

**PERCEPTIONS OF ELT STUDENTS  
RELATED TO LEARNER AUTONOMY  
IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

**Yüksek Lisans Tezi**

**Gökhan YİĞİT**

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**İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN DİL ÖĞRENMEDE  
OTONOM ÖĞRENME İLE İLGİLİ ALGILARI**

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## JÜRİ VE ENSTİTÜ ONAYI

Gökhan YİĞİT'in "Perceptions Of ELT Students Related To Learner Autonomy In Language Learning" başlıklı tezi 22.08.2017 tarihinde, aşağıda belirtilen jüri üyeleri tarafından Anadolu Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim ve Sınav Yönetmeliğinin ilgili maddeleri uyarınca Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı İngilizce Öğretmenliği programı yüksek lisans tezi olarak değerlendirilerek kabul edilmiştir.

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## ÖZET

### İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN DİL ÖĞRENMEDE OTONOM ÖĞRENME İLE İLGİLİ ALGILARI

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Bu araştırma Anadolu Ünivesitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin otonom öğrenme ile ilgili algılarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmaya 73 erkek ve 139 kız olmak üzere toplam 212 öğrenci katılmıştır. İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerinin dil öğrenme sürecinde otonom öğrenme ile ilgili algılarını belirleyebilmek için bir anket uygulanmıştır. Anket katılımcıların otonom öğrenmeye ilişkin algıları ile sorumlulukları, yetenekleri ve aktivite seçimleri olmak üzere üç ana başlıkta incelemektedir. Ayrıca nicel verilerin doğruluğunu sağlamak ve öğrencilerin Otonom Öğrenme ile ilgili algıları hakkında daha detaylı bir bakış açısına sahip olmak için araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerden her sınıftan 5'er kişi olmak üzere toplam 20 kişiyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yapılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler katılımcıların kaçınıcı sınıfta olduğu (birinci sınıftan dördüncü sınıfa kadar) ve cinsiyetlerine göre sınıflandırılarak analiz edilmiştir. Nicel veriler için, ortalama hesaplama, bağımsız t- testi, tek yönlü ANOVA analizi kullanılmıştır. Nitel veriler için, içerik analizi yapılmış ve ortaya çıkan bulgular yine öğrencilerin kaçınıcı sınıfta olduğuna ve cinsiyetlerine göre düzenlenmiştir. Sonuçlar, araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin kaçınıcı sınıfta olduklarına göre anketin üç ana başlığı, sorumluluklar, yetenekler ve aktivite seçimleri bakımından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcıların cinsiyetleri bakımından otonom öğrenme ile ilgili yetenek ve aktivite seçimleri bakımından istatistiksel olarak bir fark olduğu ortaya çıksa da, sorumluluklar bakımından öğrencilerin benzer algıları olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Nitel verilerden elde edilen sonuçlar da ortaya çıkan tabloyu destekler niteliktedir. Öğrencilerin kaçınıcı sınıfta olduklarına göre elde edilen bulgular, öğrencilerin benzer sorumluluklar, yetenekler ve aktivite seçimleri olması gerektiği yönünde görüş beyan ettiklerini göstermektedir. Yine, nitel veriler kız ve erkek öğrencilerin benzer sorumluluklar, yetenekler ve aktivite seçimlerinin öneminden

bahsetseler de, cinsiyete gre farklılaşan durumları da ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca, katılımcılar otonom öğrenmenin tanımı hakkında görüşlerini ifade etmiş ve otonom öğrenme kavramının çok yönlülüğünü ortaya koymuşlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Otonom Öğrenme, Sınıf, Cinsiyet.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **PERCEPTIONS OF ELT STUDENTS RELATED TO LEARNER AUTONOMY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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This study mainly aims to investigate the perceptions of ELT students related to Learner Autonomy in language learning. 73 male and 139 female students, a total of 212 students, participate in the study. A questionnaire is applied in order to identify the perceptions of ELT students related to Learner Autonomy in language learning. The questionnaire is prepared in four main parts: one of them is for background information of the participants and the other three parts are for their perceptions of ELT learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy. In addition, in order to support the quantitative data, and to have a deeper understanding of the perceptions of ELT students, a total of 20 students, five students from each class, are interviewed. The findings gathered are analyzed according to the year of the study (from 1<sup>st</sup> year to 4<sup>th</sup> year) and gender of the participants. Mean, independent samples t- tests and One- Way ANOVAs are used for analyzing the quantitative data. Content analysis is done for the qualitative data and the findings of the qualitative data are organized according to the participants' year of study and gender. The results indicate that there are not any statistically significant differences between male and female students in terms of the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activity choices. In addition, although there are statistically significant differences between the genders in terms of the perceptions of learners related to abilities and activity choices on learner autonomy, both genders have similar perceptions related to responsibilities of learners. The findings gathered from the qualitative data are in line with the findings of the quantitative data. The participants mainly state similar responsibilities, abilities and activities in terms of their year of study. In addition, qualitative data reveal that although both female and male participants give importance to the similar perceptions related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy, they state different reasons

regarding the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities. Additionally, participants utter some definitions related to learner autonomy and they prove how versatile the notion of learner autonomy is.

**Keywords:** Learner Autonomy, Year of Study, Gender.

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## ETİK İLKE VE KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ

Bu tezin bana ait, özgün bir çalışma olduğunu; çalışmamın hazırlık, veri toplama, analiz ve bilgilerin sunumu olmak üzere tüm aşamalardan bilimsel etik ilke ve kurallara uygun davrandığımı; bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilemeyen tüm veri ve bilgiler için kaynak gösterdiğimi ve bu kaynaklara kaynakçada yer verdiğimi; bu çalışmanın Anadolu Üniversitesi tarafından kullanılan “bilimsel intihal tespit programı”yla tarandığımı ve hiçbir şekilde “intihal içermediğini” beyan ederim. Herhangi bir zamanda, çalışmamla ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda, ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçlara razı olduğumu bildiririm.

(İmza)

Gökhan YİĞİT

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background to the Study

“Spoon feeding, in the long run, teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon.”

— E.M. Forster

Language teaching in recent decades has faced many innovations in terms of both language teaching methodology and the roles of the stakeholders such as learners and teachers. There are innumerable changes in the methodology of teaching, and many approaches and methods have been introduced to enlighten language teaching pedagogy. After the 1970s, for instance, the focus on teaching a language has shifted from a number of grammatical and phonological rules to expressing the meaning (Nunan, 2003, p. 6). The changes in these years have crucial effects on the methodology of language teaching. For example, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which aims to develop communicative competence of learners (Richards, & Rodgers, T, 2001, p. 159), prioritizes the communicative needs of language learners, and this leads to the development of learner-centered approach, which is an idea that learners are responsible for their own learning including all aspects of language learning (Richards, & Schmidt, 2010, pp. 326-327).

Although the learners are located in the center of education in learner-centered approach, this doesn't mean that teachers don't take any responsibilities in language learning process. In traditional teacher-centered approach, teachers are responsible for designing all aspects of language teaching including choosing the textbook, deciding on the course content, and the program, planning the lesson and assessing the learners' developmental stages (Hedge, 2000, p. 84). According to Brown (2007, pp. 214-215), the expected teacher roles in traditional education can be defined as the “controller” in every moment of the course, and a teacher determines what the learners should do, what linguistic forms they should focus on, and the teacher can even control the time they speak during the course. So, the only role of the learner in traditional teacher-centered approach is to be passive recipient of knowledge throughout the learning process; therefore, the language rules have to be internalized by the learners without considering the language

as a system for expressing meanings (Nunan, 1999, p. 9). In other words, learners are employed for doing the tasks that their teachers direct (Brown, 2007, p. 130).

Within the changes in the perspectives of educational theories, teacher and learner roles have been redefined. In CLT, for instance, a number of roles are assigned to the teachers such as facilitator, adviser, and co-communicator (Razmjoo, 2011, p. 61). Other roles employed by the teachers in CLT are being a counselor, needs-analyst, and group process manager (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 167). All these roles assigned to teachers show that both teachers and learners have responsibilities in the language teaching/learning process. According to Larsen- Freeman and Anderson (2011, p. 122), the teacher is responsible for establishing situations to advance communication in the classroom. Throughout these communications, the teacher takes the responsibility in monitoring the learners' performance and guides the learners where they need help. In other words, both teachers and learners share the responsibilities and they behave like partners in this process because teachers' role is to be involved in activities like an independent student in the class (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 167).

Although learners are not actively involved in designing the learning process in traditional language teaching, it is important that learners should take more responsibilities for their own learning within the light of new approaches to language teaching such as CLT and learner-centered approach. Thanks to the learner-centered approach, learners are embraced to take active roles in designing the language teaching. Nunan (2003, pp. 8-9) defines this involvement with two dimensions. The first dimension is that learners are involved in deciding what and how to learn as well as how evaluation methods will be used. On the other hand, the other dimension focuses on broadening the class time in which they are active in doing the tasks.

According to Hedge (2000, p. 34), learner-centeredness can be defined from different perspectives. One perspective is that learners can take responsibilities for specifying their needs in language learning, and they can make contributions to the design of course content and learning procedure. Another perspective is that language learners can make contributions in the design of language learning activities. By taking active roles in the design of the activities, students get the chance of understanding the purpose of these activities. The third perspective in learner-centeredness is that learners become

responsible for their own learning process not only by designing activities and course content but also by pursuing their own learning outside of the classroom.

As it is seen that learner-centered approach is really crucial in language learning, the endeavors to increase the learners' involvement in designing their language learning process should be prioritized. For this aim, Brown (2007, p. 52) proposes several techniques to be used in learner-centered instruction:

Focusing on learners' needs, styles, and goals

Giving control to the learners in group works and strategy use

Including learners in defining the objectives of the curricula

Permitting the learners to be creative and innovative

Encouraging the learners to increase their competence and self- esteem

In the light of these advancements in language teaching, the learners are expected to gain the control over the language learning processes, and this has revealed the notion of learner autonomy, which is defined as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1891, p. 3). Learner autonomy is closely linked to the principles of learner-centeredness and the roles of the learners in CLT. Besides, Brown (2007, p. 130) adds that autonomy is also linked with the concepts of "awareness" and "action". Awareness is defined as the desire of learners to become aware of their own learning process; and without action, it can be said that awareness will not reveal the potentials of learners in learning a language. Therefore, these three concepts, autonomy, awareness, and action, play an important role in the development of the learners' active participation in the language classes. Brown (2007, p. 131) also states that when the learners are aware of their indispensable roles in language learning, they can take actions by using appropriate strategies for their own learning. As a result of these actions, learners can increase their autonomy in their own learning process.

