

**T.C.  
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**AN INVESTIGATION INTO LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER  
AUTONOMY AT TERTIARY LEVEL**

**THESIS**

**Tamer HALAYQEH**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**English Language and Literature Program**

**February, 2020**

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İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ



YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ ONAY FORMU

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## **DECLARATION**

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

**Tamer HALAYQEH**



## **FOREWORD**

First, I am highly grateful to ALLAH for continuously granting all the strength, patience, knowledge and well-being that were necessary to be able to complete this study.

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## AN INVESTIGATION INTO LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER AUTONOMY AT TERTIARY LEVEL

### ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy has gained popularity over recent years. While some teachers do not hand over responsibility for learning, others acknowledge the role of learners in language learning. Successful learners like to take responsibility for their own learning process and make decisions about what to learn and how to learn. However, some less successful students have no self-agency or autonomy. There seems to be a problem with learners and learning. Hence, this study aims at identifying learners' perceptions of learner autonomy involving responsibilities, abilities, motivation, and in-class, out-of-class activities and behaviours. As a quantitative data collection method, a questionnaire in which 110 students participated was conducted to gather and analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed the fact that the majority of the participants were autonomous English learners. They were aware of whose responsibility it was- the teacher's or the learner's. They were also able to make decisions about the content and methodology, have a high level of motivation to learn and enjoy participating in-and out-of-class activities. However, the minority of these participants tended to rely on their teacher and did not study English independently. They held teachers responsible for the learning process, so they did not spend a lot of time studying English on their own and did not develop strategies to succeed in learning English. Teachers should foster learner autonomy and train learners to become more autonomous. Learners need to be self-directed and self-agent rather than spoon-fed.

**Keywords:** *Learner Autonomy, Motivation, Responsibility, Strategy, Train, Successful*

# ÜNİVERSİTEDE EĞİTİM ALAN ÖĞRENCİLERİN ÖZERK ÖĞRENME İLE İLGİLİ ALGILARI

## ÖZET

Özerk öğrenme eğitimde son yıllarda popüler olan bir kavramdır. Bazı öğretmenler, öğrenme sürecinden öğrencilerin önemli bir rol alması gerektiğine inanırken, diğerleri öğrencinin dil öğrenimindeki rolünü göz ardı etmektedir. Başarılı öğrenciler öğrenme süreci ile ilgili sorumluluk almakta ve ne öğreneceği ve nasıl öğreneceği ile ilgili olarak öğretmenle birlikte kararlar alabilmektedir. Ancak, dil öğreniminde bazı başarısız öğrenciler öğrenme sürecinde etkin rol oynamadığı için çeşitli sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadır. Bu yüzden, bu çalışma üniversite de eğitim alan öğrencilerin sorumluluk, yetenek, motivasyon, sınıf içi ve sınıf dışı etkinliklere katılmasını içeren özerk öğrenme ile ilgili algılarını ölçmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu algıyı belirlemek için nicel araştırma yöntemi olarak, İngilizce öğretmenliği alanında eğitim alan 110 öğrencinin katıldığı bir Likert tipi tutum ölçeği kullanıldı. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, katılımcıların çoğu yabancı dil gelişiminde öğretmenden bağımsız olarak özerk öğrenmenin gerekli olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. Bu da tutum belirleme ölçeğine katılanların yabancı dil öğreniminde etkin bir rol oynadığını göstermektedir. Ancak, az sayıda öğrenci dil öğreniminde öğretmene dayandıklarını ve bağımsız olarak dil çalışması yapamadıklarını belirtmektedir. Öğretmenler yabancı dil öğreniminde daha başarılı sonuçlara ulaşabilmek için özerk olarak öğrenmeyi önemsemeli ve öğrencileri bu konuda eğitmelidir. Öğrenciler bir başkasının güdümünden ziyade kendi kendini yönlendirebilmelidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Özerk Öğrenme, Motivasyon, Sorumluluk, Strateji, Eğitim, Başarılı*

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Introduction**

As the proverb "you cannot teach a man everything; you can only help him find it within himself" suggests, we cannot teach our students everything; we just pave the way for them to reveal the things that have to be learned and the ways to do so based on the motivation they have within themselves. To answer the question "why do learners learn languages", teachers need to be aware of what motivates them. Motivation such as getting a degree overseas which requires knowing a different language, living in a different country which also stimulates learners to learn that country's language for communicative purposes with the people there, and having a job in a very good company leads them to learn a second or more languages. The previously mentioned factors and motivations along with other different factors explain why learners tend to learn foreign languages.

Within the scope of ELT, there have been many studies, researches and academic papers, which are related to the field of learner autonomy, carried out. Many researchers have spoken about the definitions, the importance, the development, the features, and the characteristics of learner autonomy (e.g. Little, 1991, Chitashvili, 2007, Summer, 2010, Tütünlü, 2011, Dang, 2012, Kamberi, 2013, etc.). Yet the term "spoon-feeding" is still widespread in education in many contexts worldwide. The term spoon-feeding is related to the teacher-led approach, which means that learners only receive information from their teacher while learners are not appropriately engaged in the learning practicability.

Furthermore, in almost all schools, learners are just passive recipients from their teacher whose basic role is to transfer knowledge to pupils (Trinh, 2005). On the other hand, Nga (2014) stimulates that the enhancement of learner autonomy needs to be explored in great detail. Therefore, the aim of the current study is to investigate learners' perceptions of learner autonomy. It is believed that the

results will assist teachers in improving their way of planning, teaching, evaluating the learning process and reflecting on their teaching.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Learner autonomy has existed in the field of English language teaching for approximately four decades. The emergence of learner autonomy starts with the publication of *Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning* published by Holec (1980), who defines learner autonomy as the ability to be responsible for the learning process.

When exploring the historical background of learner autonomy, Gremo and Riley (1995) are both good pioneers who have made a lot of contributions to learner autonomy in foreign language learning. They have identified many significant factors affecting learner autonomy and they have created a number of effective reasons for learner autonomy:

- The growing number of schools and universities and easy access to educational resources
- Respect for minority rights
- New insights into teaching and learning languages as a reaction to old-fashioned learning theories like behaviourism
- Improvements made in adult education
- Fast-growing demand for learning a foreign language
- People' s views of language learning
- Advancements in Technology (p. 152)

When looking at these factors and reasons closely, it can be said that they are strongly interrelated to the classifications made by other researchers and scholars in order to underline the significance of promoting learner autonomy.

Little (1994) categorises arguments for learner autonomy as general educational and psychological. According to him, the general arguments speak for progress of democratic states which must undertake educational measures to develop the capacity of their citizens to think and act as free and self-determining

individuals. On the other hand, the psychological arguments suggest that the most efficient learners are those who know how to process new information in terms of what they already know and how to transfer their existing knowledge on a new learning task.

Cotteral (1995) argues that there are three different reasons for learner autonomy in foreign language learning: philosophical justification, pedagogical justification, and the practical justification. The philosophical justification is the belief that learners have the right to choose what to study in the learning process. The pedagogical justification claims that adults are more self-confident and safer in their own learning process. They can learn a foreign language more and more effectively when they are actively involved in making decisions about the different stages of their learning process: pace, sequence, mode, and the content of instruction. The practical justification argues that teachers may not always be present or available in order to support and help students learn by themselves.

Learner autonomy is viewed as an individual, gradual, and never-ending process. Holec (1981) claims that the most common situation “will be that of learners who are not yet autonomous but are involved in the process of acquiring the ability to assume responsibility for their learning” (pp. 25- 26). This idea is also supported by Candy (1991) declares that learner autonomy is not a state which could be reached once and for all; it is rather a state of immutable process open to educational interventions. Thus, based on the fact that autonomy is not a product, but it is a process, Oxford (2008) describes the notion of autonomy in the following ways 1) autonomy as stages, 2) autonomy as part of a spiral and 3) autonomy as degrees/levels.

Candy (1991) discusses two-stage theories: a) Vygotsky`s (1978, 1981) social-constructivist theory of stages and b) Nunan`s (1997) theory of stages.

Vygotsky (1978, 1981) presents a social-constructivist theory of stages of development of internal self-regulation. Learning takes place through the learner`s dialogues with a more competent person, who ‘mediates’ the learning. Self-regulation is achieved by moving through three stages:

- social speech: interaction with the more capable person, who models higher-order thinking skills;
- egocentric speech: overtly giving oneself instructions for applying such skills;
- inner speech: mental self-guidance, a sign that the learner has fully internalised such skills.

This theory implies a close relationship between the more competent person and the learner. However, in the independent foreign language learning situation such a relationship is difficult because the tutor is at a distance and does not work constantly with the learner. Learning in independent foreign language situations is mediated primarily by computer programmes, textbooks, handbooks, videos, and websites.

Nunan`s (1997, cited in Oxford 2008) theory of stages concentrates on classroom-based foreign language learners, whose autonomy grows and changes through five stages:

- awareness: the learner is the recipient of information;
- involvement: the learner is the reviewer and selector among given options;
- intervention: the learner adapts official goals;
- creation: the learner is the inventor, originator and creator of his/her own goals;
- transcendence: the learner identifies their own interests and creates goals relevant to those.

Autonomy as part of a spiral developed by Little (2000b) extends Vygotsky`s theory of stages and the concept of interdependence mentioned above. It describes autonomy as part of a learning spiral. The learner progresses to new levels of independence by first moving through additional phases of interdependence (with a teacher or others). This suggests that autonomy is not a linear matter of stages or degrees but part of the curving movement of the spiral.

Autonomy as degrees/levels represents the idea that learner autonomy is not all-or-nothing and it serves as a rough substitute for the much more complicated lifestyle. Littlewood (1996) speaks about levels of behaviour at which a person makes independent choices or decisions. The hierarchy goes from low-level choices which control the specific operations through which the activity is carried out to high-level choices which control the overall activity. In between, he distinguishes any number of levels.

Littlewood (1996) examines the components that make up autonomy in language learning. He defines an autonomous person as “one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which manage his or her actions” (p. 427). According to Littlewood (1996) this capacity depends on two main components: ability and willingness. This means that, on the one hand, a person may have the ability to make independent choices but may have no willingness to do so. On the other hand, a person may be willing to make independent choices but may not have the ability to do so. Ability and willingness can further be divided into two components. Ability depends on possessing knowledge about the alternatives from which choices have to be made and skills for carrying out whatever choices seem most appropriate. Willingness depends on having both the motivation and the confidence to take responsibility for the choices required. To be successful in acting autonomously, all of these four components need to be present together.

We conclude that both concepts of making choices and decision-making are highly important and necessary for learner autonomy. Holec (1981) states that learners who can control and are able to make decisions as follows:

- regulating the targets,
- acknowledging the purports and the advancements,
- adopting the procedures and the mechanisms,
- and observing all proceedings in relation to the acquisition and straightening the targets which have been acquired.

In terms of learner-autonomy as a decision-making process, some educators think that decision-making and making choices are the core of the learner



autonomy. Holec (1981) comments on the range of the autonomous learner's control in terms of making the following decisions:

- determining objectives,
- defining the contents and progressions,
- selecting methods and techniques,
- monitoring procedures of acquisition and evaluating what has been acquired". (p. 3)

Oxford (2008) extends the list of possible decisions related to:

- the language to be learned;
- the purpose, general content, topics, and specific tasks of the foreign language learning;
- the amount and type of directions the learner needs;
- the kinds of learning strategies to be used;
- the nature, frequency, and reporting format of assessment;
- formality or informality of the learning;
- timing;
- location (e.g. at a self-access centre, on the phone or computer at home, or elsewhere).

We can find a highly strong relation between both the autonomy the learners' and the teachers' have in the field of second language learning. The shift in control from teacher to learner is crucial to an autonomous approach regardless of the particular organisational structure. It involves a change in role, and can bring feelings of anxiety, uncertainty or discomfort (Little, 1995). Teachers in all educational contexts are the human interface between learners and resources. They can only help their learners to develop a capacity for critical reflection if they have this capacity themselves. It is strongly argued in the field of second/foreign language education that learner autonomy is dependent on teacher autonomy.

(Yang, 1998) claims that learner autonomy does not mean that the teacher becomes redundant in the learning process. Teachers change their role from source of information to counsellor and manager of learning resources. New roles for teachers also include helpers, facilitators, advisors, guides, active participants, and consultants.

In the context of applying autonomy within classroom learning and designing courses based on learner autonomy, which will be addressed later, one more role of the teacher should be mentioned. According to Benson (2000) and Huang (2006), the teacher's role is to mediate between the learners' right to autonomy and the constraints that inhibit the exercise of this right as well as to explain and justify these constraints to his or her learners. Omaggio (1978, cited in Thanasoulas 2000 pp. 117-118) provides seven main attributes of autonomous learners who:

- have insights into their learning styles and strategies;
- take an active approach to the learning task at hand;
- are willing to take risks - to communicate in the target language at all costs;
- are good guessers;
- attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy;
- develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply;
- have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

To relate teacher roles in fostering learner autonomy to the foreign language learning, Little (1995) lists the following steps that each teacher should take:

- use the target language as the preferred medium of classroom communication and require the same from the learners;
- involve the learners in a non-stop quest for good learning activities, which are shared, discussed, analysed and evaluated with the whole class;

- help the learners to set their own learning targets and choose their own learning activities, subjecting them to discussion, analysis and evaluation;
- require from the learners to identify individual goals but pursue them through collaborative work in small groups;
- require from the learners to keep a written record of their learning – plans of lessons and projects, lists of useful vocabulary, whatever texts they themselves produce;
- engage the learners in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners and as a class.

As for learners and their autonomy in foreign language learning, Littlewood (1996) names the following abilities:

- learners are able to make their own choices in grammar and vocabulary (e.g. in controlled role-plays and simple tasks involving information exchange). This is the initial step towards “autonomous communication”;
- learners choose the meanings they want to express and the communication strategies they will use in order to achieve their communicative goals;
- learners are able to make more far-reaching decisions about goals, meanings and strategies (e.g. in creative role-playing, problem-solving and discussion);
- learners begin to choose and shape their own learning contexts, e.g. in self- directed learning and project work;
- learners become able to make decisions in domains which have traditionally belonged to the teacher, e.g. about materials and learning tasks;
- learners participate in determining the nature and progression of their own syllabus;

- learners are able to use language (for communication and learning) independently in situations of their choice outside the classroom. (pp. 429-430)

Autonomy represents reshaping of teacher and learner roles and shift of responsibility from teachers to learners due to a change in the distribution of power and authority. Since autonomy involves a transfer of the control over learning decisions from the teacher to the learners, Huang (2006) perceives learner autonomy as a process concerned with the negotiation between teacher and learner in an atmosphere of genuine dialogue and collegiality.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Many learners studying English as a foreign language (EFL) have problems with English. They do not have a good command of English, so they cannot communicate with other people effectively. They do not produce or use language successfully although they spend a lot of hours studying English. They do not know how they learn because they may not be aware of learning strategies or learning styles. They do not know how to act as an agent because they are not actively involved in the learning process. In other words, they do not make decisions about the learning process. Teachers do not encourage them to participate in the decision-making process. They also have a low level of motivation. Motivation can be a predictor of success. The more motivated the better they become at English. They do not do many activities independently of their teacher because they rely on their teacher.

