ③           | <b>④</b>      | ⑤                 |
|   | <i>Students</i> | ①                 | ②               | ③           | <b>④</b>      | ⑤                 |
| 1. Students' progress during lessons?                               | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 2. Students' progress outside class?                                | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 3. Students' interest in learning English?                          | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 4. Students' working harder?  | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 5. Identifying students' weaknesses in English?                     | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 6. Setting learning goals for students for their English course?    | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 7. Deciding what should be learned in English lessons?              | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 8. Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons?        | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 9. Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class?            | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 10. Evaluating students' learning?                                  | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 11. Deciding what students learn outside class?                     | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |

**Section 2: Abilities**

(Blacken the appropriate circles)

How would you rate your students' ability to:

|   | <i>Very poor</i> | <i>Poor</i> | <i>O.K.</i> | <i>Good</i> | <i>Very Good</i> |
|---|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| 12. Choose learning activities in class?                        | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 13. Choose learning activities outside class?                   | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 14. Choose learning objectives in class?                        | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 15. Choose learning objectives outside class?                   | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 16. Choose learning materials in class?                         | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 17. Choose learning materials outside class?                    | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 18. Evaluate their learning?                                    | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 19. Evaluate the course?  | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 20. Identify their weaknesses in English?                       | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 21. Decide what they should learn next in your English lessons? | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |
| 22. Decide how long to spend on each activity in class?         | ①                | ②           | ③           | ④           | ⑤                |

**Section 3: Autonomy and your teaching**

(Please tick the appropriate answers)

23. Do you consider learner autonomy as a goal of your teaching?

- a. Yes                                      b. No                                      c. I've never thought about it

24. How important do you think learner autonomy is for effective language learning?

- a. Not important at all      b. Important                              c. Extremely important

*Section 4: Activities*

Please list any teaching activities you do to encourage students to learn autonomously.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please list any learning activities you recommend to students to encourage them to learn autonomously.

.....

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.....

.....

.....

Many thanks for giving your time to complete the questionnaire.  
Your co-operation is much appreciated.

## C. PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE (PLAQ)

– *Version for students*)

We are interested in your views of the roles of learners and teachers in second language learning. Please give your opinions as indicated below.

### *Section 1: Responsibilities*

**To what extent do you think the teacher and students are responsible for ...:**

Blacken both ‘Teacher & Students’ circles

|   |                 | <i>Not at all</i> | <i>A little</i> | <i>Some</i> | <i>Mainly</i> | <i>Completely</i> |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Example:<br>0. maintaining an English speaking environment in class | <i>Teacher</i>  | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | <i>Students</i> | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 1. Students’ progress during lessons?                               | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 2. Students’ progress outside class?                                | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 3. Students’ interest in learning English?                          | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 4. Students’ working harder?  | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 5. Identifying students’ weaknesses in English?                     | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 6. Setting learning goals for students for their English course?    | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 7. Deciding what should be learned in English lessons?              | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 8. Choosing what activities to learn English in the lessons?        | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 9. Deciding how long to spend on each activity in class?            | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 10. Evaluating students’ learning?                                  | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 11. Deciding what students learn outside class?                     | Teacher         | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
|   | Students        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |

## Section 2: Abilities

How would you rate your ability to:

Blacken the appropriate circles

|  | <i>Not at all</i> | <i>A little</i> | <i>Some</i> | <i>Mainly</i> | <i>Completely</i> |
|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 12. Choose learning activities in class?                       | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 13. Choose learning activities outside class?                  | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 14. Choose learning objectives in class?                       | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 15. Choose learning objectives outside class?                  | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 16. Choose learning materials in class?                        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 17. Choose learning materials outside class?                   | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 18. Evaluate your learning?                                    | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 19. Evaluate the course?                                       | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 20. Identify your weaknesses in English?                       | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 21. Decide what you should learn next in your English lessons? | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 22. Decide how long to spend on each activity in class?        | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 23. Plan your learning?  | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |
| 24. Set your learning goals                                    | ①                 | ②               | ③           | ④             | ⑤                 |

## D. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### For Students

1. What do you think is the difference between learning English in high school and in the university (i.e. preparatory programme)?
2. Do you think your English classes prepare you for autonomous learning? If not, should they?
3. What do you think you can do to better at English?
4. To be a better English learner, do you think you should take some responsibilities regarding your own learning procedure? Why? Why not?
5. Do you think you always need your teacher to help you learn English? Why?

### For Teachers

1. What do you understand by 'learner autonomy'?

2. Do you consider learner autonomy important? Why? Why not?
3. Do you do anything to encourage students to become more autonomous in our outside the classroom? If yes, what exactly and do you face any challenges/difficulties in doing so?
4. What do you think your most important roles are as a teacher? Please support your answer with related examples.
5. In general, what do your students think are the teacher's most important roles? Can you give examples?
6. Does the teaching and learning environment in Turkey help or hinder the development of autonomy? In what ways?



## E. CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Öztüfekçi, Ali

Nationality: Turkish (T.C.)

Date and Place of Birth: 13 April 1992, Malatya

Marital Status: Single

Phone: +90 553 394 14 24

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### EDUCATION

| Degree      | Institution           | Year of Graduation |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| MA          | Bahçeşehir University | 2018               |
| BA          | Gazi University       | 2014               |
| High School | Ali Karasu Lisesi     | 2010               |

### WORK EXPERIENCE

| Year      | Place                     | Enrollment                  |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2017-     | Bahçeşehir University     | English Language Instructor |
| 2014-2017 | Istanbul Aydın University | English Language Instructor |

### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Beginner Spanish

### PRESENTATIONS

Ören, D., A., **Öztüfekçi, A.**, Kapçık, A., C., Kaplan, A. & Uzankaya, Ç. (2017). *Building awareness of World Englishes among university preparatory students*. Paper presented at GlobELT 2017: The Third

International Conference on Teaching and Learning English as an Additional Language, 18-21 May, İzmir, Turkey.

**Öztüfekçi, A.** & Kapçık, A. C. (2017). *Examining the impact of INSET on World Englishes integration into ELT practices*. Paper presented at at The Winds of Change, INGED, 20-22 October, 2017, İstanbul, Turkey

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Ören, D., A., **Öztüfekçi, A.**, Kapçık, A., C., Kaplan, A. & Uzankaya, Ç. (2017). Building awareness of World Englishes among university preparatory students. *International Online Journal of Education and Teaching*, 4(4). 483-508.

Kapçık, A., **Öztüfekçi, A.**, Ören, D. A., Kaplan, A., Uzunkaya, Ç. Y. & Mede, E. (2018) Mentoring University Preparatory University Students Through World Englishes (WEs)- Integrated Courses. In Dikilitaş, K., Mede, E., & Atay, D. (Eds.). *Mentorship Strategies in teacher education*. (pp. 77-96). IGI Global.

### **HOBBIES**

Music, Reading, Travelling overseas, Gardening, Camping/Backpacking, Movies