Giving responsibilities to the learners in their own learning process makes them more independent, therefore, they can develop more positive attitudes towards learning. Little (1991, p. 4) also acknowledges that learners get pleasure with freedom, because being autonomous makes the learners take charge in decision-making processes for their own learning in both formal educational context and out of class. By this way, time and input allocated for learning a language can get rid of chains, and learners can get the

chance to broaden their knowledge of the language by becoming more autonomous in language learning.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

As a product of Western societies, learner autonomy has attracted the interests of the researchers from different cultures in recent years, and it has profoundly affected the other cultures which seem totally opposed to the concept of education in Europe. According to Palfreyman (2003, p. 1), many reasons can be put forward to favoring learner autonomy in language education: learner autonomy promotes human rights, and it is an effective approach to language learning. However, the effectiveness of learner autonomy has been debated by the researchers from other cultures since the educational settings differ from each other as well as the educational philosophies of these nations. For example, the cultural differences between the West and the East have been asserted to have influenced the perceptions of learners and teachers on learner autonomy. In other words, the term “autonomy”, which is a notion of English- speakers’ ideology (Holliday, 2003, p.111), can be understood differently by the learners because of their cultural backgrounds. Although learners’ decision-making is supported in western cultures, Confucian values in the eastern cultures don’t encourage students to question the learning (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Instead, learners are expected to show obedience to their teachers in eastern cultures.

Ever since learner autonomy gains popularity especially with the help of the endeavors of Council of Europe as a project in 1971, it has been studied from several aspects by many western teachers and researchers (Holec, 1981; Palfreyman, 2003; Little, 1991). On the other hand, learner autonomy has been looked with suspicion by the teachers and researchers in some other countries. Even some researchers reject the notion of learner autonomy simply because of the cultural stereotypes and its being a multifaceted and controversial concept (Atkinson, 1999). In addition to this, perspectives on culture and learner autonomy show parallelism since the notions of culture and autonomy are related to other disciplines like psychology and cultural studies as well as language teaching. For this reason, it is quite natural to say that culture of the nations and educational settings have been profoundly influencing the perceptions of learner autonomy (Reinders, 2010).

As shown in the relevant literature, culture is an indispensable notion for the realization of learner autonomy; thus, the current research focuses on ELT students' perceptions related to learner autonomy in Turkey. By ELT students, we mean EFL teacher candidates enrolled in an English Language Teaching Department at a state university of Turkey. In other words, one aim of the current study is to investigate the perceptions of ELT students to shed light on how Turkish ELT students perceive being autonomous in language learning.

Since the development of learner autonomy is one of the educational objectives (Chan, 2001) of the nations, it has been rather emphasized to increase the learners' responsibilities for their own learning in educational settings. Therefore, to become autonomous learners, the students are expected to develop their abilities to take responsibilities for their own learning. For this aim, Chan (2001) proposes a number of abilities to be developed for becoming an autonomous learner:

Defining learning goals

Developing strategies for implementing these goals

Organizing study programs

Thinking over learning and defining the problems and ways to solve them

Choosing the appropriate resources and support

Evaluating their own progress

In addition, although several abilities to be developed for becoming an autonomous learner have been proposed, learners' experiences on language learning is considered one of the basic factors for the development of learner autonomy (Chan, Spratt & Humphreys, 2002). However, relevant studies reveal that the learners don't have sufficient experience in how to become an autonomous learner (Chan, 2001; Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002). We should note here that promoting learner autonomy is accepted to be highly crucial for increasing the learners' awareness on language learning process, but there are limited studies which aim to promote learner autonomy (Kristmanson, Lafargue & Culligan, 2013). On the other hand, Little (1991, p.7) states that learners should create their own purposes, determine the content, and the way the learning will occur by using their past learning experiences. Therefore, defining the perceptions of learners in terms of the experiences the students have in language learning is an important factor. For this reason, one of the aspects of the current study is to define the perceptions of ELT students

from their first year to the fourth year with a broader sense in order to see whether learning experience has an effect on their view related to learner autonomy.

As stated earlier, autonomy is a complex notion; therefore, to explore the learners' perceptions related to learner autonomy is a challenging work for the researchers. One challenge of defining the perceptions of learners stems from the learner differences. For example, Brown, (2007, pp. 234- 235) states that language learning is highly affected by the learners' gender. He informs that the differences between males and females can be one of the factors that affect language production. In other words, in his study he realizes that there are a number of differences between males and females in terms of their language use such as the usage of hedges, tag questions etc. This indicates that learners may have different choices in language learning in terms of their gender. On the other hand, the studies focusing on the perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy are limited in terms of gender (Üstünoğlu, 2009). Therefore, investigating the role of gender on learner autonomy may provide valuable information to the literature.

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

The main aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy with regard to their learning experiences. In other words, this study aims to define the relationship between the learners' study years in ELT department and their perceptions related to learner autonomy in a broader perspective, because several studies in the literature take the issue from only a narrow perspective, or the focus of these studies is not to explore whether any changes occur during the whole process of learning a language. For example, Ahmadzadeh and Zabardast, (2014), investigate only the perceptions of the third year university students at two state universities in Turkey. Again, Yıldırım (2005) contributes to the literature by focusing on the perceptions of students in their first and the fourth years in ELT department of Anadolu University. These studies show that there is a need to identify learners' perceptions by beginning from the first year to the last year in language learning in order to see whether learning experience has an effect on the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy.

There are several studies conducted to investigate the learners' perceptions related to learner autonomy from different perspectives in different contexts (Chan, 2001; Reinders, 2010; Kristmanson, Lafargue & Culligan, 2013). However, gender and learner

autonomy relation has not attracted the researchers' interests much, and thus, there are limited studies focusing on investigating the effects of gender on learner autonomy (Leathwood, 2006; Üstünoğlu, 2009). For this reason, the present study aims to explore the relationship between gender and perceptions of Turkish ELT students at Anadolu University related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

As mentioned above, the aim of this study is to define the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy with regard to participants' study years and their gender. Additionally, the present study seeks to find how learners define the concept of learner autonomy. Therefore, we aim to convey the perceptions of learners by addressing the following questions:

- 1- Does year of study have an effect on the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to (a) responsibilities, (b) abilities, and (c) activities on learner autonomy?
- 2- Does gender have an effect on the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to (a) responsibilities, (b) abilities, and (c) activities on learner autonomy?
- 3- How do Turkish ELT students define the concept of learner autonomy?

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Concepts of Autonomy**

The concept of autonomy is hard to explain since there are many factors which are the sources of the idea of autonomy and thus it cannot totally be defined with a few paragraphs (Little, 1991, p. 2). We, therefore, need to organize the concepts of autonomy starting from the first announcement of the term to the literature. On the other hand, in order to handle such a widespread concept, the scope of this study is restricted only with the perspectives of learners related to autonomy in language learning. In other words, the concept of autonomy, unlike other concepts like politics and philosophy is to be clarified in terms of learners' perspectives.

From the second half of the twentieth century, two important concepts have become the main themes of language teaching. One is that language should be taught for communication. In order to provide learners to gain experience in communication, the idea that authentic sources are needed to be used in classrooms has been greatly uttered in different educational settings. However, researchers and teachers have a tendency to use these terms "communication" and "authentic" with a narrower perspective in that teaching language for "communicative" purposes is only related to spoken language and the "authentic" texts can be included in newspapers and magazines (Little, 1991, p.1). Such usage of the terms has led the many language classrooms impoverished; therefore, renewal of all the concepts is inevitable for all fields including language teaching.

Another important ideology defining the concept of learner autonomy is the learners' gaining freedom in language learning. Learner autonomy has shifted the idea of learning from more controlled language learning settings to the individualization of learning. Despite the fact that learner autonomy is a buzz-word today, the association of learner autonomy with the individualization was not easy at the beginning (Benson, 2001, p.8). This is because both individualization and autonomy are different terms (Houghton, Long & Fanning, 1988, p.75) although they are sometimes regarded as synonymous. Individualization doesn't refer to a value, which only emphasizes individuality opposing to group work, however, autonomy has been given an important value, especially in European societies.



### **2.1.1. Definition of learner autonomy**

With a growing interest in learner autonomy in different educational settings, the concept of learner autonomy has been highly discussed by many researchers (Benson, 2008; Smith, 2008; Balçıkanlı, 2010). Since it is a complex concept, researchers define learner autonomy from different perspectives. One of the most accepted concepts related to learner autonomy is that it is a product of Western societies (Chan, 2001). It is assumed to be a sum of Western culture in that its political and ideological approaches have become a part of language education. This has been achieved through broadening the concept of autonomy with the idea of liberal, democratic, and humanistic ideology (Ahmadzadeh & Zabardast, 2014). As a result, now, the concept of language teaching has an individualistic viewpoint by promoting learner-centeredness, and process-oriented teaching.

In the definition of learner autonomy, the approaches of the researchers vary from each other. The most known and accepted definition is Holec's definition. According to Holec (1981, p.3), autonomy means "the ability to take charge of one's own learning". From this definition, it can be understood that learners should have responsibilities to take decisions related to their own learning. In Holec's understanding, it doesn't mean that learners were born with a capacity of being autonomous (Little, 1991, p. 8) but learner autonomy can be developed with the support of language teachers. In order to develop learner autonomy, Holec defines five steps which characterize the concept of autonomy. These are:

- Identifying learners' objectives
- Organizing the content and progression
- Choosing methods and techniques
- Observing the learning procedure
- Evaluating what the learners acquired

As the learners have responsibilities in their own learning, Cottrel (2000) says that learner autonomy has influenced the curriculum design since the concept of learner autonomy includes different goals to be achieved such as philosophical and pedagogical goals. Although the roles of the learners in taking active participation in designing curriculum are restricted in traditional teacher-based approaches, learners' roles are even questionable since they don't have sufficient experience in designing curriculum.

Henceforth, the learners' active participation in curriculum design has not sufficiently been supported although the learners' roles are vitally important in language learning with regard to learner autonomy (Tanyeli & Kuter, 2013).

In another definition of learner autonomy, Little (1991, p. 8) expresses that one of the targets of promoting learner autonomy is to get rid of the obstacles to learning and living. Instead of building barriers between life and learning, learner autonomy can be defined as a concept which promotes learning and develops the lives of the individuals, and henceforth, it makes the society more enhanced. In other words, it can be said that the concept of learner autonomy, especially from the language teaching perspective, have influenced the social life since nearly the second half of the twentieth century (Yıldırım, 2005).