Being aware of learners' perceptions of learner autonomy is of great importance to teachers and students for several reasons. Firstly, some learners are more successful in language learning than others, so the role of learner autonomy needs to be explored. This leads researchers to do research on the role of learner autonomy in language learning. Second, if teachers are aware of the role of learner autonomy, they will understand how learners will be responsible for their own learning, so teachers should be aware of the importance of learner autonomy and put their students responsible for the learning process. Third, learners need to be trained to succeed in language learning so that they can become autonomous. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to learner

autonomy. Fourth, learners must be cultivated and supported by their teachers who can act as guides or counsellors. The issue to raise here is whether learners are encouraged to become autonomous by their teachers or not. Finally, learner autonomy is highly related to teacher autonomy. In other words, as teachers become more autonomous, students will become more autonomous.

Both learners and teachers need to view learner autonomy as a very important component of student achievement. Among these factors, training learners is a very important part of student success. For learners to become more confident, skilled, creative, communicative, and most importantly, autonomous language teachers in the future will be one of the most important outcomes to be achieved. Thus, being aware of learners' perceptions is a quite helpful tool for teachers to encourage their students to become increasingly autonomous learners, and in the future when learners become teachers, they will help and motivate their own students become creative, confident, and independent learners.

#### **1.4 The Purpose of the Study**

This research aims to explore EFL students' perceptions of learner autonomy. Firstly, this thesis will explore who will be responsible for a large number of factors which can influence student achievement like student progress in a lesson and self-study, student motivation, objectives of the course, content of the next lesson, activities for the next lesson and evaluation of the course. Secondly, students' abilities to make their own decisions will be determined. I.e. how good students are at making decisions about the learning process. Thirdly, students' motivation level will be examined to determine how motivated they are. The relationship between motivation and learner autonomy will be discussed in great detail. Finally, the effects of in-class and out-of-class activities on learners will be examined. What do students do on their own and how often have they done out-of-class -activities and in-class activities?

#### **1.5 Research Questions:**

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How do EFL learners of different proficiency levels view the responsibilities of learners and teachers in learning English?
- How do they view their ability to learn English autonomously?
- How high is EFL students' motivation level?
- What different learning activities and behaviours have they utilized and at what frequency?
- Which grade students are more autonomous- first, second or third-year students?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Learner autonomy has recently become one of the most crucial issues in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) for probably four decades. Since the 1980s there has been a lot of research into learner autonomy as educators emphasize the role of being autonomous learners who can apply autonomy in language learning.

Learners can succeed in learning a foreign language if only they can take on responsibility for their own learning process. Those who make decisions about what to learn how to learn and how to be assessed can be more successful than others. Active learner involvement is an important factor which can impact foreign language learning. Learners should be actively involved in the learning process so that they can be aware of how to develop their language skills.

Learners usually need to learn how they learn. Teachers can train their learners to learn how to learn. This can allow them to study English independently of their teachers. Otherwise, learners will always rely on their teachers and they will not accomplish any progress in their education. This would be considered as failure in promoting autonomous learners.

Learners' view of language learning plays an important role in student achievement. When learners have control over the learning process, this can help them to become more successful in language learning. They need to become autonomous learners who can be encouraged to view themselves as very important participants. This insight into language learning can assist them in

learning English successfully. Language learning is individually constructed, so all learners need to be autonomous to reach the required outcomes.

This will be a very important study for educationalists and teachers. Teachers should learn to put learners responsible for their language learning, so this research will help them develop learner autonomy and guide their students to learn to study independently. When learners are responsible for the improvement of their language, they will make a lot of progress.

Self-directed learning is a very important issue in which teachers and educationalists need to deal with. Learners need to be self-directed rather than spoon-fed. For this reason, they only need to be guided and trained by teachers. When teachers train learners to learn how to learn, they can be more successful than those who are not aware of study skills and strategies.

### **1.7 Limitations**

The scope of the current study is considered as a limitation by the researcher. That is, the setting where this study took place is a university in Istanbul with a small number of participants. The aim was to investigate the learners' perceptions of learner autonomy; therefore, it cannot be generalized to all other contexts. Even though one university can be a representative of all universities across the country, it still cannot be claimed that one will find compatible results with all the universities in Turkey because all the universities follow more or less the same educational principles.

### **1.8 Definitions of Key Terms**

Autonomy: (Holec, 1981; cited in Little, 1991, p. 7). Defines autonomy as the capability of being a controller of your own way of learning that includes being in charge of what pupils are willing to learn.

Autonomous learner: According to Holden (2002) learners who can recognize both the cognitive and the meta-cognitive aspects are considered to be more conscious about their responsibilities in language learning process. They are capable of establishing different opportunities to learn any structure, capable of

observing their progress in learning, and have the capability to actively administer their own learning outside the classroom.

**Learner autonomy:** (Thornbury, 2006) having the capacity to manage both the responsibilities and controlling one's own learning. This can be done in two different settings, an institutionalized context or entirely away from the teacher's involvement or any other institution.

**Learner Responsibility:** if the pupils are willing to accept the idea that their potentials are highly appreciated and decisive they are to be considered autonomous learners as well as responsible learners. Furthermore, they are able to edit whatever is related to their own progress and they are likely to pay lots of attention to the available resources which might also include all activities within the classroom (Scharle and Szabo2000).



## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following section presents the literature related to the topic of learner autonomy, in particular learners' perceptions of learner autonomy. This part contains fifteen sections along with their related sub-categories. This literature section starts with some universal definitions of learner autonomy, together with the learner autonomy and dominant philosophies underlying learning, which is followed by a comprehensive discussion elaborating some previous studies which have been conducted on both the student and the teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy. The later section is devoted to some approaches related to fostering learner autonomy in language classrooms, together with the approaches to fostering learner autonomy outside language classrooms. The next section presents the characteristics of autonomous learners. Followed by a section to elaborate reasons for promoting learner autonomy. The following section of this chapter deals with the principles for learner autonomy. another section is discussing the relationship between learning style and learner autonomy. Followed by the section which clarifies the relationship between learner autonomy and learning strategies. The next section is concerned with the relationship between motivation and learner autonomy. Followed by a section about learner training and learner autonomy. The later section elaborates the applications of learner autonomy and the last section demonstrates the levels of autonomous learning.

### **2.2 Definitions of Learner Autonomy**

There are different definitions of learner autonomy and autonomy can take a variety of different forms depending on learning context, learning content, process of learning and learner characteristics. The oldest definition of autonomy from Holec (1981) describes autonomy as “the ability to take charge of his or her learning.” (p. 3) According to Little (1994), autonomy can be recognised in a wide variety of

behaviours “as a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action.” (p. 81)

Benson (2001) defines it as “the capacity to take control of one’s own learning” (p. 47) because it allows for easier examination than ‘charge’ or ‘responsibility’. Benson and Voller (1997, p. 2, cited in Thanasoulas 2000) suggest the term autonomy

- for situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
- for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
- for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
- for the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning; and
- for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

A helpful approach might be to describe what autonomy is not. According to Littlewood (1994, p. 81) autonomy is not:

- a synonym for self-instruction - autonomy is not limited to learning without a teacher,
- a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best as they can - autonomy does not entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher,
- something that teachers do to learners - it is not another teaching method,
- a single, easily described behaviour,
- a steady state achieved by learners.

### **2.3 The Learning Underlined by Both Learner Autonomy and Dominant Philosophies**

In relation to learner autonomy, there are three important prevailing philosophies of learning: experiential learning, humanism and constructivism.

The first philosophy of learning related to learner autonomy is experiential learning which refers basically to the concept 'learning by doing'. As the concept suggests, being autonomous learner means that learners should organize all concepts related to learning in a way most appropriate to them:

- being in charge of their own learning,

- being able to develop their language skills and managing their tasks through gaining self-concept,
- being producers of the language rather than just consumers to the knowledge they get from their teachers.

All this can be done by stimulating learners through the use of their innate capacities, independent thoughts and being able to give judgments. In short, according to Kohonen (1992), experiential learning is a way of activating these capacities.

A widespread practice of experiential learning in language learning is project work whose advantages have been discussed by Legutke and Thomas (1991) as an effective method of facilitating autonomy. Some of the goals of project work are:

- managing and carrying out the work,
- planning, dealing and interacting with others,
- scrutinizing the work conclusively,
- manipulating and interpreting ideas in speech or writing, and so on.

Learners have the opportunity to learn autonomously in project work. The project-based learning aims to provide language learners with more opportunities to receive comprehensible input and so to produce comprehensible output (Beckett & Miller, 2006, p. 4). Such opportunities are presented in meaningful contexts where learners are not provided with only academic subjects, but with instruments for expression and comprehension in a foreign language context as well.

The second philosophy related to learner autonomy is "humanism" which has been of a great interest to educators since the early 1970s. Humanism is related to psychology and 'self' is the main focus of humanism. There are two pioneers of humanism: Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, both of whom are the people precisely behind the evolution and development of humanistic psychology. The elements of humanistic psychology are not new (Underhill 1989). According to (Wang, 2005), humanism is concerned with different aspects related to the humans' inner world: feelings, thoughts, and emotions of individuals as the foreground of other human achievements.

Moskowitz (1994) and Muishra (2000) define humanistic education as a way of relating that emphasizes self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and getting in

touch with the strengths and positive qualities of others and ourselves. Elias and Merriam (1980) Heimstra and Brockett (2008) believe that humanism is associated with the freedom, autonomy. From their perspective "human beings are capable of making significant personal choices within the constraints imposed by heredity, personal history, and environment" (p. 118). They have also declared that the human needs are the most important concern that the humanistic principles try to emphasize. According to Elias and Merriam (2004), some of the assumptions underlying humanism are:

- individuals are free and autonomous and therefore, they can make major personal choices;
- individuals are urged to move toward self-actualization;
- human nature is inherently good;
- human beings have unlimited potential for growth and development;
- self-concept has a significant role in growth and development;
- each person defines reality by himself/herself;
- individuals have responsibility to both themselves and to others.

Stevick (1990) claims that humanism has been employed in different meanings related to foreign language learning (FLL) and those meanings are of five types of overlapping emphasis:

- **Social Relations:** Humanism encourages friendship and cooperation, and rejects whatever may reduce them.
- **Intellect:** Humanism rejects whatever interferes with the free use of mind, and is doubtful about whatever cannot be tested intellectually.
- **Feelings:** Humanism rejects whatever causes people to feel bad or whatever destroys enjoying aesthetics.
- **Responsibility:** Humanism accepts the need for public scrutiny, criticism, and correction, and disapproves whoever or whatever denies the importance of such issues

- Self-actualization: Humanism believes that the search for realizing one's uniqueness leads to liberation.

The third philosophy concerning learner autonomy is constructivism. Benson and Voller (1997) define constructivism as "the process of learning helping learners to construct their own version of target language" (p. 21). Therefore, learners need to be responsible for their own learning. Throughout the learning process, individual responsibility of decision-making is one of the most propped versions of autonomy by constructivist approaches (Candy, 1989). In one way or another, the term "constructivism" encourages and stimulates self-directed learning as a necessity for language learning. The most valuable points about constructivist approaches to learning are:

- creativity is a highly appreciated term in autonomous learning;
- interaction and engagement with the target language should be encouraged by autonomy;
- the pedagogical aspects of autonomy dedicate great focus on learners' attitudes and behaviours. Those aspects suggest that learners' freedom in creating their own way of learning is a precious factor in constructivist approaches.

#### **2.4 Studies related to Students and Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy**

Both perceptions of teachers and students about learner autonomy are of great importance in the field of the research for several reasons: First, it is important to know whether teachers and learners have positive or negative views regarding learner autonomy. Second, it is important to be aware of to what extent students are involved in the learning process through decision-making. Third, it is important to have an idea of whether students are able or have the potential to become autonomous learners. Finally, it is important to be aware of the most successful ways of fostering learner autonomy based on students' perceptions of learner autonomy. Most of the previous studies which have been conducted on both students and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy aim to explore the students' perception and understanding of the learning process.

Al Asmari (2013) states that the language learning process works through the learners' own reflection on how they learn and it makes learners active in the sense that they learn to analyse their learning strategies. Throughout his study, practices and prospects of learner autonomy: teachers' perceptions, he has found:

- it is important to provide learner training together with the studies and make it an integral part of the teaching process so as to help learners become autonomous;
- A teacher should initiate the learning process by sharing the course objectives, contents and methodology in the beginning of each academic session;
- A strong preference for a more autonomous learning process, but the teachers themselves have lacked proper training and expertise in this area;
- The autonomous learner takes a proactive role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing himself/herself of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher. Also, the teachers expect learners to work independently and take responsibility for their learning;
- Learners are challenged to manage their language studies in a variety of ways like reflecting on their own thinking process, evaluate their performance and make important decisions regarding their studies;
- An autonomous teacher should be aware of his own personal influence on the learning process, understand pedagogy and skills in management;
- The teacher is no longer the knowledge supplier; a manager, resource person and counsellor;
- Teachers' concerns about learner autonomy need to be addressed before autonomous learning initiatives are initiated in the classroom;
- The teacher should involve learners in their own learning, giving them ownership of learning objectives and the learning process and getting the learners to reflect about learning and about the target language.

Another research on learner perceptions of learner autonomy was conducted by Mineishi (2010). The study focuses on the differences between successful and less

successful learners with regard to their perceptions of learner autonomy. He claims that less successful learners are in the process of acquiring reactive autonomy. In other words, they react to becoming autonomous. Therefore, they should be encouraged to promote autonomy and possess proactive autonomy.