### **2.1.2. Misconceptions of learner autonomy**

As mentioned before, learner autonomy has been widely accepted by different educational settings although there are some arguments asserting that it is not an appropriate concept for all the societies. According to Hedge (2000, p. 99), there are a number of distinctions on the perceptions of learner autonomy, which need to be clarified. One of them is the distinction between perceptions related to learner education in an effective classroom and perceptions related to self-directed learning, examples of which are open- learning centers and self-study at home. In other words, the perceptions related to learner education in a regular classroom and the perceptions related to self- directed learning are different regarding their goals to language teaching. Although learners rely more on self-reliant approaches in self-directed learning context, in regular classroom settings, especially those which have limited sources and are crowded, teachers focus on strategy training to overcome the deficiencies and use the resources effectively as much as they could.

One important misconception is related to false assumptions about the learner autonomy. Little (1991, p. 3) states that one of the most widespread misconceptions related to learner autonomy is that it is assumed as self- instruction. In other words, the learners are assumed to be learning a language without a teacher. He adds that although there are successful examples among those who follow self-instruction, the success in language learning is primarily related to the organization of learning.

According to Little (1991, p.3), another misconception related to learner autonomy is about the learners and teachers' roles. Since the learners have the power to design all aspects of language learning, the role of the teachers have been questioned in that teachers are not needed anymore. In this respect, Benson, (2001, p.1) states that autonomy is seen to feed learning in isolation, that is, learning a language without the support of the teacher. However, this is not true because the roles of the teachers are as important as the roles of the learners. In learner autonomy, teachers' roles have been redefined and they have been given new roles such as being a counselor (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 167).

In addition, autonomy is regarded as teaching particular skills and behaviors (Benson, 2001). Likewise, Benson states the misconception that autonomy focuses on particular methods in the organization of learning. It can be stated that learning becomes more learner-centered and every individual has different learning perceptions, which makes the use of only a particular method in the design of learning process nearly impossible.

Another misconception mentioned by Little (1991, p. 3) is the assumption that autonomy is what teachers do for their students to become autonomous learners. In other words, it is a new way of teaching that promotes learner autonomy. This is not the case, but it is mostly through the endeavors of teachers that learners enhance their capacities for becoming an autonomous learner. Similarly, Little adds that autonomy is assumed as a behavior which can easily be described. It is true in some aspects that whether the learners are autonomous or not is defined by the activities and behaviors of the learners. However, these behaviors may vary according to the learners' ages, their progress in language learning, and so on. Therefore, defining the frame of autonomy and how successful learners are in language learning is not an easy task because of the complex structure of autonomy.

## **2.2. A Brief History of Learner Autonomy in Language Learning**

As mentioned earlier in the introduction section of this study, the notion of learner autonomy in language learning dates back to the end of the 1960s as a reflection of ideas and expectancies of political views in Europe (Benson, 2001, p.7). However, widespread use of learner autonomy in language learning starts with the report of Holec in 1981 to the Council of Europe. Learner autonomy has gained prominence with the Modern Languages Project made by Council of Europe to enable opportunities for adults and the

project aimed to initiate a lifelong learning program for adults. As a result of this project, CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues) is established in Nancy, France, which become famous for researching in language teaching and learning (Yıldırım, 2005). The founder of this project is Yves Chalon, who is also known as the father of learner autonomy (Benson, 2001, p. 8). In this center, individuals' freedom via self- directed learning is emphasized. Additionally, the establishment of CRAPEL let the learners have opportunities for their own learning by self- access resource center.

Gremmo and Riley (1995) report that the idea of the notion of learner autonomy become popular in the years after the Second World War. They state that autonomy is accepted to be a complex notion, therefore the history of the notion cannot be limited only to an event. Therefore, it is inevitable that the idea feeding the notion "autonomy" should have implications for the historical and social events showing up in Western societies. In this respect, according to Gremmo and Riley (1995), some factors are needed to be identified to clarify the ideas under the notion of autonomy. These are:

1. The wave of minority rights movements
2. The reaction against behaviorism
3. The interest in minority rights
4. Developments in technology
5. The demand for foreign languages
6. The commercialization of much language provision
7. The vast increase in the school and university population

### **2.3. Characteristics of Autonomous Learner**

With learner autonomy, roles of the stakeholders have become one of the disputed areas in language learning. To understand the characteristics of an autonomous learner, we should closely look at the issue in terms of the changes on the roles of the learners related to learning. As clarified earlier, the learners are settled in the center of learning regarding the new approaches to language learning when it is compared to traditional way of teaching. In traditional approaches, learners are regarded as passive recipients of knowledge and syllabus dependent (Chan, Spratt & Humphreys, 2002; Dişlen, 2010). Chan (2001) identifies the features of those who don't perceive themselves as autonomous learners in that they are dependent on the teacher and they are reticent, that

is, not active in language learning process. Over-reliance on the teacher is also one of the basic features of learners in traditional language learning (Yıldırım, 2012).

On the contrary, several researchers define what characteristics the learners should have to become autonomous learners (Little, 1991; Benson, 2001; Chan, Spratt & Humphreys, 2002; Tanyeli & Kuter, 2013; Yıldırım, 2012). These characteristics can be listed as:

- Motivated to learn a language
- Goal-oriented
- Hard-working
- Well organized
- Having curiosity about languages
- Having a powerful enthusiasm
- Active
- Being initiative
- Flexible
- Having a high willingness to learn
- Working cooperatively with other learners
- Having an awareness of their learning

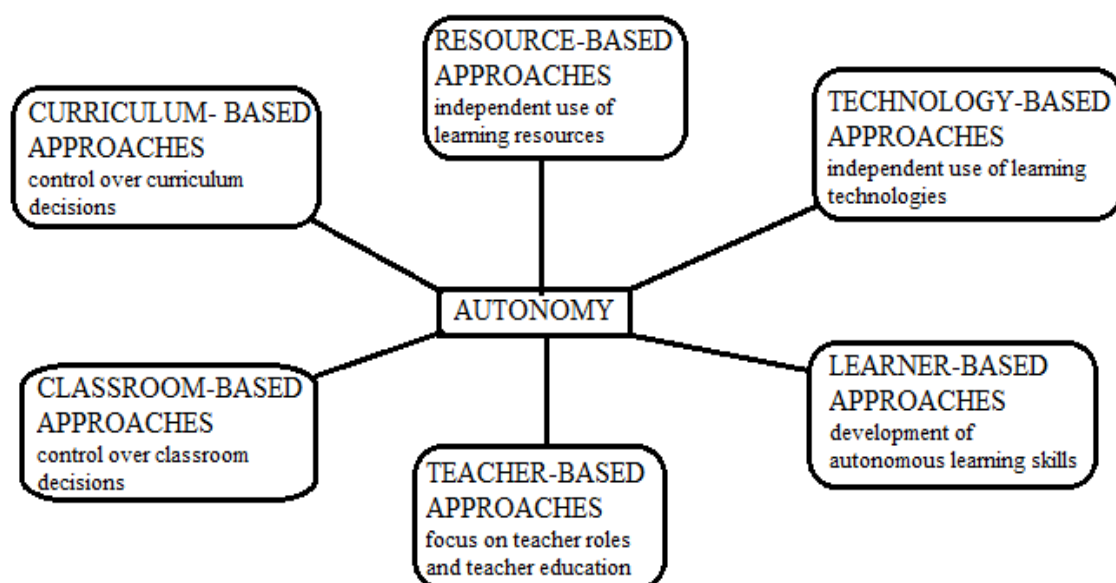
Besides, learners can be able to identify their needs since they are responsible for their own learning as well as other dimensions of learning such as defining the sources for learning and using appropriate learning strategies (Benson, 2001, p. 33). Other characteristics of autonomous learners identified by Nicolaidis (2008, p. 141) can be defined as learners' being able to work independently as well as having consciousness on their roles in learning.

#### **2.4. Related Approaches with Learner Autonomy**

The concept of autonomy is defined by Benson (2001, p. 109) as “the capacity to take control over one’s learning”. It is stated that developing learning autonomy is helpful for learning a language; however, it is easier said than done. In other words, developing one’s capacity to become an autonomous learner can take a long process. Teachers, as well as learners, have important roles in developing one’s autonomy in language learning. For this purpose, for instance, Dickinson, (1993) defines the ways of teachers’ efforts in promoting learners’ gaining independence in the learning process. These are:

- Approving independence in the classroom by encouraging the learners to become more active in language learning.
- Persuading the students in that they have greater capability to gain their independence in learning by showing them successful examples.
- Helping learners to experience independence.
- Giving opportunities to the learners to become aware of their learning process for understanding the language system.
- Sharing some precious knowledge about the language with the learners in order to make them aware of what is expected from the tasks or what problems they can face during the learning process.

Efforts to promote autonomy can be shaped in different forms although teachers and institutions have important roles in learners' gaining control over their learning. According to Benson (2001, p. 109), any effort or practice to encourage and provide learners to take control in their own learning can be referred as one of the ways of developing autonomy. On the other hand, he also states that it doesn't rely on only one way of teaching or any particular approach to language learning. Therefore, there are a number of approaches affecting the learners' way of becoming autonomous learners. Basic approaches that have crucial effects in fostering autonomy defined by Benson (2001, p. 111) are shown in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1.** *Basic Approaches Related to Learner Autonomy*

### **2.4.1. Resource-based approaches**

Resource based approaches focus on the development of autonomy by allowing the learners to gain independence regarding the interaction with the resources provided to the learners. In resource-based approaches, the learners are given opportunities in planning the lesson, selecting the materials, and evaluating the learning process. Unlike the teacher-directed classrooms, being an autonomous learner is accepted to have a great value in learning. In order to develop the autonomy in language learning, learners must be able to make their decisions for their own learning and they should have responsibilities in determining the objectives of learning, deciding on the course content, choosing the method, monitoring the progress, and self-evaluation (Hedge, 2000, p. 84). One of the important things in resource-based approaches is providing opportunities for authentic situations, especially for communication (Benson, 2001, p. 134). Having communicative interaction is highly crucial for the development of autonomy. Therefore, the importance of “self” approaches such as self-access language learning and self-directed language learning, which help learners develop their autonomy in language learning are clarified under this section.

#### ***2.4.1.1. Self-access language learning***

According to Gardner and Miller (1999, pp. 9-11), Self-access Language Learning (SALL) is “not an approach to teaching language, but an approach to learning language”. The approach focuses on the organization of the environment in which learners can choose learning materials and do the tasks on their own. Because of the idea in SALL, self-access centers have been put into practice especially by taking an active role in developing autonomy through the self-works of the learners. In other words, self-access centers play an important role in the practice of autonomy (Benson, 2001, p. 114). Therefore, the effectiveness of autonomy and self-access in language learning is generally confused although self-access doesn't imply learners' controlling their own learning.