Additionally, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) investigated the relationship between learner autonomy and student achievement. The results are as follows:

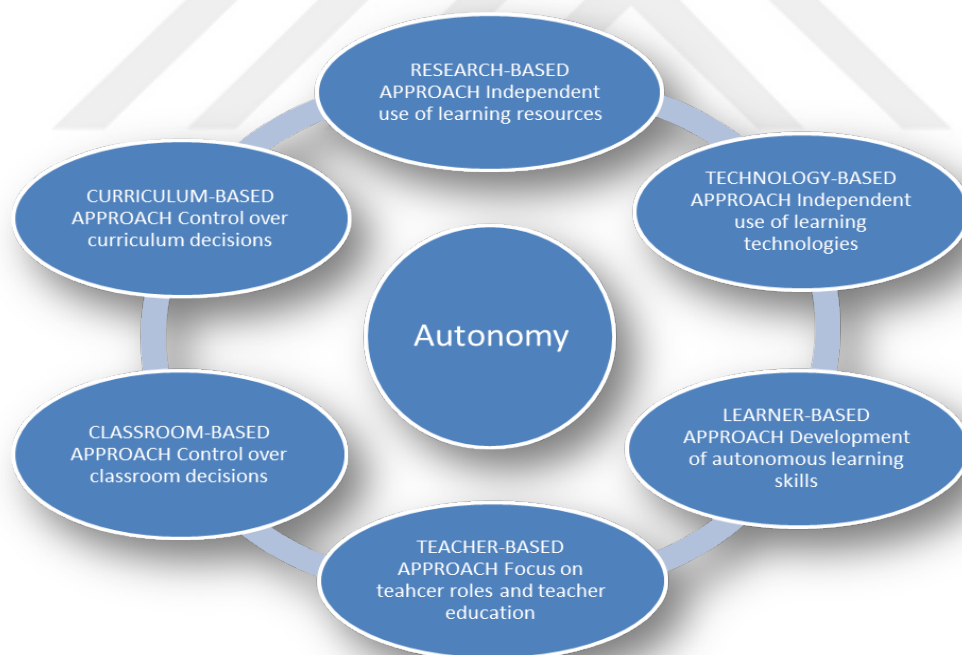
- Learner autonomy involves learners in having the freedom and/or ability to make choices and decisions.
- In terms of the role of learner autonomy in L2 learning, a large number of teachers have agreed that learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner and that learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than less successful one.
- Teachers are more positive about the desirability of student involvement than they are about its feasibility. Student involvement in decision making is seen as the most feasible in relation to materials, topics, and activities and the least feasible in relation to choices about objectives and assessment.
- The challenges identified by teachers in promoting learner autonomy can be grouped into learner factors (lack of motivation; lack of skills for independent learning), institutional factors (an overloaded curriculum; limited resources to promote learner autonomy), and teacher factors (lack of teacher autonomy; low expectations of what learners can achieve). In relation to institutional constraints, one teacher wrote ‘in the short time that I have to teach such an overwhelming amount of material, there is very little I can do to promote true learner autonomy’.

Furthermore, Balçıkanlı (2010) in his study on students and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy has found that both students and teachers have positive attitudes towards the adoption of learner autonomy principles. On the other hand, most of the teachers do not want their future students to take part in the decision-making process concerning the time and place of the course and the textbooks to be followed. He has also found that teacher educators are recommended to encourage their student teachers to engage in out-of-class tasks; to involve them in decision-making on the learning/teaching processes and to employ portfolios and teacher logs for the

development of practical knowledge and thinking operations. One of his major findings in his study is that student teachers have a clear view of learner autonomy and the involvement of students in the learning process. They have agreed with the idea that students should be involved in the decision-making process concerning the objectives of the course, classroom management, homework tasks, and the selection of materials.

## 2.5 Approaches to Fostering Learner Autonomy in Language Classrooms

Fostering autonomy, which is based on the enhancement of individual autonomy, is of great importance to English language teaching (ELT). The following section will present the approaches to fostering learner autonomy. Benson (2001) has classified language learning autonomy into six factors which will be presented below and will be discussed in further details.



**Figure 2.1:** English language learning autonomy with its rehearse frameworks (Benson, 2001)



### **2.5.1 Resource-based approach**

Resource-based approach involves using learning resources independently. Therefore, it gives students a chance to practise autonomy by programming their own learning, deciding on their learning materials, monitoring their own progress and assessing themselves. Learners have to take control, facilitate, and direct their own learning through discovery as well as their association with didactic sources (Benson, 2001).

The term "self-access" has been defined as a way of describing materials that are designed and organized in such a way that students can select and work on their own" (Sheerin, 1991, p.147). Students will be given a chance to self-study and to be in charge of their own learning only if the term self-access is stimulated. As the definition suggests, learners will be responsible for what materials to be taken and studied and also the way of how to use such materials (Edge & Wharton, 1998). Self-study can be acquired through the use of a variety of authentic sources which qualify learners to specify their needs, decide on their aims of learning, choosing the most appropriate resources, and studying away from, and independently of, the teacher as well as being able to evaluate their own progress and improvement (Sheerin, 1997).

Another definition of the term "self-access" is proposed by (Gardner and Miller, 1999, as cited in Benson, 2001) as a procedure of persuading the students to become autonomous and not relying on their teacher. The following resource aspects: the self-access learning, the self-studying, the self-instruction and the distance schooling are not qualified to make any progress in terms of fostering learner autonomy in language learning due to the obvious reduction of imperfect assistance and enough elaborations of how to use those resources.

### **2.5.2 Technology-based approach**

Educational technology is the use of both physical hardware, software, and educational theoretic to facilitate learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources (Richey 2008). A tremendous number of studies have been conducted to investigate the use of technology for educational purposes. Although all the methods and materials that teachers use are considered to be educational equipment, computers and the internet are the first to come in mind when hearing the term "technology". In relation to the use of technology in language learning, in particular to promote learner autonomy,

Benson (2001, pp. 141-142) claims that computer assisted language learning differs from self-access learning in terms of:

- it gives\* more opportunities for more collaboration and it increases learners' motivation to learn about new technologies which may influence their learning as autonomous learners;
- in terms of data collected based on the type of language used;
- a good computer- assisted language learning environment for language improvement.

Dang and Robertson (2010) conducted a study on computer mediated communication (CMC). They investigated the association together with the influence of computer on promoting autonomous learners. In their study, they found that there is a close connection between the learners' socio-cultural competence and learner autonomy. Both professionals and educationalists in the field of ELT have to benefit from the use of learners' social e-habits for achieving educational purposes (Hamilton, 2013).

Another study on (CMC) carried out by Ankan and Bakla (2011), who focus on blog-writing as a means to fostering learner autonomy. In their study, they found that students could be highly involved in the process of decision-making through writing blogs. In other words, they are no longer relying on their teacher. On the other hand, although learners have taken part in the process of making decisions, the majority of them had problems with technology and the language competence. As a result, the researchers claimed that teachers need to make more efforts in order to engage their students in the process of decision-making in addition to fostering their independency of learning a new language.

### **2.5.3 Curriculum-based approach**

As the term autonomy suggests, learners need to be involved in planning for the learning process. The current approach supports the idea that learners can contribute to the syllabus design or curriculum development. In other words, learners are expected to participate in the decision-making process, choosing the content, and following the most appropriate procedures of learning. According to Benson (2001), this can be done through cooperation of the teacher with students.

Teachers should incorporate relevant content in the curriculum. Brown (1995) has listed some aspects in which any curriculum will be related to students' preferences:

- learning approaches,
- attitudes toward learning,
- learning styles,
- the nature of effective learning,
- degree of learner control over their own learning,
- what constitutes effective teaching,
- patterns of interaction, learning activities,
- strategies used in learning (p. 187)

He believes that involving all these concepts is a necessity in engaging learners in curriculum design and in promoting learner autonomy.

Stimulating learner involvement in the decision-making process is one of the goals of curriculum-based approach. This highlights the need for interaction between the teacher and learners. To give an example, Cotterall (2000) argues that designing a proper language course cannot be well acquired without a good promotion of learner autonomy. The five most crucial principles in his research are:

- tasks,
- thinking about how to learn; learning strategies,
- learner goals,
- learning process,
- learning styles.

To boost learner autonomy, the five principles need to be well considered when teachers design a language course.

Another study conducted by Nunan (1999) shows that a mutual reorganization between the teacher and learners should be well considered when they create the curriculum to promote learner autonomy. When students are involved in designing and making decisions about their own learning, the learning process will be more

purposeful, highly effective, and autonomy will be achieved. They have the potential to focus on the content of what and how to learn.

#### **2.5.4 Classroom-based approach**

For students to be engaged in the process of describing goals regulation, assessment as well as the decision-making process in their own learning progress, teachers can establish or create a favourable and communicative classroom environment. Both pair and group work can stimulate learners to be in charge of their own learning (Benson, 2001).

Miller and Ng (1996) used the application of peer-assessment strategies aiming to involve learners in the learning process. They found that learners are in need of being able to both assess and be assessed by their peers. In a similar way, Bullock (2010) studied the integration of peerassessment and self-assessment in daily class activities with the purpose of promoting learner autonomy.

Learners need to make decisions about the learning process. They can participate in the decisions of the three components of curriculum involving the selection of content or materials, methodology and evaluation. For example, Asim (2013) suggests that learners should be involved in taking charge of these three stages so that they will become autonomous learners. In order to stimulate learner autonomy, and to achieve an autonomous learning environment, Yıldırım (2012) and Asim (2013) claim that learners need to gradually take responsibilities for their own learning. Over time those responsibilities could be increased. This will indicate that students are making progress in their learning process.

##### **2.2.1 Learner-based approach**

To succeed in learning a foreign language, learners need to learn how they learn. As (Benson, 2001) has announced “the primary goal of all approaches is to help learners become better language learners” (p. 142). All methods and approaches seeking to promote learner autonomy based on the learners' perspectives will be seen as emphasizing the production of both behavioural and psychological alterations over the learners who are in charge of their learning (Benson, 2001, p. 143). The sense behind this approach is to develop the metacognitive strategies to fostering learner autonomy. In other words, learners learn how they learn; they control their learning through organizing, planning and evaluating when they focus on a task or activity.

Ng and Confessore (2010), who have investigated the association of multiple learning styles with fostering learner autonomy, have found that autonomous learners are connected to some common learning styles: competitive, collaborative, participant, dependent and independent. Moreover, students who are able to activate different learning styles in different learning environments are more autonomous than the students who are stuck with only one learning style.

### **2.5.5 Teacher-based approach**

The teacher-based approach focuses on the teacher autonomy. Based on this approach, (Harmer, 2012) assumes that teachers play some different significant roles in order to make the learning process flexible and quite smooth rather than feeding their learners with the knowledge. Some of those different roles teachers assume are organizers, monitors, facilitators, counsellors, participants, feedback providers, advisers, editors and resource. (Barfield et al, 2002, define teacher autonomy as "Characterized by recognition that teaching is always contextually situated, teacher autonomy is a continual process of inquiry into how teaching can best promote autonomous learning for learners.

Teacher autonomy involves understanding and making explicit the different constraints that a teacher may face so that teachers can work collaboratively towards confronting constraints and transforming them into opportunities for change. The collaboration that teacher autonomy requires suggests that outside the classroom, teachers need to develop institutional knowledge and flexibility in dealing with external constraints. It also suggests that teacher autonomy can be strengthened by collaborative support and networking both within the institution and beyond. The term negotiation is forming an integral part related to the process of developing teacher's autonomy" (p.218).

Furthermore, negotiation skills; institutional knowledge in order to start to address effectively constraints on teaching and learning; willingness to confront institutional barriers in socially appropriate ways to turn constraints into opportunities for change; readiness to engage in lifelong learning to the best of an individual's capacity; reflection on the teaching process and environment; commitment to promoting learner autonomy" are all aspects and concepts that have to be acquired by all teachers to be considered as autonomous.

To be considered as an autonomous teacher, the first to be done is to hold and believe in the idea of “an evaluative stance towards elements of the teaching and learning context over which she has a degree of control” McGrath (2000). Another case study conducted by Feryok (2013) which considers teacher autonomy as the standard base that consists of concepts as teachers' perception and practice supports this view. The findings of the study are as follows:

- to stimulate learner autonomy, teachers should provide their students with a very well scheduled program which will provide students with different types of activities including a number of options to be carried within the classroom.
- students will be able to monitor and control all the different factors in the learning process.
- for fostering learner autonomy to be achieved, teachers' knowledge about learner autonomy has to be quite sufficient.

## **2.6 Approaches to fostering learner autonomy outside language classrooms**

Almost all the recent movements are directed toward achieving the goal of learner-centeredness in terms of education; particularly learner autonomy. To put another way, it is not easy for teachers to perfectly perform the different underlying principles when it comes to learner autonomy. The already existing materials and tools followed may not be quite adequate in relation to student improvement, attentiveness, and the required skills. A list of approaches known as specialist approaches, which have been applied for fostering learner autonomy will be provided below.

### **2.6.1 Learner -Training Approach**

Learners need to be well trained to become autonomous. Rubin and Thompson (1994) claim that, in this approach, in order to promote students' skills to be more independent and in charge of their own learning and also to increase their equivocation of how important it is to be able to learn outside the classroom, a number of special courses and even short seminars can be held to achieve those goals. Moreover, to avoid the focus on language skills only, this approach provides courses consisting of strategy instructions and some study skills.

### **2.6.2 Strategy Instruction Approach**

For achieving the aim of explicitly fostering learner autonomy, a good number of institutions have created and developed different tools in which they can manage the language learning process appropriately. Some examples of this are as follows:

- tandem learning programs and personal learning environments in which the goal is to facilitate and create links between formal and informal learning (Schwienhorst 2007).
- portfolios like those the European Union has developed (Ekbatani & Pierson, 2000).
- an online learning environments are developed in order to provide students with materials to encourage self-study, tips to improve independency in learning and create opportunities for interaction and communication between both the staff and students (White, 2003).

This approach is often presented as being part of a systematic classroom teaching, and some other times presented as private short courses or classes on language learning strategies Macaro (2001) & Oxford (1990).

### **2.6.3 Self-Access Approach**

Self- access is a one of the best ways to apply learner autonomy. Gardner & Miller (1999) argue that one of the most widespread ways of accomplishing autonomy is the self-access approach, so the creation of suitable and available resources for more independent learning process and highly collaborative staff members is the highly appreciated goal of self-access centre or even the on-line self-access materials. The self-access learning process is sometimes incorporated within the classroom in which there is a corporation between teachers and their students. They work together and sometimes the term “self-access” is applied away from the classroom where learners seek to practise language to achieve personal purposes independently of the teacher. It is worth noticing that in North America, providing or writing centres usually carries out an analogous role.

## **2.6.4 Language Advising or Language Counselling Approach**

Learners will always need guidance which will help them with the learning process. According to Mozzon-McPherson and Vismans (2001), this approach involves a meeting between learners and their teachers in order to discuss students' goals, needs, progress and achievements. Furthermore, the adviser provides students with appropriate feedback, the best materials they can benefit from and recommends them how to plan their own learning to achieve success, which is a good metacognitive strategy to help learners how to learn. This approach is considered to be a kind of language support.