Self-access Centers (SAC) are purposefully designed places where learning materials such as audio and videotapes, computers, online resources, communication tools, many printed materials, etc. are enabled to the learners. They also include places for group works and counseling areas. The materials in SAC are defined up to the

demands of the learners, which change from one nation to another. Therefore, it can be concluded that these centers can be formed in a variety of ways depending on the cultural and educational understanding of the nations.

On the other hand, there are some misconceptions about self-access in that it is regarded as a collection of the materials or a combination of resources. However, Gardner and Miller (1999) define these centers as a combination of a number of elements, both teachers and students taking active roles in language learning. An important issue of self-access centers is the involvement of teachers and students to the system. Being autonomous doesn't mean that learners have to do all the things individually. Teachers should have responsibilities in promoting learner autonomy in a number of ways. The role of the teachers in SAC is important as well. Their main responsibility in the centers is to map the learning by guiding the students at SAC (Lonegran, 1994, p. 122). Lonegran defines what teachers should do in these centers and put them into an order. According to him, the first step is course planning simply because the courses in SAC should be different from traditional courses, and they should include activities peculiar to the centers. The second responsibility of teachers in these centers is timetabling. Learners differ from one to another such as their ages, their needs; as a result, expectations of learners may vary. To be able to correlate the needs and expectations of the learners and the resources available in the center is crucial for the teachers working in these centers; therefore, timetabling is an important step that teachers should keep in mind. Lastly, the material selection is very crucial in SAC in that choosing inappropriate materials may cause problems. Therefore, teachers should consider the needs of the learners and for what purposes the materials are selected.

Learners' involvement to self-access centers provides both learners and institutions opportunities in that learners can control their own learning, and help institutions to organize learning (Benson, 2001, p. 122). Benson also states that learners can take active roles in selecting and cataloging the materials, and learners' outcomes can be used as materials for the other learners in SAC. The responsibilities of learners in taking active roles in their learning in SAC are indispensable. According to Lonegran (1994, p. 124), learners can successfully achieve their responsibilities by considering these facilities: "self-awareness, self-assessment, and self-discipline". He adds that learners need to be aware of their needs, objectives, abilities and learning strategies to be used in self-access



courses. With these facilities, they can evaluate their learning through self- assessment processes. The self-assessment process can be maintained by the learners' having self-discipline, and with regularly recording the processes. In other words, learners' preferences in language learning constitute the core of the self- access centers although there are some challenges in the learners' taking active roles in every aspect of learning. For example, Reinders and Lázaro, (2008) inform that any systematic assessment in SAC is lacking, and the assessment is mostly done informally; as a result, the reliability of the assessment is questioned because students are traditionally exam focused and don't have adequate assessment skills.

#### ***2.4.1.2. Self-directed learning***

Self-directed learning (SDL) is defined as “learning in which the objectives, progress, and evaluation of learning are determined by the learners themselves” (Benson, 2001, p. 8). The term SDL is associated with self-improvement, and self- education because, self-direction involves only the desire and tendency of the learners in language learning. In other words, SDL is achieved under the control or direction of learners, not the others (Yıldırım, 2005).

With the recent improvements in technology and with the varieties in other sources like audio and video recorders, fast-copier machines, easily accessible journals and newspapers by means of web tools, self- directed learning (SDL) has gained prominence especially within the influence of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project. All these developments have made accessing learning materials easier and therefore designing a self-directed learning system without under any controller of the learning process is more achievable with self- instructional materials (Gremmo & Riley, 1995).

According to Olmos and De Los Angeles, (1998, p. 20), self- directed learning is achieved in two stages. The first stage is the stage of the preparation for deciding to learn a language with the learner's desire. In the first stage, the learner gets ready to learn a language or decides how he can learn it with or without the help of anyone else. The aim of the first stage is to make learners acquire the concept of “learning to learn”. The second stage is the real decision-making process. In the second stage, the learner is expected to decide to the learning itself. In other words, the second stage is achieved deciding all the

aspects of language learning such as deciding objectives, resources, and the other processes of learning.

The relation between learner autonomy and SDL can be explained with learners' taking responsibilities in language learning (Du, 2013). Both in autonomy and SDL learners are responsible for their own learning. However, being an independent learner takes time and there should be training to move away from the dependence to the teacher (Okumuş Ceylan, 2015); therefore, SDL is a tool uncovering the learner's potential for being an autonomous learner.

#### ***2.4.1.3. Distance learning***

With the improvements in technology, distance learning, which is highly related to the notions of autonomy and self-regulated learning, has become popular in educational settings (Andrade & Bunker, 2009). In both concepts, autonomy and self-regulated learning, learners should be responsible for their own learning. In distance learning, learners are more responsible for self-managing the learning process than in the actual classroom settings (Xiao, 2014). Such responsibility makes learners be at the center of learning, and as a result, to be autonomous in language learning. Learners in distance learning depend largely on packaged resources (Benson, 2001, p. 132), and they have not any direct interaction with their peers.

According to Andrade and Bunker, (2009) language learning in distance learning can be challenging in some aspects although it is easier to obtain the materials with the help of the improvements in technology. Lack of interaction, for instance, can be problematic for the learners because language learners need comprehensible output (Swain, 1985) as well as comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982). The accessibility of printed and audio materials enables learners a variety of authentic resources, therefore, they get adequate comprehensible input with these materials. However, in distance learning, learners don't have any opportunities in interacting with the peers and negotiating the input provided. In other words, it is difficult for learners to have real communication practices with their peers when learning a language. On the other hand, these challenges are tried to be solved through computer-mediated communications, and virtual learning settings.

Although the concept of distance learning is not directly related to the notion of autonomy, in such an instruction, materials and the process of teaching itself take the function of a teacher in the classroom (Benson, 2001, p. 133). Therefore, it can be concluded that distance learning, as well as self-access and SDL, provides opportunities to learners in taking responsibilities for their own learning.

In practice, however, Hurd, Beaven, and Ortega (2001) investigates the relationship between learner autonomy and distance learning, and skills and strategies needed to become successful learners in distance learning. They examine the process of developing a language course providing Spanish diploma at Open University. The production of such a language course takes three years and it includes planning learning process and producing materials for distance learning. As a conclusion, it can be said that learners don't have the opportunity to be involved in syllabus design, they are given little choice on what to learn, and the course doesn't allow learners to work on their own pace. In other words, the process of preparing a course for distance learning doesn't match with the features of learner autonomy and learners are not encouraged to take responsibilities for their own learning.

#### **2.4.2. Technology-based approaches**

The use of educational technologies affects language learning in many ways. For example, such technologies provide learners to interact with a great number of people, and it is difficult, and even nearly impossible to interact with those people in the classroom (Benson, 2001, pp. 136- 137). It also provides multi-media language learning applications that give opportunities for learners to develop their autonomy by enabling authentic input. Benson (2001, pp. 138- 139) clarifies the relationship between autonomy and the new technologies in his book:

“The best of these applications support the development of autonomy by offering rich linguistic and non- linguistic input, by presenting new language through a variety of media, and by offering branching options. Such applications encourage exploratory learning and encourage learners to exercise control over the selection of materials and strategies of interpretation.”

The importance of technology in language learning has been determined with a number of studies in the literature. For example, Gao (2003, p. 54- 55) interviewed with

Chinese students who take academic courses in the UK. He states that most of the students accept to do their works through computers. They also admit using language learning software programs, particularly dictionary applications. Some state that they use software programs which have self- testing functions, and use Microsoft- word spelling checking facility when writing their assignments.

There is a great variety in the use of educational technologies for language learning, including computers, tablets, and mobile phones with their various applications. The use of these materials in language learning is growing because they are having larger screen sizes, enhancing their audio and video quality, enlarging the storage capacity, and giving more options for recording and editing (Rosell-Aguilar, 2017). A number of studies related to the use of such applications in language learning have been done. In one of them, for instance, Castañeda and Cho (2016) report that the undergraduate university students who learn Spanish significantly improve their knowledge in verb conjugations after the use of an app. In Kim's study (2013), he realizes that Korean learners gain improvements in listening comprehension after using such devices. The learners also state positive attitudes towards the use of such apps for language learning.

One of the strengths of using such devices is that they are helpful in developing their capacity in self-directed learning. As explained before self- direction increase the learners' taking control over their learning, therefore learners become more responsible for their own learning. In other words, they get the chance in promoting their capacity for being autonomous in language learning. Among the studies in the literature, for instance, Lai, Shum and Tian (2016) study on the effectiveness of an online language learning platform aiming at increasing two- basic components of self- directed use of educational technologies for language learning- "willingness and the knowledge and skill based". In the study, 80 Chinese undergraduate EFL students are asked about the technology use in learning English before and after a 12-week training. The findings of the study indicate that the training is effective in the frequency of self-directed use of such technologies and increasing willingness and knowledge in language learning.

One of the advantages of these technologies is that using web tools provide many opportunities for the learners in language learning. Benson (2001, p. 139) clarifies the advantages of using the internet to increase the knowledge of the learners in language learning. First of all, it provides an easy and cheap access to the authentic resources. These

resources are generally those which are appropriate for the learners who learn a language individually; therefore, it can be concluded that using the internet in language learning supports SDL. In addition, it is convenient for interaction with others to make discussions about the things to be learned through on line discussions. Besides, according to Benson, this interaction can be made with other learners, between the teacher and the learner, or between the learner and anyone who uses the target language. All these advantages of using the internet in language learning show that learners are not dependent on the teacher, any place, or time to increase their target knowledge, thus, it can be said that using web tools in language learning may help learners to foster autonomy.

Although learners are not dependent on their teachers when using such tools to increase their knowledge of the target language, teachers' position is also important to make use of such technologies easier for learners. For instance, Lai, Yeung, & Hu, (2016) investigate the perceptions of learners and teachers to promote autonomy with technology outside the class. They make interviews with 15 students and 10 language teachers in a university of Hong Kong. The findings indicate that both students and learners accept the importance of using technology in language learning because it provides opportunities for exposing learners to the target language. In the interviews with 15 university students, they state that teachers should be responsible for promoting learners' autonomy in language learning with technologies by suggesting them a number of technological tools. The students also add that teachers should recommend cognitive and metacognitive strategies to use these technological tools efficiently in language learning.

#### **2.4.3. Learner-based approaches**

Different from the other approaches to fostering autonomy, Learner-Based Approaches (LBA) mainly focus on the specific skills and strategies that help the learners to take control over their learning. According to Benson (2001, p. 142), with LBA, behavioral and psychological changes are expected in the behaviors of learners in order to take control over their learning. In other words, learner training on how to use strategies to be successful in language learning is one of the cornerstones in promoting learner autonomy.

Learner strategies are defined by many researchers in the literature. For example, they are defined as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster,

more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” by (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). The aim of learner training is to make learners more aware of the strategies used in language learning, therefore, they can take control over their learning. In other words, the aim in strategy training is to gain awareness to the learners on how to learn. Learner strategy training is important because making learners aware of learning strategies can help the learners to select the appropriate strategies in language learning (Bueno-Alastuey & Agulló, 2015).

The relationship between strategy use and learner autonomy has been investigated in many aspects. Nguyen and Gu (2013) define this relationship as “the evidence that learner autonomy promotes learning comes from learner based approaches to strategy training” (p. 12). Teaching language learning strategies can increase the target knowledge of the learners because such strategies encourage the learners to find their own way of learning and promote autonomy. However, the relationship between strategy use and learner autonomy is not easy to understand as it is thought because there may not be a direct relationship between strategy training and success in language learning. Cohen (1996) relates the effectiveness of a strategy with the characteristics of learners, successful or unsuccessful. In other words, the effectiveness of strategy use is related to the awareness of the learners in how consciously learners select the strategies during the language learning process. On the other hand, Rees-Miller, (1993) makes four criticisms to the relationship between strategy use and learner autonomy:

The relationship between awareness of learners in strategy use and success in learning is not proved with empirical studies.

Some learner characteristics, such as being active cannot be directly associated with the success of the learners; therefore, they cannot be taught as a learning strategy.

The use of strategies which successful learners employ may not be sufficient for unsuccessful learners.

Successful learners tend to use non-recommended strategies instead of recommended strategies in language learning.

#### **2.4.4. Classroom-based approaches**

In classroom based approaches (CBA), learners are mainly given opportunities to make their decisions for the learning processes in the classrooms. In other words, it is one

of the key factors which provide opportunities to the learners in participating the stages of making decisions concerning their language learning processes in a supportive and collaborative environment (Benson, 2001, p. 151). At this point, learners' taking active roles or sharing the responsibility of making decisions regarding the classroom activities is crucial in some aspects. For instance, Allwright (1979) states that sharing responsibility with the learners gives the teachers an opportunity to observe the learners as much as possible. Furthermore, teachers' extensive control of the learning process can be risky in that it may hinder learners to gain experience in classroom settings. In other words, it may weaken the chance of getting classroom experience for learners.

As understood from Allwright's views related to decision making processes in classroom settings, learners should be given a bit freedom to take responsibilities for their own learning unlike the teacher-centered approaches. Learners' having control over planning the classroom processes may create positive results (Benson, 2001, p. 152). For example, Anton (1999) makes a study on classroom discourse and he investigates the effect of teacher-centered and learner centered classrooms regarding the interaction between the teacher and the learners in the L2 classrooms. The data are collected from the observations of the first year university students in French and Italian classes throughout a semester.

The findings of the study show that learner-centered classrooms provide opportunities to the learners for negotiating the form, content and classroom rules of behavior, which is an indication of how useful learner-centered classrooms are in L2 learning. On the contrary, teacher-centered classrooms provide few opportunities for negotiation. In other words, this study indicates that when learners are given opportunities to negotiate the language, it may gain cognitive development because of the socio-cultural involvement of learner as well as increasing linguistic features in L2 learning. Learners' involvement in the learning process requires sharing responsibilities for planning learning stages, choosing classroom activities, and materials as well as arranging classroom interaction (Little, 2007). Therefore, learners' taking active roles in classroom based approaches is one of the key factors to developing autonomy.

In collaborating learning, learners need to work as a group; as a result, they need to interact with each other in classroom activities. According to Benson (2001, p. 154), giving learners opportunity to interact with each other can be useful in that transferring

the control of the classroom to the learners increases the opportunity of student- student interaction and the use of the target language in a group work.

On the other hand, peer mediated learning can be an effective way for increasing learners' autonomy and for developing their language proficiency. Peer learning can be defined as the learners' gains from each other both in formal and informal ways (Havnes, 2008). Contrary to the teacher- centered education, peer mediated learning is basically concerned with teaching language through student- student interaction. Student- student interaction is valuable because the experience of teaching to peers can be a beneficial tool for learning gains (Benson, 2001, p. 154). In the literature, there are a number of studies which focus on the effectiveness of student- student interaction through peer mediated teaching. For instance, in a meta- analysis study made by Cole (2013), the effectiveness of peer mediated learning is investigated in terms of oral and written language. In 41 studies related to peer mediated learning, the findings indicate that peer- mediated learning is effective at developing both oral language and written language.

For the interaction of learners, internet based tools can be used to make the learners be involved in a group. One of the ways of doing this is creating a wiki for student interaction. In a study made for examining the effectiveness of wiki for language learning (Bradley, Lindström & Rystedt, 2010), Swedish engineering students take advanced ESP course within a term. In the analysis of the interaction of learners in the wiki, a number of different interactions have been found among the students. The findings also show that the interaction among the students changes when there is another activity. Additionally, it can be said that it is a beneficial tool for increasing the collaboration and cooperation among the students because a wiki potentially lets its users make arrangement on the texts cooperatively. It can also be added that English has become a lingua franca and learners can find people who use such tools from other parts of the world and therefore such tools can be beneficial for language learning.

One of the dimensions of CBA is self-assessment, which is a prominent issue related to autonomy. The term "self-assessment" is also related to language testing although there is some criticism to the reliability of summative self-assessments in language learning (Benson, 2001, p. 155). Therefore, Oscarson (1989) identifies self-assessment as internal self- directed activity which is in the form of self-report and external other-directed activity which is in the form of examinations and tests. Developing self-assessment is crucial for the learners because it is an ongoing process



that affects determining the learning goals, activities and assessment criteria (Benson, 2001, p. 155).

In the literature, there are a number of studies focusing on the effectiveness of self-assessment in language learning. For example, Li and Chen (2016) study on the effectiveness of peer and self-assessment in writing composition with Chinese university students. After the experiment, the researchers ask the participants about their views related to new ways of assessment. The findings indicate that nearly 88 percent of the students believe that they are beneficial for language learning. 80 percent of the students also state that they gain confidence and become more critical after the experiment.

As understood from the explanations above, involving learners in the processes of planning and assessment can promote learner autonomy. According to Benson (2001, p. 161), supporting and giving the opportunity to the learners in an appropriate way may provide learners to take responsibilities for their own learning. He also states that learners' capacity to take control over their learning can be developed within the classroom, especially collaborating with other learners as well as the support of the teachers.

#### **2.4.5. Curriculum-based approaches**

The main focus of Curriculum Based Approaches to autonomy is to broaden the principles of learners' control over the curriculum. In other words, what is expected from the learners is that they should be involved in decision-making processes of curriculum design within a collaboration of teachers. According to Yüksel (2010), in the third millennia characteristics of education has faced numerous changes in a way that learning has become more flexible, inclusive, collaborative and authentic. Therefore, the roles of both learners and teachers have been negotiated in a number of aspects, as in the case of negotiating curricula. He also adds that in the previous studies it has been found beneficial to negotiate the curriculum because it enhances and encourages learning.

On the other hand, Benson (2001, p. 163) informs about the notion of "process syllabus" regarding learner control over the curriculum. He states:

"The principle of learner control over the curriculum has been formalized in the idea of process syllabus, in which learners are expected to make the major decisions concerning the content and procedures of learning in collaboration with their teachers."

According to Breen (1987), process syllabus has three main processes: communicating, learning and purposeful social activity of teaching and learning in the classroom. The ideology of the process syllabus originates from the communicative

language teaching and task based learning. In process syllabus, learners are expected to reorganize the syllabus provided regarding their needs in the classroom. On the other hand, the stronger version of process syllabus doesn't provide any pre-determined syllabus to be discussed. The negotiations related to syllabus are done throughout the course. Therefore, content of the course is decided throughout these negotiations (Benson, 2001, p. 165) since negotiation has an important place in learning a language (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000) in that learners can be included in communicative and social activities of a language class.

Communicative syllabus design has emerged as a result of the inadequacy of the structural approach to language teaching (Stratton, 1977). Although structural approaches focus on traditionally grammar teaching, communicative approaches aim to provide learners communicative competence as well as linguistic competence. In task based syllabuses, learners are expected to do tasks since the tasks are organized in a way that learners should achieve the tasks by communicating in the target language. Two tasks, communicative and learning tasks, are incorporated to facilitate learning and produce real communication (Bucur, 2014). However, going further, process syllabus provides opportunities to both learners and teachers for negotiating and creating the syllabus. In other words, gaining autonomy can be achieved through transferring responsibilities to the learners for all aspects of learning (Cotterall, 2000) such as designing an entire course.

Learners' gaining control over the course design has been studied by a number of researchers. In one of them, for example, Cotterall (2000) investigates the principles of designing a language course with 20 university students in a 12- week intensive language courses. In the study, learners state five principles that are important in designing a language course:

The course should reflect learner goals

Course tasks should be linked to the language learning process

Tasks should be parallel with real world communication

Learner strategies should be incorporated into the course

Learners' reflections on learning should be paid attention in the courses

As understood from the explanations above, learners' gaining control over curriculum doesn't mean that they should be left alone to design the entire course. On the contrary, being successful in gaining control over the syllabus design depends largely on the support of the teachers in decision-making processes (Benson, 2001, p. 170). Without

the help of the teachers, it can be concluded that learners cannot increase their capacities to take control over their learning.

#### **2.4.6. Teacher-based approaches**

One of the important aspects of promoting learner autonomy is perhaps the value of teachers in language learning. As explained by (Little, 1991, p. 3) in the misconceptions section, the place of teachers in language learning has been questioned in a way that teachers are not needed anymore in language learning, however, the roles of teachers have been redefined within the concept of learner autonomy.

Although concept of learner autonomy is accepted as one of the significant gains in language learning, interaction of both learners and teachers in classroom settings seems problematic in accordance with applications of teaching methodologies; therefore, Benson (2001, p. 171) argues the issue in two dimensions: teacher roles, which focuses the roles of teachers in learning a language, and teacher autonomy, which focused on teacher education.

##### **2.4.6.1. Teacher roles**

In learner autonomy, learners are considered responsible for their own learning; however, this doesn't mean that teachers are not needed because learners' gaining autonomy in language learning is primarily supported with teacher autonomy (Sofracı, 2016, p. 18). According to Ünal (2015, p. 34), the most important dimension of autonomy is the position of the teacher in language learning because it is very challenging to promote learner autonomy without the support of teachers. On the other hand, within the scope of new approaches to language learning, the roles of learners have been redefined and the researchers (Hedge, 2000; Benson, 2001; Dokuz, 2009; Dişlen, 2010; Yapıörer, 2013; Ünal, 2015; Sofracı, 2016) define new role to the teachers in the literature. These roles include *facilitator, counselor, helper, advisor, guide, model, supporter, cooperator, motivator, personal tutor, manager of activities, consultant, inspirator, knower, organizer, promoter, and resource*.