## **2.7 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners**

Learners need to ask themselves the question of whether they want to learn a language and then to be able to decide what to learn. Furthermore, if learners are able to skilfully organize their time to overcome any difficulties and issues they may face during the process of learning, they will be viewed as autonomous learners (Ho and Crookall, 1995). To help learners to become autonomous, Nunan, Lai and Keobke (1999) have suggested that learners should be:

- given opportunities to select content and learning tasks and also when they are provided with opportunities to evaluate their own progress;
- actively involved in productive use of the target language rather than merely reproducing language models provided by the teacher or the textbook;
- encouraged to self-monitor and self-assess;
- systematically incorporating strategies training into the learning process;
- encouraged to reflect critically on their learning process;
- encouraged to find their own language data and create their own learning tasks.

Similarly, Dickinson (1993) lists five qualities that learners must possess in order to be considered as autonomous learners:

- They are able to identify strategies that are not working for them;
- They are able to formulate their own learning objectives;



- They are able to identify what has been taught;
- They are able to monitor their own learning;
- They are people who can do, select and implement appropriate learning strategies.

Scharle and Szabo (2000) emphasize the importance of training learners in terms of responsibility:

- Responsible learners do not have to be especially keen on team work, but they are willing to cooperate with the teacher and others in the learning group for everyone's benefits;
- Responsible students may not always do their homework, but whenever they fail to do it, they are aware of missing an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the foreign language. This is because they consciously monitor their own progress and make an effort to use available opportunities to their benefit, including classroom activities and homework;
- Responsible learners who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning, and behave accordingly. When doing their homework or answering a question in class, they are not aspiring to please the teacher, or to get a good mark. They are simply making an effort in order to learn something (p. 3).

During their research, they give some examples of an autonomous learner:

- interpreting the teacher's explanations to ask about a certain point in the explanation;
- looking up a word at home that the teacher has used in the classroom but has not taught;
- paying special attention to an aspect language the learner is not so good at.

The answer is that learners behave responsibly as they are consciously making an effort to contribute to their learning. They act independently of the teacher, not waiting to be told what to do (P. 4).

Littlewood (1996: 429) focuses on the levels of autonomy in which the person's behaviour is directed towards making independent decisions:

- Learners participate in determining the nature and progression of their own syllabus;
- Learners are able to make more far-reaching decisions about goals, meanings and strategies;
- Learners are able to make decisions in domains which have traditionally belonged to the teacher;
- Learners are able to make their own choices in grammar and vocabulary. This is the initial step towards "autonomous communication";
- Learners begin to choose and shape their own learning contexts;
- Learners are able to use language independently in situations of their choice outside the classroom;
- Learners choose the meanings they want to express and the communication strategies they will use in order to achieve their communicative goals.

According to another study conducted by Breen and Mann (1997:134), learners need to possess eight qualities:

- the desire to learn;
- management of change;
- the learner's stance;
- a robust sense of self;
- a strategic engagement with learning;
- management of change;
- a capacity to negotiate;
- independency.

To become an autonomous learner, learners first need to ask themselves the question of whether they want to learn, and then they need to be able to decide what to learn. Furthermore, if learners are able to skilfully organize their time and overcome any difficulties and issues which they may face during the process of learning, they will be considered to be autonomous learners (Ho and Crookall, 1995).

Likewise, Nunan, Lai and Keobke (1999: 77) claim that for autonomy to be reinforced,

- Learners are provided with good chances to help them choose what content to learn, giving them the chance to assess themselves and their progression;
- Learners are actively engaged in the productive use of the target language instead of simply giving the patterns created by their teachers;
- Learners are stimulated to observe and assess themselves;
- Learners systematically incorporate strategies training into the process of learning;
- Learners are encouraged to reflect critically on their learning process;
- highly stimulated to figure out the language datum of their own and to establish their own assignments.

Scharle and Szabo (2000: 3) overview the ideas and problems in relation to training learners for responsibility:

- Pupils who are independent might not be willing to team up with other learners. On the other hand, such independent learners are highly willing to interact with their teachers in order to help other learners;
- Pupils who are independent might not be willing to work on the given assignments. However, they are conscious that failing to do an assignment means that they have lost an opportunity to increase or even to extend the knowledge they might get from other languages;
- Pupils who are independent know well that making efforts is quite important in relation to the progression of their learning which motivates them to work harder. Independent and autonomous learners pay attention, work on their assignments, engage themselves in their classes just to increase the amount of their knowledge but not to satisfy their teachers.

## **2.8 Reasons for Promoting Learner Autonomy**

Within the field of teaching a language, learning occurs if and only if pupils are participating willingly in the learning process, though teachers are capable of

providing students with all they need to learn Scharle & Szabo (2000). They have also declared that a saucepan of learning autonomy is pivotal with respect to independency and prosperous in language learning. As we are not provided with a stable number of reasons of why to promote learner autonomy, we are going to list some of the most crucial reasons behind the need to fostering learner autonomy:

- Jiao (2005) argues that fostering learner autonomy spectacularly increases students' motivations towards creating a shapely classroom environment.
- Although in non-native settings students are not supplied with sufficient exposure to the objective language, autonomous learners take-charge over the target language in which language learning is simplified.
- Van Esch and St. John (2003) claim that learning environment proposes learners with precious opportunities in which learners try to benefit from them as much as possible by outfitting themselves with different supplies and approaches.

## **2.9 Principles for Learner Autonomy**

There are some principles for achieving autonomous learning. Firstly, students need to be actively involved in the learning process. They can make decisions about the content involving materials and course book, the way of learning and how the teacher will test what they have learnt. The teacher can also provide students with options as well as resources students can have access to. For example, lots of self-directed learning resources can be available. Students can be given options about out-of-classroom activities like assignments or projects. Moreover, students can be supported by their teachers so that they can study language on their own independently of their teacher. If they can learn on their own, they can be self-directed rather than spoon-fed. Finally, teachers can help learners to reflect on learning. This is a very good way for learners to personalise what they have learnt. Students can produce or use language if they can process the knowledge (Benson, 2001).

## **2.10 Relationship between Learning Style and Learner Autonomy**

In today's education world, teachers place learners at the centre of the language learning process. Therefore, learning or cognitive style, which is considered to be a cognitive factor influencing language learning, plays a key role in student achievement.

Harmer defines learning style as "the way that individuals like to learn or learn successfully" (2014: 271). Similarly, Richards (2014: 337) thinks of learning style as a "general disposition or preference to approach learning in particular ways".

Learners approach the learning process differently in the language classroom. Differences in learning styles may be reflected in the preferences learners have for different classroom activities, for teacher roles and learner roles, for a variety of patterns of interaction and for specific modes of learning within and outside the classroom.

A diversity of learners in the classroom can usually respond to the teaching and learning process differently. For this reason, their preferences for the learning process have a great effect on how they respond to different learning situations.

Teachers can explore a variety of learner styles in different ways. They can conduct questionnaires and interviews or do some writing activities in order to get to know their students well.

Various types of learning styles can be available in the language classroom. For example, visual learners who prefer visuals and learn well from reading, auditory learners who learn best from teacher explanation and from some listening activities, kinaesthetic learners who learn best when they actively participate in activities like drama or role play, tactile learners who learn best when they are engaged in "hands on" activities like jigsaw, group learners who enjoy working in a group or with others cooperatively, individual learners who prefer to work on their own and authority oriented learners who like to study English in a teacher-fronted classroom.

Learner styles can help learners to succeed in learning inside and outside of the classroom. There is a close relationship between teacher role and student achievement. If the teacher acts as a facilitator, s/he tries to build good rapport to be very important and also places emphasis on creativity or independent learning. For

example, analytical learners can be encouraged to enquire and challenge what the teachers say. Some students are also eager to use English by communicating in front of the class

Learning style and learner autonomy have a lot in common. Firstly, good language learners are aware of their preferences for learning. This can make their learning process easier. Secondly, as they get to know themselves well, they will be more self-directed and creative. Thirdly, they can learn to act independently because knowledge is individually constructed. For instance, individual learners are capable of learning new information by themselves and remembering the material better if they learn it alone. Finally, teachers can both respond to a diversity of learners in the classroom and facilitate them to become autonomous learners with different learning styles inside and outside the classroom.

### **2.11 Relationship between Learner Autonomy and Learning Strategies**

Language learning strategies are defined as "thoughts and actions consciously selected by learners to assist them in learning and using language in general and in the completion of specific language tasks" by Cohen (2011; 682). Learners can take on a more active role in language learning process to be able to manage their learning thanks to learning strategies they use.

Learning strategies focus on how students learn a foreign language. They are the cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies which students use to learn effectively and efficiently. Cognitive strategies are described as the actions learners take to understand or remember learning materials or input and in retrieving it, such as underlying key phrases in a text, making word lists following a lesson to meta-cognitive strategies are related to the ways in which learners "control their language learning by planning what to do, monitoring their progress and then evaluating their performance on a given task" (Cohen 2011:682).

Students need to develop learning strategies for two main reasons so that they can make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable and self-directed and more transferable to new situations. The first reason is that learning strategies help learners to become aware of how they learn in order to expand their repertoire of learning strategies and

to be effective learners in the classroom. The second reason is that learning strategies help learners to develop ways to continue to learn beyond the classroom.

Learner autonomy and learner strategies, especially meta-cognitive strategies go hand in hand. Good language learners are perfect at developing language learning strategies to help them learn how to learn the language. Research which has been carried out on learning strategies is useful because it can be used in teaching and learning or in developing learner autonomy. Cohen (2011: 683) suggests that it is a good idea for teachers to take into account the following subjects to understand the nature of learner strategies better. Firstly, teachers need to be aware of the strategies students already use. Secondly, teachers introduce and model strategies so that students can learn about their learning processes. Thirdly, teachers can provide opportunities to help learners to use strategies independently of their teacher. Finally, teachers need to make students evaluate their strategies they use.

Students need to be trained about learning how they will learn. Teachers should make strategy training an important part of a language lesson. Learners need to be trained about how to learn. They need the teacher's guidance, so the teacher should act as a guide or mentor. This training session involving five stages: preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation and expansion can guide students to learn how they will learn, understand and produce language.

## **2.12 Relationship between Motivation and Learner Autonomy**

Motivation is a very important affective factor related to learners' emotions or feelings. Motivation is defined as a desire to learn a language (Harmer, 2014) or a key factor determining success or failure (Thornbury, 2016). Learners' interest, enthusiasm and passion for learning English can motivate them to learn successfully because motivation can be a predictor of success. Good language learners usually have a high level of motivation, so they are more successful than unmotivated learners.

Self-determination theory (SDT) which was developed by Ryan and Deci (2000) is a theory linking personality, human motivation and optimal functioning. According to this theory, motivation is categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation, a kind of motivation from within, involves doing something as an end in

itself like rewards of enjoyment, interest, challenge or skill and knowledge development. However, extrinsic motivation involves doing something as a means to such outcomes as gaining a qualification, getting a job, pleasing the teacher or avoiding the punishment. Therefore, intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy have a lot in common. Intrinsically motivated learners can become good autonomous learners because they decide whether to learn English by themselves or not.

SDT links self-determination to the importance of three basic human needs. To begin with, learners usually feel the need to participate in determining their own preferences, needs, goals, etc. Secondly, learners need to feel capable of controlling the environment and outcomes. Finally, learners who decide to learn a foreign language on their own rather than being told what to do can learn English more successfully than others because they are more aware of their needs, goals and interests than those who learn English for some external reasons.

Being self-directed or autonomous has a lot in common with motivation. Thouësny and Bradley (2011) state that autonomy and self-direction have are related to learner motivation through self-determination theory. As there is a relationship between intrinsic motivation and self-directedness, learners can develop a good interest in learning and this can help learners to motivate themselves to learn well, which can lead to more effective learning outcomes.

There is a close relationship between autonomous learning and motivation. Firstly, autonomous learners are more motivated. Motivation and learner autonomy are interrelated. Learner autonomy is very important and has a huge effect on motivation. To put it another way, the more autonomous the learners are, the more motivated they are. They both affect their ability to learn the language well. Secondly, autonomous learners are enthusiastic about the learning process. They are also happy to learn a language and willing to do the necessary things to reach their goals. Finally, autonomous learners are more personalised and focused on their studies and tend to take more risks with the language because they enjoy using and producing language (Ushioda, 2011).



### **2.13 Learner Training and Learner Autonomy**

Learners need to be trained to become autonomous learners. They should be taught how to learn a language independently of their teacher. If they are trained to be good language learners who are not dependent on their teacher, they will become more autonomous. Nunan (2003) suggests nine steps to learner autonomy in process of training learners. Firstly, teachers can make instruction goals clear to learners. Secondly, teachers facilitate learners to determine their own goals. They can create their own goals and content. Thirdly, learners can be encouraged to use their second language outside the classroom. A logical extension of this idea is to get learners activating their language outside the classroom itself. Besides this, teachers can raise awareness of a variety of learning processes. It is important to give them a voice in how they learn. Additionally, learners can identify their own preferred styles and strategies. In addition, they can encourage learner choice. In some foreign language contexts, the notion of student choice may be a relatively unfamiliar. Moreover, learners can be allowed to generate their own tasks. Having encouraged learners to make choices, the next step is to provide them with opportunities to modify and adapt classroom tasks. Furthermore, learners can be encouraged to become teachers. At a more challenging level, learners will become teachers. There is nothing like the imminent prospect of having to teach something for stimulating learning. Finally, learners need to be encouraged to become researchers.

### **2.14 Applications of Learner Autonomy**

There are many ways for learners to apply learner autonomy. Reinders (2009) suggests a large number of applications of learner autonomy in English language teaching:

- Needs analysis: The teacher's ultimate goal is to help students create their own profile consisting of their strengths and weaknesses and then to make suggestions about how to deal with the weaknesses.
- Learner training: Students can be provided with the most suitable courses and activities which introduce different strategies to improve their independent learning.

- **Self-monitoring:** This application is basically related to the development of the skills students need in order to promote autonomous learning. For example, a diary, portfolio or video recording can be effective ways to self-monitor so that they can compare their learning.
- **Learning-counselling:** Both teachers and learners usually arrange meetings in which they can discuss and plan for the best ways to develop their own learning.
- **Learning resources:** The school students study at can provide learners with online links in order that they can have access to different resources that facilitate autonomous learning.
- **Self-access centres:** Institutions generally have online facilities which offer learners a rich diversity of self-directed learning resources to fill the gap or consolidate what happens in the classroom.
- **Follow up and support:** the provision of ongoing improvement, encouragement, and also supporting is the key concept of developing learner autonomy.
- **Self-study:** most of the commercial language-learning packages aim to entirely to stimulate and support self-studying in which they are considered to be learner-centred and away from the teacher involvement.