Although new approaches propose more humanistic roles to the teacher, in the practice of teaching, generally, teachers don't believe these roles as in Turkey since they believe that teacher role as a controller is inevitable in order to provide a disciplined atmosphere in the classroom (Dokuz, 2009, p. 45). Hedge (2000, p. 29) also states that

interpretation of these roles is strictly bound to social and cultural environments as well as the personality of teachers. For instance, in an environment where teachers are authority figures, teachers are in the role of checking the response of the students to the questions; however, in an environment where teachers share responsibilities with their learners and are perceived partners of learners in the learning process, they become in the role of helper to guide the learners to remember a point. In other words, unlike the roles which are given to teachers in traditional language teaching, teachers become more friendly and sensitive to the needs of learners during the learning process. Therefore, teachers must be supportive and spend a great effort to encourage the learners in overcoming the obstacles to become autonomous learners. As a result, teachers' roles to promote learner autonomy cannot be ignored.

As understood from the roles defined for teachers in language learning, teachers should be helpful to the learners to become more autonomous, independent and motivated in learning a language. For this reason, learners need teachers on the way of becoming autonomous learners and being responsible for their own learning (Dişlen, 2010, p. 13). Today, teachers cannot be regarded as a transmitter of knowledge or supplier of knowledge (Yapıörer, 2013, p. 19) as in the case of traditional teacher-centered education, they are responsible for guiding, modeling, counseling and facilitating to the learners in the learning process.

#### ***2.4.6.2. Teacher autonomy***

Teacher autonomy mainly focuses on the attempts to teacher training, because Benson (2001, p. 174) identifies the role of teacher education to learner autonomy with these words: "In order to foster autonomy among learners, teachers must be both free and able to assert their own autonomy in the practice of teaching". In other words, teachers should be the persons who develop their own ways of teaching since the things that they apply such as curriculum, materials, activities, show a teacher's reflections on teaching a language. Therefore, teacher autonomy can be described as one's "capacity, freedom, and responsibility to make choices" for his/her own teaching (Aoki, 2002, cited in Ünal, 2015, p. 18). It can be understood as professional freedom of a teacher in the implementation of the curriculum (Benson, 2001, p. 174). However, teachers tend to follow the guidelines of the curriculum while having teaching experience. According to Little (1995), this is the point that enables a basis for developing teacher autonomy. He also defines it as a

starting point because it is a long and complex process to negotiate taking responsibilities with the learners for their own learning.

In the literature, it has been accepted that teacher education is not only a process of acknowledging the teachers on the concept of learner autonomy and importance of promoting learner autonomy in language learning, but a process of practicing to promote learner autonomy among learners. Therefore, in order to promote learner autonomy, teacher autonomy is a necessity (Little, 1995; Ünal, 2015).

On the other hand, there are some arguments that teacher autonomy cannot only be limited to the promotion of learner autonomy. In this sense, Smith (2003) identifies different dimensions of teacher autonomy:

Capacity for self-directed professional action

Capacity for self-directed professional development

Freedom from control by others over professional action and development

The relationship between teacher autonomy and other factors influencing teachers' professionalism such as job satisfaction has also been investigated by a number of researchers. In one of them, for example, Pearson and Moomaw (2005) investigate the relationship between teacher autonomy and stress, work satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. The results indicate that job stress falls when teacher autonomy on curriculum increases. In addition, the results indicate a direct relationship between teacher autonomy and empowerment and professionalism, although a direct relationship is not found between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction.

In another study made by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2014), the roles of self- efficacy and teacher autonomy on teacher engagement, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion has been analyzed over the perceptions of Norwegian elementary and middle school teachers. The correlation and regression analyses indicate that both self-efficacy and teacher autonomy influence teacher engagement, job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion. In other words, both self-efficacy and teacher autonomy positively affect teacher engagement and job satisfaction; but, they affect emotional exhaustion of teachers in a negative way.

As a result, teacher based approaches are crucial for developing both learner autonomy and teacher autonomy in that promoting learner autonomy depends on promoting teacher autonomy and the success of teacher education is highly bound to the promotion of teacher autonomy. Therefore, there should be attempts to promote teacher

autonomy in teacher education programs such as supporting systems to encourage new teachers in order to provide professional development in the schools (Dymoke, & Harrison, 2006).

## **2.5. Learner Autonomy and Culture**

As discussed earlier, autonomy is known as a product of western values. At this point, researchers investigate whether the concept of autonomy is appropriate universally (Hedge, 2000, p. 99). In many studies, it is mentioned that learner autonomy includes values of western societies and the implementation and effectiveness of learner autonomy may vary according to the values of societies. Therefore, Benson (2001, p. 55) says: “If we accept that autonomy takes different forms for different individuals, and even for the same individual in different contexts of learning, we may also need to accept that its manifestations will vary according to cultural context”.

Benson (2001, p. 55) also informs about the spread of the notion of autonomy in a way that acceptance of learner autonomy has a more extensive influence on educational philosophies of Asian contexts than European ones since the ideas behind learner autonomy belong to western cultures. On the other hand, he informs that although the learners in Asian context are known as passive and reticent, this is the case that occurs in recent decades because of the changes in the philosophy of education in these contexts. Hedge (2000, p. 100) also asks that although it is regarded that the practices of learning a language are achieved more with self-directed learning in western cultures, is it true that these values don't fit with the educational practices in Asian contexts? Her answer to this question is that it may not be true because there are prominent sayings that support the idea of learner autonomy in Asian cultures. For example, a Chinese saying is: “Tell me and I will forget; show me and I will remember; involve me and I will learn”. In addition, Littlewood (1999) makes criticism on the generalizations that produce cultural stereotypes. He adds that although we can find similarities among the learners who are from the same culture, it is not the right thing to say that all learners in a culture have similar characteristics when the concern of education becomes individual.

One of the argued issues related to autonomy is a question raised by Riley (1988): “Are the principles and practice on which autonomous and self-directed learning schemes are based ethnocentric? (p. 13). Although Riley answers this question positively, being against towards Riley's approach to the relationship between autonomy and

ethnocentricity, Schmenk (2005) defines two blindness in such a view. Firstly, educators put on a risk being culture blind when they don't realize that learner autonomy is a cultural framework. In other words, it is the fact that learner autonomy and culture are not separable. Secondly, the culture blindness occurs when attempts to promote learner autonomy globally by ignoring cultural backgrounds of the probable audience. Therefore, it can be concluded that we cannot fully exclude the effects of cultural traits in any practices of language learning (Ivanovska, 2015).

The arguments on the relationship between learner autonomy and culture can be resolved through the studies from different contexts. Since autonomy is a complicated notion, many variables affect the promotion of autonomy such as the culture of the learners. For the relationship between learner autonomy and culture, studies from different contexts can shed light on our understanding of learner autonomy. In other words, the experimental studies from different contexts make clear to see different approaches to learner autonomy in terms of different cultures such as the differences between European and Asian cultures.

For example, a study made by Chan (2001) investigates learners' readiness for learner autonomy. Participants of the study are 20 second-year university students in Hong Kong. The data are collected through a questionnaire and interviews for supporting the questionnaire. The results of the study mainly explore aims and motivation in learning English, teachers' and learners' roles, and learner preferences. The results indicate that learners are mostly instrumentally motivated. For the roles of the teachers, the study finds that learners expect their teacher to give them opportunity and occasion for discovering things. The students also desire to be involved in language learning and group works. Concludingly, the results of the study indicate that learners have positive attitudes to be autonomous learners.

## **2.6. Learner Autonomy Studies in Turkish Context**

Learner autonomy has gained popularity in almost every corner of the world, and hence, there are many studies related to the notion of autonomy. These studies focus on different aspects of autonomy such as the relationship between autonomy and learning, the differences between the perceptions of learners and their teachers, strategies for fostering autonomy, the relationship between autonomy and other concepts like self-esteem, and the other variables of a study design such as grade and gender of the learners.

Yıldırım (2005) aims to investigate the Turkish ELT students' perceptions related to learner autonomy as learners and future teachers. The participants are 179 first and fourth year students enrolled in ELT department. The data taken from two questionnaires and interviews indicate that a significant difference between the first year and the fourth year students has not been observed.

Sabancı, (2007) investigates primary and secondary state school teachers' views on learner autonomy. The participants are 197 English teachers working in state schools in a city of Turkey. The teachers are asked about their views with a five- point Likert scale and they are asked to list the most important five things which affect their views on learner autonomy. In the questionnaire, the teachers are asked about twelve instructional responsibilities such as course objectives, material selection, course content, classroom management, etc. related to learner autonomy. Overall findings of the study indicate that most of the teachers (58 percent) have positive views related to learner autonomy. Out of 197 teachers, 26 percent of them admit that learner autonomy can be negotiated with the learners although only 16 percent of the teachers state negative views on learner autonomy.

In a study made by Üstünoğlu (2009), perceptions of university students related to responsibilities, abilities and, activities have been investigated regarding the participants' gender and motivation. The participants are 320 university students and 24 teachers. The data are collected through questionnaires and interviews. The results of the study reveal that students perceive themselves autonomous however they don't take responsibilities for their learning. The results also indicate that there is not any difference in the perception scores of participants related to responsibilities in terms of gender although the perceptions of learners related to ability and activity scores differ statistically significant regarding the gender in that female students have more positive perceptions than male students.

In another study made by Balçıkanlı (2010), the student teachers' beliefs related to learner autonomy are investigated in the Turkish context. Participants of the study are 112 Turkish university students enrolled in ELT department of a state university. The students are asked about their long term and short term opinions related to principles of learner autonomy. The data are collected through a questionnaire and through interviews with 20 participants. The overall results reveal that student teachers have positive beliefs towards the principles of learner autonomy while most of the student teachers don't



approve of future students' taking active roles in the decision-making process for their learning because of time and place restrictions.

Yapıörer (2013) investigates the learners' views on learner autonomy related to nine different areas. The participants are 114 7th grade students enrolled in a state elementary school in Turkey. Data are collected through a questionnaire called Autonomy Learner Questionnaire. Findings indicate that learners are more autonomous in some areas of learning such as working collaboratively in a group, being motivated in learning while they are less autonomous in other areas of learning such as readiness for the content and selection of materials.

Tanyeli and Kuter (2013) investigate the perceptions of freshmen Law students regarding learner autonomy and writing skills. The participants are 200 freshmen and six teachers. The findings of the study reveal that students don't perceive themselves as autonomous learners and proficient enough in writing skills although they have positive attitudes towards learning a language. The teachers also inform that some factors such as materials and strategies hinder learner autonomy.

Ahmadzadeh and Zabardast (2014) investigate third year Turkish ELT students' preferences related to learner autonomy in two state universities of Turkey. The participants are 152 third year university students. The results indicate that Turkish ELT students from different universities share certain similarities such as their perceptions related to abilities for becoming autonomous learners although there are some differences such as teacher-student interaction between the students from two universities.

Okumuş Ceylan (2015) focuses on whether training learners in strategy use help them promote autonomy. The participants are Turkish university students who have different proficiency levels. The results indicate that when the students are trained with learning strategies they take control over their learning, although their autonomy levels are not high at the beginning.

Merç (2015) aims to investigate the effects of learner autonomy training on the learners' study habits. The participants are first year 122 university students enrolled in a learner autonomy class. For data collection, a questionnaire is administered at the beginning of the course. Then, a 12-week training is given to the learners before the questionnaire is administered to the students again at the end of the course. The results indicate that there is a statistically significant difference in the learners' study habits after

receiving training in some skills such as note-taking, reading, and managing school work stress.

Tilfarlioğlu and Çiftçi (2015) investigate the effects of self-efficacy and learner autonomy on EFL learners' academic success. This study also investigates the relationship between self-efficacy and learner autonomy. The participants are 250 preparatory class university students enrolled in different universities of Turkey. The data are collected through two questionnaires, one is self-efficacy questionnaire, the other is learner autonomy questionnaire. The findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between academic success and self-efficacy and learner autonomy. There is also a positive correlation between self-efficacy and learner autonomy at  $p < 0,01$ .

Sofracı (2016) focuses on the perceptual differences of EFL instructors and Turkish ELT students as prospective English teachers related to learner autonomy. The participants of the study are the instructors working in two different state universities and the third and fourth-year Turkish university students enrolled in the departments related to language teaching and learning such as ELT and English Language and Literature. The total number of the participants of the study is 123. 55 of them are instructors and 68 of them are the third and fourth-year Turkish university students. For gathering the data, a learner autonomy questionnaire is administered to the participants. For the questionnaire, the participants are also asked to write comments for each item to verify the data qualitatively. The overall findings reveal that both instructors and Turkish university students as prospective teachers of English have positive perceptions related to learner autonomy although there are a few differences in the perceptions of EFL instructors and Turkish university students in terms of different aspects of learner autonomy, which prospective teachers have more supporting perceptions than EFL instructors related to some main aspects of learner autonomy such as course objectives, course content, selection of materials, and so on.

By this chapter, we aim to give detailed information about the concept of autonomy and its historical development. The idea behind learner autonomy is clarified with a number of approaches affecting the concept of learner autonomy. It is also argued whether it is suitable for different cultural settings and its effectiveness in these cultures. Although it is a complicated notion in that there are many variables affecting the effectiveness of learner autonomy, it is regarded as highly valuable concept, especially for language

learning. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the notion of learner autonomy from the perspective of Turkish ELT learners regarding their year of study and gender.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter focuses on investigating the perceptions of Turkish ELT students enrolled in Anadolu University related to learner autonomy. The chapter includes information about the sub-sections of the methodology part such as participants, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure.

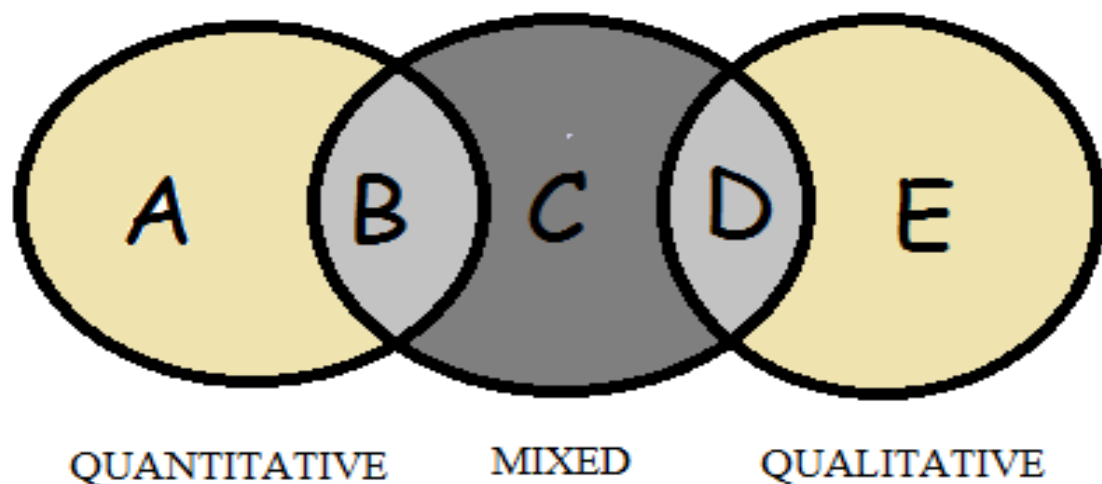
#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study mainly aims to explore the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy regarding their study years. Since being an autonomous learner is not explicitly observed (Reinders, 2010), it is quite natural to use different tools to grasp the perceptions of learners about how a learner perceives himself related to responsibilities, abilities and activities that should be applied to become an autonomous learner. Therefore, there is a need to use both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to discover the perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative instruments are applied roughly at the same time. In the quantitative part of the study, statistical measurement tools are applied whereas the qualitative part of the study aims to explore in-depth interpretations of the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy. In other words, the research design of this study is convergent parallel mixed method (Cresswell, 2013, p. 44), a type of mixed methods design in which both quantitative and qualitative data are collected roughly at the same time because the main aim of the present study is to converge both quantitative and qualitative data in order to ensure a detailed analysis of the research problems.

Mixed methods designs aim at providing multi perspective and sophisticated results with both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. In the quantitative tradition, hypotheses and proposals are aimed to be tested through statistical techniques (Teddlie, & Tashakkori, 2009) since one of the basics of quantitative methods is confirmatory research in which proposals and hypotheses are investigated through statistical measurements. Besides, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) say that the quantitative methods design, in nature, is a hypothetico- deductive model in which the theory precedes the collection of the data. On the other hand, the qualitative tradition includes inductive logic. In other words, it aims to reach to generalizations or proposals and hypotheses from

inductively analyzed data. The qualitative methods design is exploratory in nature, and unknown aspects of issues are tried to be resolved through qualitative tradition.

The mixed methods design is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, which involves techniques found in both methods. The purpose of mixed methods design is to triangulate, that is, merge the data collection and data analysis procedures of both quantitative and qualitative methods; and examine different sides of the issues (Cresswell, 2013). In other words, triangulation can be explained as combining and comparing multiple sources of the data (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) in order to provide in- depth explanations to the research problems.



**Figure 3.1.** *The Relationship of the Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods*

The intention in both quantitative and qualitative inquiry differs from each other in that the theoretical ideas behind both methods, their data collection tools and data analysis procedures differ. Both methods have different focuses on the issues and have a number of strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, the intention of mixed methods design is simply to reach a common understanding through combining these procedures when collecting the data. Cresswell (2013, pp. 266- 267) defines the basics of mixed methods design and the relationship between the concepts of quantitative and qualitative methods:

“It involves the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypotheses.

It includes the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative forms of data.

The two forms of data are integrated into the design analysis through merging the data, connecting the data, or embedding the data.

These procedures are incorporated into a distinct mixed methods design that also includes the timing of the data collection (concurrent or sequential) as well as the emphasis (equal or unequal) for each database.

These procedures can also be informed by a philosophical worldview or a theory.”

As understood from the definitions of the basics of the mixed methods design uttered above, it is useful to employ mixed methods design in investigating the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy simply because mixed methods design is superior to both quantitative and qualitative methods in a number of areas. Firstly, both confirmatory and explanatory questions in a research can be answered through the simultaneous usage of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. As stated above, quantitative tradition is typically linked with theory verification whereas qualitative tradition is mainly associated with theory generation (Teddlie, & Tashakkori, 2009). Since both methods are not perfect, emerging the purposes of both quantitative and qualitative methods enables the researchers to accomplish both explanatory and confirmatory questions in a research project. Secondly, it is accepted by many researchers that mixed methods design resolves the disadvantages of the methods they have by triangulating the strengths of the methods. By this way, stronger inferences can be provided with the use of mixed methods design because quantitative data provide breadth understanding of the issue whereas qualitative data provide in-depth understanding of the research question. Thirdly, mixed methods design is a convenient method when there are divergent views in the results. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) state that divergent results found in quantitative and qualitative analyses are crucially important in that different inferences gathered from mixed methods design are reflections of different perspectives on the issue. Additionally, such diversity in the results may lead to going beyond for further investigation.

### **3.2. Participants**

English Language Teaching (ELT) students at Anadolu University participate in this study. Convenience sampling is applied in this study because, in convenience sampling, those who are conveniently available and eager to participate in the study are chosen as participants (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). In this sense, Turkish ELT students enrolled in Anadolu University are chosen as the participants of the present study because of the practical reasons such as availability and reachability of the participants.

The number of students who take part in the study is 212. Out of 212 participants, 51 of them are first year students; 47 of them are second year students; 54 of them are third year students, and 60 of them are fourth year students.

One of the concerns of the study is to explore the relationship between gender and learners' perceptions related to learner autonomy. Although the characteristics of ELT departments are densely populated with females, the number of participants are tried to be balanced as much as possible in terms of gender. As a result, out of 212 students who participate in the present study, 73 of them are male students and 139 of them are female students. The native language of all the participants is Turkish and they learn English as a foreign language. Table 3.1. presents the background information related to the participants.

**Table 3.1:** *Background Information Related to the Participants*

Year of Study	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
First- year	24	27	51
Second- year	19	28	47
Third- year	13	41	54
Fourth- year	17	43	60
Total	73	139	212

Besides applying a questionnaire to the participants of this research, semi-structured interviews are conducted with five students from each year, from the first year to the fourth year. The background information related to those who participate in interviews is also given in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2:** *Background Information Related to the Interviewees*

Year of Study	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
First- year	2	3	5
Second- year	2	3	5
Third- year	3	2	5
Fourth- year	2	3	5
Total	9	11	20

The main purpose of the current study is to investigate the perceptions of Turkish ELT students enrolled in Anadolu University in terms of learner autonomy. With this investigation, we aim to find whether there are any similarities and differences in the perceptions of the Turkish ELT students across the years because of the education they get.