### **2.15 Levels of Autonomous learning**

Learner autonomy is categorised in a number of level. A good example of this is Nunan's levels of autonomous learning. Nunan (1997) has provided a paradigm consisting of five scales of autonomy in the learner action: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence.

- **Awareness:** Pupils are required to be aware of all the educational targets as well as the materials they are using.
- **Involvement:** Pupils are engaged in the process of choosing the targets they are willing to achieve out of several available alternatives.
- **Intervention:** Manipulating, adjusting and adopting the targets and the content of the education system are highly appreciated when learners are involved.

- Creation: The creation of all own targets and purposes has to be done by the learners.
- Transcendence: This term explains that learners personalize what they learn outside the classroom. This means that there is a good relationship between these two sides of the learners' learning process.



### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. It starts with the research design, participants, data collection instruments and finally data analysis procedures in which they are respectively presented.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The current study seeks to investigate the learners' perceptions of learner autonomy at tertiary level. The main objective of the study aims to achieve a better understanding with respect to learners' perceptions of learner autonomy based on four parts: responsibility, ability, motivation, and activities and behaviours. There is a variety of methods used in research like quantitative, qualitative and mixed method.

There is enough number of definitions to mixed method research, but most importantly is the definition by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) "Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems that either approach alone" (P. 5).

Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon. When the aim in conducting quantitative research study is to determine the relationship between one thing [an independent variable] and another [a dependent

or outcome variable] within a population. Quantitative research designs are either **descriptive** [subjects usually measured once] or **experimental** [subjects measured before and after a treatment]. A descriptive study establishes only associations between variables; an experimental study establishes causality. Quantitative research deals in numbers, logic, and an objective stance. Quantitative research focuses on numeric and unchanging data and detailed, convergent reasoning rather than divergent reasoning.

Qualitative research is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places. Qualitative research is designed to reveal the meaning that informs the action or outcomes that are typically measured by quantitative research. Qualitative researchers investigate meanings, interpretations, symbols, and the processes and relations of social life. What this type of research produces is descriptive data that the researcher must then interpret using rigorous and systematic methods of transcribing, coding, and analysis of trends and themes. Qualitative researchers use their own eyes, ears, and intelligence to collect in-depth perceptions and descriptions of targeted populations, places, and events. Their findings are collected through a variety of methods that a researcher often uses: direct observation, open-ended surveys, focus group, in-depth interviews, ect.

Since the current study deals mainly with numerical data collected through the use of a Likert-scale, then a quantitative method of analysis is employed to acquire descriptive results.

### **3.3 Participants**

The participants of the study were ELT students. The study includes a sample of 110 subjects. Our target group of students is divided almost equally into three subgroups: first year students with a total number of 34, second year students with a total number of 45, and third year students with a total number of 31, who are studying English language teaching at Istanbul Aydin University. The mission of the Department of English Language Teaching is to educate English prospective teachers who have scientific and critical thinking skills, are able to

keep up with technological changes, and follow contemporary developments in their fields, depending on the principles of contemporary education.

The aim of the ELT department is to educate highly qualified teachers and researchers who will be able to contribute to all the subjects need to be further studied in English Language. It is worth noting that graduates of the Department of English Language Teaching are students from all different nationalities. They have the right to teach at all levels of the Ministry of National Education. They can also easily find employment in private educational institutions or in organizations requiring foreign language (English). The target group of the study includes both males and females who come from different nationalities including only non-native speakers of English.

**Table 3.1:** Demographic Information of the EFL Students

		F	%
Age	18	5	4.5
	19	20	18.2
	20	27	24.5
	21	37	33.6
	22	5	4.5
	23	5	4.5
	24	5	4.5
	25	6	5.5
Gender	Male	46	41.8
	Female	64	58.2
Calsss	Degree	109	99.1
	Prep-school	1	0.9
Level	Elementary	2	1.8
	Pre-intermediate	5	4.5
	Intermediate	24	21.8
	Upper-intermediate	65	59.1
Length of Study	Advanced	14	12.7
	2 months	2	1.8
	A year	2	1.8
	2 years	5	4.5
Parents' Education	More than 2 years	101	91.8
	Primary school	10	9.1
	Secondary school	18	16.4
	High school	31	28.2
	University	41	37.3
	H.S & University	9	8.2
Has been to an English-speaking country	P.S & S.S	1	0.9
	Yes	29	26.4
	No	81	73.6
	Total	110	100%

\* **Note:** The characters H.S, P.S, and S.S are the contracted forms of **High school, Primary school, and Secondary school**

### 3.4 Data Collection Instruments

The study adopted a Likert-scale to collect the necessary information. A Likert-scale is one of the highly important elements that a researcher needs to take into consideration in which they could acquire valuable data (Creswell 2012, Hinkin 1995). According to Hinkin (1995), one of the most applicable ways to avoid or minimize the response biases to the highest degree which might be caused by either tiredness or exhaustion is that you can keep the measurement short. He adds that to be able to examine the consistency as well as uniformity of items there must be four and above items included in each scale in your Likert-scale.

Likert scales are widely used to measure attitudes and opinions with a greater degree of nuance than a simple “yes/no” question. A Likert Scale is a type of rating scale used to measure attitudes or opinions. With this scale, respondents are asked to rate items on a level of agreement. I.e. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Five to seven items are usually used in the scale. The scale doesn't have to state “agree” or “disagree”; dozens of variations are possible on themes like agreement, frequency, quality and importance. For example:

- Agreement: Strongly agree to strongly disagree.
- Frequency: Often to never.
- Quality: Very good to very bad.
- Likelihood: Definitely to never.
- Importance: Very important to unimportant.

The scale that the study adopted was developed by Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002), (see APPENDIX A), with the title of Developing Learner Autonomy: The Perceptions and Needs of Japanese EFL Learners. The Likert-scale consists of five parts and 47 items. The first part of the Likert-scale collects demographic information about the participants whereas the other parts of the Likert-scale are presented in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2:** Summary of the Questionnaire Categories

Number	Content	Number of items
1	Responsibilities	13
2	Abilities	11
3	Motivation	1
4	Activities and Behaviours (outside class)	17
	Activities and Behaviours (inside class)	5

As Table 3.2, shows there are 47 items in the questionnaire altogether and there are four sub-headings including (1) Responsibilities, (2) Abilities, (3) Motivation, and (4) Activities and Behaviours in and outside the class. There are different rates for measurement, ranging from ‘Not at all to completely’ for the part Responsibilities, ‘Very poor to very good’ for the Abilities, ‘Very high to very low’ for the part Motivation, to ‘Often to never’ for the part Activities and Behaviours in and outside the class.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Procedure**

The statistical analyses were conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software program version 21 to find out the differences between the first, second and third-year students with respect to their responsibilities, abilities, motivation and activities and behaviours in and outside the classroom. The SPSS software program is used by market researchers, health researchers, survey companies, government entities, education researchers, marketing organizations, data miners, and many more for the processing and analyzing of survey data. The collected data were examined by using the one-way ANOVA test. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means of two or more independent (unrelated) groups



(although you tend to only see it used when there are a minimum of three, rather than two groups).



## **4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Throughout the following chapter the findings achieved from the Likert-scale are presented. The next section presents the findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of learner autonomy. The required data of the next section of the current research was collected using a Likert-scale aimed at obtaining a better understanding of the learners' perception of learner autonomy and how to help students become autonomous learners.

### **4.2 Findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of learner autonomy**

This section presents the findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of learner autonomy after they have separately responded to all items included in the Likert-scale. The students have responded to a number of questions related to learner autonomy under the following headings: responsibilities, abilities, motivation, and activities and behaviours in and outside the classroom which aim to promote learner autonomy in language learning. The Likert-scale contains six parts. The first part is designed to collect demographic information about the participants of the study. The second part includes 13 items that aim to elicit the learners' perceptions of their responsibilities, the third part which includes 11 items that aim to find out the learners' perceptions of their abilities, the fourth part that includes 1 item is exposed to elicit learners' perceptions of their level of motivation, and the fifth part which includes 17 items is designed to elicit learners' perceptions about the activities and behaviours they utilize outside class, and the last part which includes 5 items is designed to elicit learners' perceptions about the activities and behaviours they utilize inside class.

#### **4.2.1 Findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their responsibilities**

Over the duration of the second section about responsibility of the Likert-scale, the participants were asked to mark the preferable option among the subscales provided. The Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 reveal the learners' responses given to those items related to the responsibility part. In addition to the results of one way ANOVA test about first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their responsibilities that presented in Table 4.4.



**Table 4.1:** First-year learners' perceptions of their responsibilities\*

	Yours not at all %		Yours a little %		Yours mainly %		Yours completely %		Your Teacher's not at all %		Your Teacher's a little %		Your Teacher's mainly %		Your Teacher's completely %	
	F		F		F		F		F		F	F		F		F
1. Make sure of your progress in a lesson	2.9	1	5.9	2	17.6	6	32.4	11	0.0	0	0.0	0	17.6	6	23.5	8
2. Make sure of your progress in your self-study?	2.9	1	8.8	3	26.5	9	41.2	14	0.0	0	0.0	0	8.8	3	11.8	4
3. Stimulate your learning English?	0.0	0	11.8	4	23.4	11	17.6	6	0.0	0	2.9	1	20.6	7	14.7	5
4. Identify your weakness in your English?	0.0	0	8.8	3	29.4	10	23.5	8	5.9	2	11.8	4	11.8	4	8.8	3
5. Increase your motivation?	2.9	1	2.9	1	38.2	13	8	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0	14.7	5	17.6	6
6. Decide the objectives of your English course?	0.0	0	8.8	3	20.6	7	23.5	8	0.0	0	2.9	1	11.8	4	32.4	11
7. Decide the content of the next English lesson?	0.0	0	0.0	0	23.5	8	23.5	8	0.0	0	0.0	0	11.8	4	41.2	14
8. Choose activities for the next lesson?	0.0	0	2.9	1	20.6	7	17.6	6	0.0	0	0.0	0	32.4	11	26.5	9
9. Decide the duration of each classroom activity?	5.9	2	8.8	3	8.8	3	14.7	5	0.0	0	0.0	0	14.7	5	47.1	16
10. Choose materials to be used in your English course?	0.0	0	11.8	4	14.7	5	20.6	7	0.0	0	2.9	1	5.9	2	44.1	15
11. Evaluate your learning?	0.0	0	2.9	1	23.5	8	35.3	12	2.9	1	0.0	0	20.6	7	44.1	15
12. Evaluate your course?	0.0	0	5.9	2	23.5	8	35.3	12	0.0	0	2.9	1	2.9	1	29.4	10
13. Decide what to learn in your self-study?	0.0	0	5.9	2	17.6	6	38.2	13	0.0	0	0.0	0	8.8	3	29.4	10
<b>General Result</b>	<b>YN</b>		<b>YA</b>		<b>YM</b>		<b>YC</b>		<b>YTN</b>		<b>YTA</b>		<b>YTM</b>		<b>YTC</b>	
	1.12%		7%		22%		26%		0.68%		1.8%		15.16%		26.25%	
	Positive: 48%								Negative: 41.41							

Table 4.1 includes 13 items related to the reponsibility part. First-year learners were asked to answer these questions with the most preferable option among those povided, whether it is their responsibility or their teachers'; ranging from your's not at all to your teacher's completely.

**Table 4.2:** Second-year learners' perceptions of the responsibilities

	Yours at all %		not F		Yours a little % F		Yours mainly % F		Yours completely % F		Your Teacher's not at all % F		Your Teacher's a little % F		Your Teacher's mainly % F		Your Teacher's completely % F	
<b>1.</b> Make sure of your progress in a lesson	0.0	0	2.2	1	37.8	17	31.1	14	0.0	0	0.0	0	11.1	5	17.8	8		
<b>2.</b> Make sure of your progress in your self-study?	0.0	0	6.7	3	33.3	15	37.8	17	0.0	0	2.2	1	6.7	3	13.3	6		
<b>3.</b> Stimulate your learning English?	0.0	0	2.2	1	22.2	10	31.5	14	2.2	1	2.2	1	13.3	6	26.7	12		
<b>4.</b> Identify your weakness in your English?	0.0	0	20	9	13.3	6	26.7	12	0.0	0	2.2	1	15.6	7	22.2	10		
<b>5.</b> Increase your motivation?	2.2	1	2.2	1	15.6	7	20	9	0.0	0	2.2	1	13.3	6	44.4	20		
<b>6.</b> Decide the objectives of your English course?	2.2	1	2.2	1	15.6	7	20	9	0.0	0	2.2	1	13.3	6	44.4	20		
<b>7.</b> Decide the content of the next English lesson?	0.0	0	6.7	3	6.7	3	22.2	10	4.4	2	2.2	1	8.9	4	48.9	22		
<b>8.</b> Choose activities for the next lesson?	0.0	0	11.1	5	8.9	4	17.8	8	0.0	0	2.2	1	8.9	4	51.1	23		

**Table 4.2: (con) Second-year learners' perceptions of the responsibilities**

	Yours at all %		not F		Yours a little % F		Yours mainly % F		Yours completely % F		Your Teacher's not at all % F		Your Teacher's a little % F		Your Teacher's mainly % F		Your Teacher's completely % F	
<b>9.</b> Decide the duration of each classroom activity?	2.2	1	8.9	4	11.1	5	22.2	10	0.0	0	2.2	1	15.6	7	37.8	17		
<b>10.</b> Choose materials be used in your English course?	0.0	0	4.4	2	15.6	7	24.4	11	0.0	0	4.4	2	11.1	5	40	18		
<b>11.</b> Evaluate your learning?	0.0	0	6.7	3	20	9	33.3	15	0.0	0	2.2	1	6.7	3	31.1	14		
<b>12.</b> Evaluate your course?	0.0	0	0.0	0	24.4	11	37.8	17	0.0	0	2.2	1	4.4	2	31.1	14		
<b>13.</b> Decide what to learn in your self -study?	0.0	0	2.2	1	17.8	8	35.6	16	0.0	0	2.2	1	11.1	5	31.1	14		
	YN		YA		YM		YC		YTN		YTA		YTM		YTC			
General Result	0.4%		6.4%		19.5%		26.9%		0.8%		2.5%		10.5%		33%			
	Positive:46%								Negative:43.5%									

Table 4.2 includes 13 items related to the responsibility part. Second-year learners were asked to answer these questions with the most preferable option among those provided, whether it is their responsibility or their teachers'; ranging from your's not at all to your teacher's completely.

**Table 4.3:** Third-year learners' perceptions of responsibilities\*

	Yours not at all % F		Yours a little % F		Yours mainly % F		Yours completely % F		Your Teacher's not at all % F		Your Teacher's a little % F		Your Teacher's mainly % F		Your Teacher's completely % F	
1.Make sure of your progress in a lesson	0.0	0	0.0	0	35.5	11	38.7	12	0.0	0	0.0	0	12.9	4	12.9	4
2.Make sure of your progress in your self-study?	0.00	0	0.0	0	32.3	10	54.8	17	0.0	0	0.0	0	6.5	2	6.5	2
3.Stimulate your learning English?	0.0	0	0.0	0	32.3	10	38.7	12	0.0	0	0.0	0	12.9	4	16.1	5
4.Identify your weakness in your English?	0.0	0	16.1	5	29	9	22.6	7	0.0	0	0.0	0	16.1	5	16.1	5
5.Increase your motivation?	0.0	0	6.5	2	25.8	8	48.4	15	0.0	0	3.2	1	6.5	2	9.7	3
6.Decide the objectives of your English course?	0.0	0	6.5	2	25.8	8	38.7	12	0.0	0	0.0	0	12.9	4	16.1	5
7.Decide the content of the next English lesson?	3.2	1	3.2	1	29.9	9	32.3	10	0.0	0	3.2	1	3.2	1	25.8	8
8.Choose activities for the next lesson?	0.0	0	3.2	1	29.9	9	25.8	8	0.0	0	3.2	1	22.6	7	16.1	5
9.Decide the duration of each classroom activity?	0.0	0	6.5	2	29.9	9	29.9	9	6.5	2	0.0	0	12.9	4	16.1	5
10. Choose materials to be used in your English course?	0.0	0	0.0	0	16.1	5	41.9	13	0.0	0	3.2	1	16.1	5	22.6	7
11.Evaluate your learning?	0.0	0	0.0	0	29.9	9	38.7	12	0.0	0	0.0	0	9.7	3	22.6	7
12.Evaluate your course?	3.2	1	3.2	1	29	9	38.7	12	0.0	0	0.0	0	9.7	3	16.1	5
13.Decide what to learn in your self-study?	0.0	0	3.2	1	25.8	8	58.1	18	0.0	0	0.0	0	3.2	1	9.7	3
	YN		YA		YM		YC		YTN		YTA		YTM		YTC	
General Result	0.5%		4%		26%		40%		0.5%		1%		12%		16%	

Positive: 66%

Negative: 28%

Table 4.3 includes 13 items related to the reponsibility part. Third-year learners were asked to answer these questions with the most preferable option among those povided, whether it is their responsibility or their teachers'; ranging from your's not at all to your teacher's completely.

**Table 4.4:** Dependent Variable (ANOVA): First, second and third-year learners' perceptions of responsibilities.

(I) The Grade	(J) The Grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
First Year	Second Year	12.55556*	3.18480	.000	4.9860	20.1251
	Third Year	6.93548	3.48057	.119	-1.3370	15.2080
Second Year	First Year	-12.55556*	3.18480	.000	-20.1251	-4.9860
	Third Year	-5.62007	3.27140	.203	-13.3954	2.1553
Third Year	First Year	-6.93548	3.48057	.119	-15.2080	1.3370
	Second Year	5.62007	3.27140	.203	-2.1553	13.3954

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



The Table 4.1 reveals some findings, which reflect the first-year learners' perceptions of learner autonomy. They decide whose responsibility it should be—whether it is their responsibility to hold the learning process in the class or their teachers'. It has been found that first-year students do not have great tendency to become autonomous learners. Although the results shown in Table 4.1 show that 48% of the participants have positive tendencies towards being in charge of the learning process in the class, there is still 41.41% of the participants who have negative tendencies to depend on their teachers in learning. For instance, approximately 67.7% (26.5% YM and 41.2% YC) positively agree that it is their responsibility to make sure of their progress in their self-study. On the other hand, around 66.7% (20.6% YTM and 44.1% YTC) of the participants depend on their teachers to evaluate their learning.

The Table 4.2 reveals some findings which reflect the second-year students' perceptions of learner autonomy about whether the teacher or students are responsible for the learning process. The results in Table 4.2 show that although 46% of the participants have positive tendencies towards being in charge of the learning process in the class, 43.5% of the participants who have negative tendencies to learning rely on their teachers in the learning process. According to the Table 4.2, it has been found that the second-year students share almost the same results with the first-year students. For example, almost 71.1% (33.3% YM and 37.8% YC) of the participants believe that it is their responsibility to make sure of their progress in their self-study. However, approximately 60% (8.9% YTM and 51.1% YTC) of the participants depend on their teachers to choose activities for the next lesson.

The findings from this Table 4.3 demonstrate that unlike first and second-year students, third-year students have higher tendency to take responsibility for their own learning. For instance, approximately 87.1% (32.3% YM and 54.8% YC) of the participants believe that it is their responsibility to make sure of their progress in their self-study while only 13% (6.5% YTM and 6.5% YTC) of the participants depend on their teacher to make sure of their progress in their self-study. To respond to another item of this section, nearly 74.2% (25.8% YM and 48.4% YC) of the participants agree that it is their responsibility to increase

their motivation whereas around 16.2% (6.5% YTM and 9.7% YTC) of the participants think that it is their teacher's responsibility.

To find out the differences in responsibilities between the first, second and third-year students, the collected data were examined by using the one way ANOVA. The results show that there is a significant difference between the first and second-year students since that the P value is 0.000, so it is less than 0.05 whereas between the first and third-year students there is no significant difference due to that the P value, which is 0.119, is more than 0.05. Similarly, there is no significant difference between the second and third-year students because the P value, which is 0.203, is more than 0.05.

#### 4.2.2 Findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their abilities

This section presents the first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their abilities. The list of the following Tables 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 reveal the findings of the first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their abilities. The Table 4.8 presents the one way ANOVA test results of the first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their abilities.

**Table 4.5:** First-year learners' perceptions of abilities

	Very Poor %	F	Poor %	F	Okay %	F	Good %	F	Very Good %	F
1.Choosing learning activities for your class?	5.9	2	5.9	2	44.1	15	38.2	13	5.9	2
2.Choosing learning activities outside class?	0.0	0	23.5	8	47.1	16	8.8	3	20.6	7
3.Choosing learning for your class?	0.0	0	17.6	6	50	17	26.5	9	5.9	2
4.Choosing learning objectives for your self-study?	0.0	0	5.9	2	50	17	26.5	9	17.6	6

**Table 4.5:** (con) First-year learners' perceptions of abilities

	Very Poor		Poor	F	Okay	F	Good	F	Very Good	F
	%	F	%		%		%		%	
<b>5.</b> Choosing the content of every class?	5.9	2	17.6	6	55.9	19	20.6	7	0.0	0
<b>6.</b> Evaluating your course?	0.0	0	5.9	2	32.4	11	55.9	19	5.9	2
<b>7.</b> Choosing learning materials for your class?	0.0	0	11.8	4	52.9	18	29.4	10	5.9	2
<b>8.</b> Identifying weakness in your English?	0.0	0	2.9	1	38.2	13	35.3	12	23.5	8
<b>9.</b> Evaluating your learning?	0.0	0	0.0	0	44.1	15	44.1	15	11.8	4
<b>10.</b> Choosing learning materials to be used outside class?	8.8	3	20.6	7	50	17	20.6	7	0.0	0
<b>11.</b> Deciding the duration of each activity in your self-study?	5.9	2	8.8	3	35.3	12	35.3	12	14.7	5
	VP		P		O		G		VG	
General Result	2.5%		11%		45.5%		31%		0%	
	Negative: 13.5%					Positive: 41%				

Table 4.5 includes 11 items related to the ability part. First-year learners were asked to answer these questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All the provided questions were set to test students' abilities towards learning; ranging from very poor to very good.

**Table 4.6:** Second-year learners' perceptions of abilities

	Very Poor		Poor		Okay		Good		Very Good		
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	
<b>1.</b> Choosing learning activities for your class?	0.0	0	4.4	2	35.6	16	37.8	17	22.2	10	
<b>2.</b> Choosing learning activities outside class?	0.0	0	6.7	3	26.7	12	46.7	21	20	9	
<b>3.</b> Choosing learning objectives for your class?	0.0	0	11.1	5	37.8	17	37.8	17	13.3	6	
<b>4.</b> Choosing learning objectives for your self-study?	1.2	1	8.9	4	17.8	8	35.6	16	35.6	16	
<b>5.</b> Choosing the content of every class?	2.2	1	11.1	5	26.7	12	44.4	20	15.6	7	
<b>6.</b> Evaluating your course?	0.0	0	6.7	3	26.7	12	35.6	16	31.1	14	
<b>7.</b> Choosing learning materials for your class?	0.0	0	6.7	3	35.6	16	33.3	15	24.4	11	
<b>8.</b> Identifying weakness in your English?	2.2	1	8.9	4	24.4	11	37.8	17	26.7	12	
<b>9.</b> Evaluating your learning?	0.0	0	6.7	3	28.9	13	40	18	24.4	11	
<b>10.</b> Choosing learning materials to be used outside class?	0.0	0	8.9	4	28.9	13	42.2	19	17.8	8	
<b>11.</b> Deciding the duration of each activity in your self-study?	2.2	1	13.3	6	20	9	35.6	16	28.9	13	
			<b>VP</b>		<b>P</b>		<b>O</b>		<b>G</b>		<b>VG</b>
<b>General Result</b>			0.9%		8.5%		28%		39%		3.6%
			Negative: 9.4%				Positive: 62.6%				

Table 4.6 includes 11 items related to the ability part. Second-year learners were asked to answer these questions with the most preferable option among

those provided. All the provided questions were set to test students' abilities towards learning; ranging from very poor to very good.

**Table 4.7:** Third-year learners' perceptions of abilities

	Very Poor %	F	Poor %	F	Okay %	F	Good %	F	Very Good %	F
1.Choosing learning activities for your class?	6.5	2	6.5	2	32.3	10	35.5	11	19.4	6
2.Choosing learning activities outside class?	0.0	0	12.9	4	35.5	11	25.8	8	25.8	8
3.Choosing learning objectives for your class?	0.0	0	6.5	2	38.7	12	29	9	25.8	8
4.Choosing learning objectives for your self-study?	0.0	0	0.0	0	32.3	19	38.7	12	29	9
5.Choosing the content of every class?	0.0	0	6.5	2	38.7	12	32.3	10	22.6	7
6.Evaluating your course?	6.5	2	6.5	2	29	9	35.5	11	26.6	7
7.Choosing learning materials for your class?	0.0	0	9.7	3	32.3	10	19.4	6	38.7	12
8.Identifying weakness in your English?	0.0	0	6.5	2	25.8	8	35.5	11	32.3	10
9.Evaluating your learning?	0.0	0	9.7	3	19.4	6	32.3	10	38.7	12
10.Choosing learning materials to be used outside class?	3.2	1	19.4	6	32.3	10	32.3	10	12.9	4
11.Deciding the duration of each activity in your -study?	0.0	0	19.4	6	16.1	5	45.2	14	19.4	6
General Result	VP		P		O		G		VG	
	1.5%		9.5%		30.2%		33%		26%	
	Negative: 11%					Positive: 59%				

able 4.7 includes 11 items related to the ability part. Third-year learners were asked to answer these questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All the provided questions were set to test students' abilities towards learning; ranging from very poor to very good.

**Table 4.8:** Dependent Variable (ANOVA): First, second and third-year learners' perceptions of abilities.

(I) Grade	(J) Grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval Lower Bound	Confidence Upper Bound
First Year	Second Year	-19.48824*	2.08626	.000	-24.4468	-14.5297
	Third Year	-4.08824	2.28001	.177	-9.5073	1.3308
Second Year	First Year	19.48824*	2.08626	.000	14.5297	24.4468
	Third Year	15.40000*	2.14299	.000	10.3066	20.4934
Third Year	First Year	4.08824	2.28001	.177	-1.3308	9.5073
	Second Year	-15.40000*	2.14299	.000	-20.4934	-10.3066

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The findings from this section explore the fact that first-year learners have positive attitudes towards their abilities in learning. As the results from Table 4.5 show, 41% (31% G and 10% VG) of the participants have a strong ability to be in charge of their learning whereas only 13.5% (2.5 VP and 11% P) of the participants do not have the ability to take control of their learning. A good example of this is 61.8% (55.9% G and 5.9% VG) of the participants have the ability to evaluate their course while just 5.9% (0.0 VP and 5.9% P) of the participants have a poor ability to evaluate their course. Another item which reveals almost the same results is that 50% (35.3% G and 14.7% VG) of the participants are able to decide the duration of each activity in their self-study whereas 14.7% (5.9% VP and 8.8% P) of the participants are not enough capable of deciding the duration of each activity in their self-study.

According to Table 4.6, the results show that the second-year students have a higher ability than the first-year students due to the items provided in the table above. 62.6% (39% G and 23.6% VG) of the participants have a strong ability to be in charge of their learning whereas only 9.4% (0.9 VP and 8.5% P) of the participants do not have the ability to take control over their learning. For

instance, approximately 66.7% (46.7% G and 20% VG) of the participants are able to choose learning activities outside the classroom. On the other hand, only 6.7% (0.0% VP and 6.7% P) of the participants are not able to choose learning activities outside the classroom. An additional item indicates that almost 71% (35.6% G and 35.6% VG) of the participants are capable of choosing learning objectives for their self-study whereas around 10.1% (1.2% VP and 8.9% P) of the participants are not able to choose learning objectives for their self-study.

As explored in Table 4.7, the third-year students are closely similar to the second-year students in terms of their abilities in learning. Almost 59% (33% G and 26% VG) of the third year participants have shown positive attitudes towards their abilities in their responses to the items provided. For instance, 67.7% (38.7% G and 29% VG) of the participants have positively agreed that they choose the learning objectives for their self-study whereas 0.0% (0.0% VP and 0.0% P) of them do not participate in setting objectives. Moreover, around 58.1% (19.4% G and 38.7% VG) of the participants are able to choose learning materials for their classes. However, only 9.7% (0.0 VP and 9.7% P) of the participants are not able to do so.

The one way ANOVA test indicates some significant differences between the first, second and third-year students in relation to their abilities to learn English autonomously. The results show that there is a significant difference between the first and second-year students in terms of their abilities to learn English independently since the P value, which is 0.000, is less than 0,05. Likewise, there is a significant difference between second and third-year students because the P value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05. On the other hand, there is no difference between the first and third-year students with respect to their abilities to learn English autonomously due to that the P value, which is 0.177, is more than 0.05.

#### **4.2.3 Findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of their motivation**

The learners' perceptions about their level of motivation were examined throughout this section of the Likert-scale. The Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 illustrate the learners' responses on the one item of this section which is how

high is your motivation to learn English; ranging from very high to very low. For further details, the one way ANOVA test is also included in Table 4.12 to determine the differences between first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of motivation.

**Table 4.9:** First-year learners' perceptions of motivation

		Very High		High		Neither		Low		Very Low	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
How high	50	17	44.1	15	5.6	2	0	0	0.0	0	
is											
your											
motivation											
to learn											
English?											
	VH	H	N	L	VL						
General result	50%	44.1%	6%	0.0%	0.0%						
	Positive: 94%					Negative: 0.0%					

Table 4.9 includes 1 item related to the motivation part. First-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. The provided question was set to examine students level of motivation; ranging from very poor to very good.

**Table 4.10:** Second-year learners' perceptions of motivation

		Very High		High		Neither		Low		Very Low	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
How high	37.8	7	46.7	21	8.9	4	2.2	1	4.4	2	
is											
your											
motivation											
to learn											
English?											
	VH	H	N	L	VL						
General result	37.8%	46.7%	8.9%	2.2%	4.4%						
	Positive: 84.5%					Negative: 6.8%					



Table 4.10 includes 1 item related to the motivation part. Second-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. The provided question was set to examine students level of motivation; ranging from very poor to very good.

**Table 4.11:** Third-year learners' perceptions of motivation

	Very High		High		Neither		Low		Very Low	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
How high is your motivation to learn English?	38.7	12	38.7	12	9.7	3	6.5	2	6.5	...2
General result	VH 37.8%		H 46.7%		N 9.7%		L 6.7%		VL 6.5%	
	Positive: 77.4%				Negative: 13.2%					

Table 4.11 includes 1 item related to the motivation part. Third-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. The provided question was set to examine students level of motivation; ranging from very poor to very good.

**Table 4.12:** Dependent Variable (ANOVA): First, second and third-year learners' perceptions of motivation.

(I) Grade	The (J) The Grade	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
First Year	Second Year	-2.37451*	.22202	.000	-2.9022	-1.8468
	Third Year	-.47343	.24264	.130	-1.0501	.1033
Second Year	First Year	2.37451*	.22202	.000	1.8468	2.9022
	Third Year	1.90108*	.22806	.000	1.3590	2.4431
Third Year	First Year	.47343	.24264	.130	-.1033	1.0501
	Second Year	-1.90108*	.22806	.000	-2.4431	-1.3590

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The findings from this section reveal that all students who have participated in this study have a quite high level of motivation to learn English. For instance, 94.1% (50% H and 44.1% VH) of the first-year participants have a highly positive motivation to learning English. 84.5% (37.8% H and 46.7% VH) of the second-year participants are highly motivated in learning English. Finally, 77.4% (37.8% H and 37.8% VH) of the third year participants agreed that they are highly motivated to learn English. According to the facts provided in Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11, it is worth noting that the first-year students are highly motivated to learn English due to the fact that they are still at the beginning of their studies, but as shown in the tables they start losing their motivation gradually as they further their education.

The one way ANOVA demonstrates the differences between the first, second and third-year students' perceptions of their motivation to learn English autonomously. The results clarify that there is a significant difference between the first and second-year students as well as second and third-year students

since that the P value, which is 0.000, for both groups is significantly less than 0.005. Whereas, there is no difference between the first and third-year students since the P value which is 0.0130, is more than 0.05.

#### 4.2.4 Findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom

In this section, the learners were asked to determine the highly performed activities and behaviours outside the classroom. There were 17 items included in this part and the Tables 4.13, 4.14 and 4.15 present the learners' perceptions on the activities and behaviours outside the classroom. For further details, the one way ANOVA test is also included in Table 4.16 to determine the differences between first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom.

**Table 4.13:** First-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours outside class

	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
1.Read grammar books on your own?	11.8	4	26.5	9	44.1	15	17.6	6
2.Done assignments which are not compulsory?	23.5	8	35.3	12	29.4	10	11.8	4
3.Noted down new words and their meanings?	58.8	20	32.4	11	5.9	2	2.9	1
4.Read the newspaper in English?	8.8	3	3.3	12	11.8	4	44.1	15
5.Sent emails in English?	4.7	16	41.2	14	11.8	4	0.0	0

**Table 4.13:** (con)First-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours outside class

	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
6.Read books or magazines in the English?	52.9	18	35.3	12	8.8	3	2.9	1
7.Watched English TV programs?	79.4	27	11.8	4	5.9	2	2.9	1
8.Listened to the radio or podcast in English?	58.8	20	23.5	8	11.8	4	5.9	2
9.Listened to English songs?	85.3	29	14.7	5	0.0	0	0.0	0
10.Talked with foreigners in English?	73.5	25	23.5	8	0.0	0	2.9	1
11.Done English self-study in a group?	38.	13	32.4	11	17.6	6	11.	4
12.Done grammar exercises?	29.	10	29.4	10	26.5	9	14.7	5
13.Watched English movies?	91.2	31	8.8	3	0.0	0	0.0	0
14.Written a diary in English?	14.7	5	14.7	5	14.7	5	55.9	19
15.Used the internet in English?	76.5	26	32.5	8	0.0	0	0.0	0
16.Revised your written work without being told to do so?	26.5	9	52.9	18	11.8 4		8.8	3
17.Attended a self-study centre, for example a CALL room?	2.9	1	17.6	6	14.7 5		64.7	22
		O		S		R		N
General Result	45%		28.6%		12.2%		14.2%	
	Positive: 73.6%				Negative: 26.4%			

Table 4.13 includes 17 items related to the activities and behaviours outside the classroom part. First-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the

most preferable option among those provided. All provided questions were set to examine the learners' perception of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom. Ranging from often to never.

**Table 4.14:** Second-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours outside class

		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
		%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
<b>1.</b>	Read grammar books on your own?	17.8	8	33	15	31.1	14	17.8	8
<b>2.</b>	Done assignments which are not compulsory?	20	9	35.6	16	24.4	11	20	9
<b>3.</b>	Noted down new words and their meanings?	48.9	22	33.3	15	13.3	6	4.4	2
<b>4.</b>	Read the newspaper in English?	26.7	12	24	11	26.7	12	22.2	10
<b>5.</b>	Sent emails in English?	53.3	24	28.9	13	15.6	7	2.2	1
<b>6.</b>	Read books or magazines in the English?	62.2	28	26	12	8.9	4	2.2	1
<b>7.</b>	Watched English TV programs?	80	36	17.8	8	0.0	0	2.2	1
<b>8.</b>	Listened to the radio or podcast in English?	53.3	24	31.1	14	6.7	3	8.9	4
<b>9.</b>	Listened to English songs?	86.7	39	6.7	3	2.2	1	2.2	1
<b>10.</b>	Talked with foreigners in English?	62.2	28	31.1	14	6.7	3	0.0	0
<b>11.</b>	Done English self-study in a group?	33.3	15	28.9	13	17.8	8	2	9

**Table 4.14:** (con) Second-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours outside class

	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
<b>12.</b> Done grammar exercises?	42.2	9	24.4	11	22.2	10	11.1	5
<b>13.</b> Watched English movies?	84.4	38	6.7	3	6.7	3	2.2	1
<b>14.</b> Written a diary in English?	26.7	12	22.2	10	17.8	8	33.3	15
<b>15.</b> Used the internet in English?	80	36	17.8	8	2.2	1	0.0	0
<b>16.</b> Revised your written work without being told to do so?	33.	15	33.3	15	17.8	8	15.6	7
<b>17.</b> Attended a self-study centre, for example a CALL room?	8.9	4	13.3	6	28.9	13	48.9	22
	O		S		R		N	
General Result	48%		26%		14%		12%	
	Positive:74%				Negative: 26%			

Table 4.14 includes 17 items related to the activities and behaviours outside the classroom part. Second-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All provided questions were set to examine the learners' perception of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom. Ranging from often to never.

**Table 3.15:** Third-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours outside class

	Often %	F	Sometimes %	F	Rarely %	F	Never %	F
1.Read grammar books on your own?	29	9	38.7 12		25.8	8	6.5	2
2.Done assignments which are not compulsory?	22.6	7	45.2 14		22.6	7	9.7	3
3.Noticed down new words and their meanings?	58.1	18	29 9		12.9	4	0.0	0
4.Read the newspaper in English?	48.4	15	22.6 7		16.1	5	12.9	4
5.Sent emails in English?	51.6	16	29	9	16.1	5	6.5	2
6.Read books or magazines in the English?	64.5	20	25.8	8	3.2	1	6.5	2
7.Watched English TV programs?	64.5	20	25.8 8		9.7	3	0.0	0
8.Listened to the radio or podcast in English?	54.8	17	29	9	9.7	3	6.5	2
9.Listened to English songs?	64.5	20	29	9	3.2	1	3.2	1
10.Talked with foreigners in English?	32.3	10	48.4 15		16.1	5	3.2	1
11.Done English self-study in a group?	35.5	11	38.7 12		12.9	4	12.9	4
12.Done grammar exercises?	35.5	11	38.7	12	12.9	4	12.9	4
13.Watched English movies?	77.4	24	19.4 6		3.2	1	0.0	0
14.Written a diary in English?	22.6	7	25.8	8	9.7	3	41.9 13	
15.Used the internet in English?	77.4	24	16.1	5	3.2	1	3.2 1	
16.Revised your written work without being told to do so?	45.2	14	16.1	5	22.6	7	16.1	5
17.Attended a self-study centre, for example a CALL room?	12.9	4	19.4 6		35.5	11	32.3 10	
	O		S		R		N	
General Result	49%		28.6%		13.2%		9.2%	
	Positive: 77.6%				Negative: 22.4%			

Table 4.15 includes 17 items related to the activities and behaviours outside the classroom part. Third-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All provided questions were set to examine the learners' perception of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom. Ranging from often to never.

**Table 4.16:** Dependent Variable (ANOVA): First, second and third-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours outside the classroom.

(I) Grade	(J) Grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval Lower Bound	Confidence Upper Bound
First Year	Second Year	-1.70261*	.59090	.003	-3.1071	-.2982
	Third Year	-.30835	.64578	.542	-1.8432	1.2265
Second Year	First Year	1.70261*	.59090	.003	.2982	3.1071
	Third Year	1.39427	.60697	.001	-.0484	2.8369
Third Year	First Year	.30835	.64578	.542	-1.2265	1.8432
	Second Year	-1.39427	.60697	.001	-2.8369	.0484

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The findings from this section reveal that students have positive attitudes to working autonomously outside the classroom in terms of the several items provided in this part. As it is shown in Table 4.13, more than 73.6% (45% O and 28.6% S) of the participants believe that they are in charge of learning English independently outside of the classroom. For instance, around 91.2% (58.8% O and 32.4% S) of the participants positively agree that they note down new words and their meanings while only 8.8% (5.9% R and 2.9% N) of the participants do not do them. Another example which also provides the same fact is that 91.2% (79.4% O and 11.8% S) of the participants highly agree that that they watch English TV programs whereas 8.8% (5.9% R and 2.9% N) of the participants do not choose to do it to improve their English.

As provided in Table 4.14, almost 74% (48% O and 26% S) of the second-year participants have also given positive responses to the items provided to them. For example, 82.2% (53.3% O and 28.9% S) of the participants positively agree that they send emails in English while around 17.8% (15.6% R and 2.2% N) of the participants do not use this strategy. Another example show that 88.9%



(62.2% O and 26.7% S) of the participants highly agree that they read books or magazines in English for pleasure while only 9.1% (8.9% R and 2.2% N) of the participants do not apply it.

Similarly, the third-year students have a highly positive attitude towards independency of learning English outside the classroom as shown in Table 4.15. Around 77.6% (49% O and 28.6% S) of the third year participants have positive attitudes toward learning English autonomously outside the classroom. For example, 96.8% (77.4% O and 19.4% S) of the participants positively respond that they watch movies in English while only 3.2% (3.2% R and 0.0% N) of the participants do not watch movies in English.

According to one way ANOVA test, which examines whether or not there is a significant differences between the first, second and third-year students in relation to their activities and behaviours outside the classroom. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the first and second-year students due to the P value which is 0.000, so that it is less than 0.05. Similarly, there is a significant difference between second and third-year students in which the P value, 0.000, is also less than 0.05. On the other hand, there is no difference between the first and third-year students because the P value, which is 0.190, is more than 0.05.

#### **4.2.5 Findings on first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom**

The learners' preceptions of the most preferable preformed activities and behaviours inside the classroom were examined throughout this section of the Likert-scale. The Tables 4.17, 4.18 and 4.19 present the learners' responses on the five items of this section concerning their perceptions of the activities and behaviours inside the classroom. For further details, the one way ANOVA test is also included in Table 4.20 to determine the differences between first, second and third-year learners' preceptions of the activities and behaviours outside the classroom.

**Table 4.17:** First-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours inside class

	Often	F	Sometimes	F	Rarely	F	Never	F
	%		%		%		%	
1. asked the teacher questions when you didn't understand?	52.9	18	38.2	13	5.9	2	2.9	1
2. noted down new information?	76.5	26	20.6	7	0.0	0	2.9	1
3. made suggestions to the teacher?	41.2	14	20.6	7	29.4	10	8.8	3
4. taken opportunities to speak in English?	61.8	21	35.3	12	2.9	1	0.0	0
5. discussed problems in learning with your classmates?	55.9	19	38.2	13	5.9	2	0.0	0
		O		S		R		N
General Result		57.5%		30.5%		9%		3%
		Positive: 88%			Negative: 12%			

Table 4.17 includes 5 items related to the activities and behaviours inside the classroom part. First-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All provided questions were set to examine the learners' perception of the activities and behaviours inside the classroom. Ranging from often to never.

**Table 3.18:** Second-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours inside class

	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
1. asked the teacher questions when you didn't understand?	42.2	19	35.6	16	15.6	7	6.7	3
2. noted down new information?	66.7	30	28.9	13	4.4	2	0.0	0
3. made suggestions to the teacher?	20	9	28.9	13	37.6	17	13.3	6
4. taken opportunities to speak in English?	57.8	26	26.7	12	13.1	6	2.2	1
5. discussed problems in learning with your classmates?	46.7	21	33.3	15	11.1	5	8.9	4
General Result	O		S		R		N	
	47%		30.5%		16.3%		6.2%	
	Positive: 77.5%				Negative: 22.5%			

Table 4.18 includes 5 items related to the activities and behaviours inside the classroom part. Second-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All provided questions were set to examine the learners' perception of the activities and behaviours inside the classroom. Ranging from often to never.

**Table 3.19:** Third-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours inside class

	Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never	
	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F
1. asked the teacher questions when you didn't understand?	58.1 18		32.3 10		6.5 2		3.2 1	
2. noted down new information?	83.9 26		12.9 4		3.2 1		0.0 0	
3. made suggestions to the teacher?	22.6 7		38.7 12		25.8 8		12.9 4	
4. taken opportunities to speak in English?	64.5 20		35.5 11		0.0 0		0.0 0	
5. discussed problems in learning with your classmates?	38.7 12		48.4 15		9.7 3		3.2 1	
	O		S		R		N	
General Result	53.5%		33.5%		9%		4%	
	Positive: 87%				Negative: 13%			

Table 4.19 includes 5 items related to the activities and behaviours inside the classroom part. Third-year learners were asked to answer the questions with the most preferable option among those provided. All provided questions were set to examine the learners' perception of the activities and behaviours inside the classroom. Ranging from often to never.

**Table 4.20:** Dependent Variable (ANOVA): First, second and third-year learners' perceptions of activities and behaviours inside the classroom.

(I) Grade	(J) Grade	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Interval Lower Bound	95% Interval Upper Bound
First Year	Second Year	-11.37255*	1.20371	.000	-14.2335	-8.5116
	Third Year	2.16509	1.31549	.190	-.9615	5.2917
Second Year	First Year	11.37255*	1.20371	.000	8.5116	14.2335
	Third Year	13.53763*	1.23644	.000	10.5989	16.4764
Third Year	First Year	-2.16509	1.31549	.190	-5.2917	.9615
	Second Year	13.53763*	1.23644	.000	-16.4764	-10.5989

The above three Tables 4.17, 4.18 and 4.19 show the results of first, second and third-year learners' perceptions of the activities and behaviours inside the classroom. The results provided reveal that all three groups of students have positive attitudes towards the questions about their activities and behaviours inside the classroom. It has been shown that the first and third-year students share almost the same results. Table 4.17 shows that 88% (57.5% O and 30.5% S) of the first-year participants have highly positive behaviours inside the class. For example, 97.1% (76.5% O and 20.6% S) of the participants positively agree that they note down new information while only 2.9% (0.0% R and 2.9% S) of the participants do not note down new information. Table 4.18 shows that 77.5% (47% O and 30.5% S) of the second-year participants have less positive behaviours than the first and third-year students inside the class. For instance, 48.9% (20% O and 28.9% S) of the participants positively agree that they make suggestions to the teacher whereas around 50.9% (37.6% R and 13.3% N) of the participants negatively respond that they make suggestions to the teacher. On

the other hand, Table 4.19 shows that 87% (53.5% O and 35.5% S) of the third-year participants, like the first-year participants, have also positive behaviours inside the class. For example, 61.3% (22.6% O and 38.7% S) of the participants positively agree that they make suggestion to the teacher.

According to one way ANOVA test, which examines whether or not there is a significant differences between the first, second and third-year students in relation to their activities and behaviours inside the classroom. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between the first and second-year students due to the P value which is 0.000, so that it is less than 0.05. Similarly, there is a significant difference between second and third-year students in which the P value, 0.000, is also less than 0.05. On the other hand, there is no difference between the first and third-year students because the P value, which is 0.231, is more than 0.05.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

The following chapter is presenting a general discussion of the finding of the study's research questions. After distributing, collecting and analysing the questionnaire's data by the mean of the SPSS program, several findings have been found.

### **5.1 How do EFL learners of different proficiency levels view the responsibilities of learners and teachers in learning English?**

Among the first, second and third-year students, the group which has the highest tendency to hold responsibility for learning English independently from their teacher is the third-year students due to the fact they have positively responded to the questions related to the responsibilities. Meaning that students who are in advanced level of their studies are willing to hold more responsibilities than students who are in a lower level due to their awareness of how important it is to work on their own in order to be successful.

### **5.2 How do they view their ability to learn English autonomously?**

In terms of students' abilities, it has been found that the second-year students have got the highest level of being able to learn English autonomously. Throughout the questionnaire, second-year students have proven that they are highly able to handle the learning process independently more than any other grade. It is highly recommended for further studies to investigate the reasons behind that, among all grades the second-year students have the highest ability to learn English autonomously.

### **5.3 How high is EFL students' motivation level?**

It has been found that the first-year students have the highest level of motivation towards learning English autonomously. It is worth noting that

although they have the highest level of motivation, it is obvious that they start losing their motivation gradually as they further in their education.

#### **5.4 What different learning activities and behaviours have they utilized and at what frequency?**

An interesting finding indicates that all the participated students have positive attitudes towards working independently outside the classroom. For instance, the great majority of the participants note down new words and their meanings. In addition to that, almost most of them read books or magazines in English, watch English TV programs, watch English movies and talk with foreigners in English.

Similar to the results that have been found about the activities and behaviours outside the classroom, all the participants share positive attitudes towards the activities and behaviours inside the classroom, but with a slight difference in which the first and third-year students have a higher level of independency that the second-year students. Some of the activities and behaviours that students hold autonomously are: asking the teacher questions when they do not understand discuss problems in learning with their classmates and take opportunities to speak in English.

#### **5.5 Which grade students are more autonomous- first, second or third-year students?**

It could be concluded that it is hard to find out which grade students are the most autonomous of all due to the fact that each of the first, second and third-year students has an autonomous feature more than the others. For instance, first-year students have the highest level independency in terms of their motivation, second-year students have the highest level of independency in terms of their abilities and third-year students have the highest level of independency in terms of their responsibility.



## **6. CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter is allotted to the conclusions of the current study referring to the research questions. Additionally, the limitations are discussed in this chapter together with the recommendation with regard to the previous studies.

### **6.2 Conclusions**

Learners and teachers are at the heart of the learning process. Teachers need to put learners responsible for learning from the very beginning. Learners who have no involvement in the learning process cannot produce good learning outcomes. Teachers and learners should develop their autonomy cooperatively.

In this research, learner autonomy has been defined as the ability or capacity to study on their own, to take control of and responsibility for their learning, to make decisions about their own learning, and to be willing to learn by themselves. This general definition encompasses almost all the elements of learner autonomy that previously have been mentioned in the literature by other researchers. Holec (1981), for example, stated that being an autonomous learner means that one is involved in all the decisions making processes. Similarly, Macaro (1997) defines autonomy as being able to take responsibility for one's own learning.

#### **6.2.1 The EFL learners' perceptions about Learner Autonomy**

The data collected over the course of this research indicated that the majority of EFL learners acknowledged that they preferred to take responsibility for the learning process rather than fully depend on their teacher. On the other hand, some of them held negative attitudes towards studying English autonomously and independently.

Based on the findings discussed in the previous chapter, this research has revealed learners' actual perceptions of learner autonomy in terms of their responsibilities, abilities, motivation and different kinds of activities and behaviours they hold in and outside the classroom. EFL learners by far have a highly positive attitude towards being in charge of their own learning process.

On the other hand, in the light of the results, some students have stated that they have no active role in the learning process. They are not involved in the learning process or teachers do not involve them in the decision-making process or train them to become autonomous. Being unaware of studying autonomously, these students can fail to improve their English because they need to do activities outside the classroom independently. They need to find ways to help them to get exposed to English.

Some teachers do not support learner autonomy. Teachers who hold old-fashioned or traditional views of language teaching have a lot of control over the learning process and they are in favour of teacher-centeredness. They usually make decisions about the content or materials and never incorporate relevant content. They cannot relate teaching to students.

However, some teachers like to foster learner autonomy. Therefore, they help students to regulate their own learning and train them to become autonomous. They help them to be aware of the ways to apply learner autonomy inside and outside the language classroom. They can also help them develop study skills and learning strategies.

Students' awareness of learning English is getting higher and higher according to the results found in this study. For instance, students who describe themselves as advanced are highly willing to take responsibility for learning more than students who are still at the beginning of their studies in which they need more help from their teacher. As beginners improve their language skills and sub-skills, they need to be supported by their teacher to become more autonomous.

There are some surprising results about the research. Further studies should be carried out to investigate the reasons why second-year students have the highest ability to learn English independently. In addition, first-year students are the

most motivated students of all or have the highest level of motivation, so they may be more enthusiastic about learning than others. However, it has been noticed that as soon as they further their studies, they gradually start losing their motivation.

In addition, an interesting finding indicates that all the participants have positive attitudes towards studying independently outside the classroom. For instance, the great majority of the participants note down new words and their meanings. In addition to that, almost most of them read books or magazines in English, watch English TV programs, watch English movies and talk with foreigners in English. Furthermore, similar to the results that have been found about the activities and behaviours outside the classroom, all the participants share positive attitudes towards the activities and behaviours inside the classroom, but with a slight difference the first and third-year students have a higher level of independence than second-year students. Some of the activities and behaviours that students do autonomously are: asking the teacher questions when they do not understand, discussing problems in learning with their classmates and taking opportunities to speak in English.

Finally, it could be concluded that it is hard to find out which grade- students are the most autonomous of all due to the fact that most students from all classes tend to be autonomous and display different characteristics. For instance, while first-year students have the highest level independence in terms of their motivation, second-year students have the highest level of independence in terms of their abilities and third-year students have the highest level of independence in terms of their responsibility.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Although the majority of the EFL learners who participated in the current study were able to identify their responsibilities, abilities, motivation and different kinds of activities and behaviours they hold in and outside the classroom with respect to learner autonomy and elaborate more on the topic, they were not enough to generalize to other contexts. It is highly recommended to investigate a larger number of students for being able to generalize. We are still unaware of

the reasons why specific grade of students have a higher level of autonomy than the other grades.



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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix A:** Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

**Appendix B:** ethic approval form



**Appendix A: Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy Questionnaire**

The purpose of this survey is to investigate EFL instructors' conceptions of learner autonomy. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers; your own perception is what we are simply interested in. Make sure that all the answers to this survey are going to remain off the record and will be merely use for research purpose.

Your time and collaboration are highly appreciated!

**Section 1. Please complete the following demographic questions:**

1- How old are you?                      18 \_\_\_\_\_      19 \_\_\_\_\_      20 \_\_\_\_\_      21 \_\_\_\_\_

2- What is your gender?                      Male \_\_\_\_\_                      Female \_\_\_\_\_

3- In what class are you?                      Prep. School \_\_\_\_\_                      Degree \_\_\_\_\_

4- What is your English level?                      Beginner \_\_\_\_\_  
Elementary \_\_\_\_\_  
Pre-intermediate \_\_\_\_\_                      Intermediate \_\_\_\_\_  
Upper-intermediate \_\_\_\_\_

5- What is the length of studying English?  
A month \_\_\_\_\_                      Two months \_\_\_\_\_  
A year \_\_\_\_\_                      Two years \_\_\_\_\_  
More than two years \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your parents' education level?                      Primary school \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary school \_\_\_\_\_                      High school \_\_\_\_\_                      University \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever been to an English- speaking country? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 2. RESPONSIBILITIES (Please check ✓ both “Yours” and “Your teacher’s” choices)**

**When you are taking English classes, whose responsibility should it be to:**

<b>Questions</b>		<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Mainly</b>	<b>completely</b>
<b>1. make sure of your progress in a lesson?</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher’s</b>				
<b>2. make sure of your progress in your self-study?</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher’s</b>				
<b>3. stimulate your interest in learning English?</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher’s</b>				
<b>4. identify your weakness in your English?</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher’s</b>				
<b>5. increase your motivation?</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher’s</b>				
<b>6. decide the objectives of your English course?</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher’s</b>				
<b>7. decide the content of the next English</b>	<b>A. Yours</b>				

lesson?	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				
<b>8.</b> choose activities for the next lesson?	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				
<b>9.</b> decide the duration of each classroom activity?	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				
<b>10.</b> choose materials to be used in your English course?	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				
<b>11.</b> evaluate your learning?	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				
<b>12.</b> evaluate your course?	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				
<b>13.</b> decide what to learn in your self-study?	<b>A. Yours</b>				
	<b>B. Your teacher's</b>				

**Section 3. ABILITIES (Please check ✓ the choices that describe you the most).**

**If you have the following opportunities, how good do you think you would be at:**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Very poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Okay</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>14.</b> choosing learning activities for your class?					
<b>15.</b> choosing learning activities outside class?					
<b>16.</b> choosing learning objectives for your class?					
<b>17.</b> choosing learning objectives for your self-study?					
<b>18.</b> choosing the content of every class?					
<b>19.</b> evaluating your course?					
<b>20.</b> choosing learning materials for your class?					
<b>21.</b> identifying weakness in your English?					
<b>22.</b> evaluating your learning?					
<b>23.</b> choosing learning materials to be used outside class?					
<b>24.</b> deciding the duration of each activity in your self-study?					

**Section 4. MOTIVATION (Please choose the best answer that describes you the most).**

Question	Very high	High	Neither	Low	Very low
25. How high is your motivation to learn English?					

**Section 5. ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIOURS (Please check ✓ the answer that describes you the most)**

**In this academic year, how often have you:**

**OUTSIDE CLASS**

Questions	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
26. read grammar books on your own?				
27. done assignments which are not compulsory?				
28. noted down new words and their meanings?				
29. read newspaper in English?				
30. sent emails in English?				
31. read books or magazines in the English?				
32. watched English TV programs?				
33. listened to the radio or podcast in				

English?				
<b>34.</b> listened to English songs?				
<b>35.</b> talked with foreigners in English?				
<b>36.</b> done English self-study in a group?				
<b>37.</b> done grammar exercises?				
<b>38.</b> watched English movies?				
<b>39.</b> written a diary in English?				
<b>40.</b> used the internet in English?				
<b>41.</b> revised your written work without being told to do so?				
<b>42.</b> attended a self-study center, for example a CALL room?				

### INSIDE CLASS

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>43.</b> asked the teacher questions when you didn't understand?				
<b>44.</b> noted down new information?				
<b>45.</b> made suggestions to the teacher?				
<b>46.</b> taken opportunities to speak in English?				
<b>47.</b> discussed problems in learning with your classmates?				



## Appendix B: ethic approval form



T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ  
Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü

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Konu : TAMER HALAYQEH Etik Onay Hk.

Sayın TAMER HALAYQEH

Tez çalışmanızda kullanmak üzere yapmayı talep ettiğiniz anketiniz İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyonu'nun 08.10.2019 tarihli ve 2019/15 sayılı kararıyla uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

**e-imzalıdır**  
Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Alper FİDAN  
Müdür Yardımcısı

03/03/2020 Enstitü Sekreteri

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TEFL

GATEHOUSE AWARDS

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IELTS

University of Cambridge

November 2016

ZAJEL YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM

An-Najah National University

January 2014

### **Work Experience:**

2014-2017 , 'Public Relation Department

2016-2017, ' Al-Makhfiya National School

2018-2019, 'Wall Street English

### **Languages:**

-Arabic: Native Language

-English: Native-like

-Turkish: Intermediate

### **Skills:**

-Strong Communication

-Ability Of Persuasion

- Organization & Operation
- Problem Solving
- Result Oriented
- Responsible
- Strategic Planning
- Strategic Communication
- Strategic Management
- Critical Thinking
- Team Leade