Throughout the program, Turkish ELT students take a lot of courses focusing on different aspects of the language learning. At their first year, they take courses related to language skills such as reading, listening, writing, speaking, and grammar. They also take learner autonomy course mandatorily in their first year. The program in the second year includes courses in order to provide Turkish ELT students how to teach English as a foreign language. From the second to fourth year of the program, the students take a number of methodology courses focusing on how learners can become good English teachers. Besides the methodology courses like *Teaching Foreign Language to Young Learners*, *Methodology in the Area of Specialization*, the program includes courses focusing on linguistics and literature such as *Linguistics I and II*, *Introduction to English Literature I and II*. In the last year, the program provides opportunities to learners in gaining experience on how to teach English in state schools with the courses like *Teaching Practicum*.

### **3.3. Instruments**

The quantitative instrument used in this study (Appendix A) is a questionnaire developed by Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002). The instrument is adapted by Yıldırım (2005) to investigate the perceptions and behavior related to learner autonomy of first and fourth year Turkish ELT students. The instrument is applied in its original language, that is, English. It includes four sections, three of which seek to explore the learner roles in language learning such as the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities the students should have while learning English. In the first section, it gives background information about the participants such as gender and which year they study English in ELT department.

The second section includes 13 items which ask the students to account for the perceptions related to their responsibilities in language learning. This section is highly crucial in defining the perceptions of the participants on learner autonomy because it has



been developed out of the individuals' conceding of their responsibilities in the learning process (Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002). This section has been prepared as a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "not at all" to (5) "completely".

The third section of the questionnaire includes eleven items which explore the perceptions of the students related to their abilities in the areas defined by Holec (1985). The students are expected to report their perceptions related to abilities on language learning. In other words, this section identifies strengths and weaknesses of language learners when they are given the freedom of choosing their own ways of learning. This section has also been prepared as a five-point Likert scale from (1) "very poor" to (5) "very good".

The fourth section of the questionnaire includes 13 items which identify the perceptions of learners on what activities should be done for learning a language and how often they should be done in order to develop Turkish ELT students' language proficiency. The original version of this section including both inside and outside class activities has been developed through focused group discussions with the students (Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002). The activities in this section indicate how language learners act autonomously while learning a language. This section has been prepared as a five-point Likert scale identifying the perceptions of the students about how often language learners should apply the activities given in the questionnaire for their own learning process. The activities listed in this section are expected to be ranged from (1) "never" to very (5) "often" by the participants.

### **3.4. Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study has been used before in the same context and in terms of content and face validity expert opinion has been taken by Yıldırım (2005) and piloted. Therefore, it can be said that it is a valid questionnaire since the questionnaire has been used before in the same context.

Internal consistency of the instrument is crucial; therefore, reliability of the questionnaire has been calculated through the program called SPSS. In Yıldırım's study (2005) Cronbach- alpha value has been found to be  $\alpha = 0.88$ . In the current study, we also have calculated the reliability of the instrument, and Cronbach- alpha has been found to

be  $\alpha = 0.85$ . According to the reliability evaluation criteria set by Özdamar (2004, p.633), Cronbach- alpha value shows that the instrument is highly reliable.

**Table 3.3:** *Criteria for the Cronbach-alpha Value*

$\alpha$ value	Reliability of the instrument
$0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$	No reliability
$0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$	Low reliability
$0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$	Quite reliability
$0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$	High reliability

### 3.5. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire has been administered to Turkish ELT students at Anadolu University in the Spring term of 2016- 2017 academic year. The students who participate in the study have been informed about the scope of the study, and they are ensured that the data will only be used for exploring the perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy for the current study. Before applying the instrument, a consent form has been given to the students proving that they voluntarily participate in the study.

As Cresswell (2013) said, whether qualitative or quantitative, both data collection procedures have some strengths and weaknesses. In order to eliminate the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative inquiries and combine the strengths of both methods, semi-structured interviews with 20 participants, 5 participants from each year have been conducted. While applying the questionnaire, the participants have been asked to participate voluntarily in the study for the interviews. Among those who volunteered, five participants for each year, 20 participants in total have been randomly selected. The participants have mainly been asked about their perceptions related to responsibilities to learning a language, their perceptions related to abilities to become a good language learner, and their perceptions related to activity choices in learning a language (Appendix B). The interview sessions have been tape recorded and then transcribed by the researcher (Appendix C). In addition, the characteristics of collecting qualitative data (Cresswell, 2013) is defined in a way that the atmosphere that interviews are conducted should be in a natural setting as much as possible, and the researcher should make the participants feel comfortable during the interview sessions. Therefore, the language used in the interviews is the native language of the participants, that is, Turkish, in order not to set a language

barrier for the participants. Since the interviews are conducted in the native language of learners, the findings such as codes and themes and the quotations from the interview data have been translated into English before they are put in the results section.

### **3.6. Data Analysis Procedure**

#### **3.6.1. Quantitative data analysis procedure**

First of all, the questionnaire has been applied to the learners in the natural environment of the participants, that is, in their classrooms. Then the data have been entered into the software program called “SPSS”, and then descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviations have been calculated. Secondly, Cronbach-alpha value has been calculated in order to define how reliable the questionnaire is. Before applying the statistical tests, whether the data are homogeneous or not has been checked by applying the Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances. Then, independent samples t-tests have been applied to each section of the questionnaire and to every item in order to define whether there are any significant differences between the female and male participants related to learner autonomy. In addition, one- way ANOVAs for each section of the questionnaire and for every item have been conducted to define whether Turkish ELT students’ year of study in Anadolu University has significant effects on the perceptions of the learners related to learner autonomy. When the results differ significantly among the groups, a posthoc test, Tukey’s HSD, has been applied in order to find where the significance is. Tamhane’s T2 has been applied when the data don’t meet the conditions of homogeneity.

#### **3.6.2. Qualitative data analysis procedure**

The qualitative data gathered from the interviews have been analyzed to have a deeper understanding of the perceptions of the learners related to learner autonomy. For ensuring reliable results, 20 percent of the qualitative data have been analyzed by a second rater who has an MA degree in ELT and continues her studies to have a Ph.D. degree in the same study area at Anadolu University. Inter- rater reliability between the researcher and the second- rater for the 20 percent of the data has been measured by the formula below:

$$\frac{\text{Number of agreements}}{\text{Number of agreements} + \text{Number of disagreements}} \times 100$$

According to the formula, inter-rater reliability between two raters has been found to be  $\alpha = 0.88$  for the 20 percent of the data. When there has been a mismatch between the raters in the coding procedure, the raters have negotiated on the mismatched codes and then they have reached a consensus.

Analysis of qualitative data has been applied up to one of the exploratory methods, called Provisional coding. This kind of coding is constituted from a predetermined list of coding from the relevant literature (Saldaña, 2009), and new codes can also be added to the list or some codes which exist in the list can be eliminated. Provisional coding is selected for analyzing the data in the present study because “this method is appropriate for qualitative studies that build on or corroborate previous research and investigations” (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014, p. 60).

In the process of data analysis, firstly the data have been thoroughly read. For the second reading, memo notes have been jotted down, and then, codes have been created in consideration of memo notes and pre-existing codes. Later on, the codes which are found in the data have been placed under pre-determined categories and themes, which seek to find answers to the research questions in the present study. For example, an interviewee (P1- female) talks about the learners’ roles in a group while learning English. She states that learners should help each other in the language learning process.

“For example, I propose learners to come together and make a group for studying together after the teacher gives instruction on any subject. The purpose of this is to help each other in the group. For instance, a student who understand the subject well should give her support to others, I think”

After the data have been read thoroughly, the quotation above has been extracted and written a memo, that is, what the quotation evokes to the researcher. The quotation, above for instance evokes “peer learning” because she talks about the learners’ supports to each other. Then, a memo is written like “*the importance of peer learning*”. In the literature, it is mentioned that peer learning is valuable for learner autonomy because it helps the learners to be actively involved in language learning process, because in teacher-centered education the role of the learners is only to acquire the knowledge and interaction

between the learners are limited. On the contrary, with learner autonomy learners become responsible for their learning and they should be active in the class with a number of ways such as helping their peers. Therefore, a code “helping peers” can be created from this quotation. As mentioned before, it is the learners’ responsibility to have active involvement in the learning process, therefore, the code “helping peers” can be placed under the theme “responsibilities”. After all the analysis procedure finishes for independent variables such as year of study, the similarities and differences among the groups are identified and then the codes which are mentioned with all the groups (from the first year to the fourth year) are placed in a group. The process of data analysis goes on like that and the codes are placed in groups to make the results more meaningful. Lastly, the figures which include themes and codes are drawn to make the findings of qualitative data more reader friendly.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Learner autonomy is regarded as highly crucial for increasing the learners' integrity to language learning process. For this aim, investigating the views of ELT students in Anadolu University related to learner autonomy sheds light on their perceptions about how responsible they should be in the language learning process, what abilities they should have, and what activities should be done in language learning. By focusing on different aspects of the learners' perceptions related to learner autonomy, we aim to look through the notion of learner autonomy with a broader perspective.

#### **4.1. Perceptions of Learners Related to Learner Autonomy in terms of Year of Study**

This part of the study gives detailed information about the perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy in terms of participants' study years in ELT department. The years are labeled from the first year of study to the fourth year of study. In other words, one perspective of the present study is to enlighten whether there are any changes in the perceptions of ELT students related to learner autonomy across the years. In this regard, this study aims to answer the following research question: Does the year of study have an effect on the perceptions of ELT students related to (a) responsibilities, (b) abilities, and (c) activities on learner autonomy?

##### **4.1.1. Year of study and perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to responsibilities on learner autonomy**

In this section, the results are given in two sub- parts: quantitative results and qualitative results.

###### ***4.1.1.1. Quantitative results***

In the second section of the questionnaire, the Turkish ELT students answer 13 items related to responsibilities of learners, which are prepared as a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "not at all" to (5) "completely. When we investigate the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on learner autonomy regarding the year of study, we realize that the mean scores of responsibility section in terms of the participants' study years are similar. The mean score of the responsibility section for the first year students

is 3,44 (SD= 0, 56); for the second year students 3,54 (SD= 0,56); for the third year students 3,62 (SD= 0,62); and for the fourth year students 3,60 (SD= 0,57). A one- way ANOVA is conducted to compare the means of responses about the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on learner autonomy in terms of their study years. The results indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference across four groups in terms of the students' perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy ( $F(3; 208) = 1,030, p = 0,38$ ). In other words, this means that there is not a statistically significant relationship between the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on learner autonomy and the year of study. Table 4.1. presents the relationship between responsibilities and year of study related to learner autonomy.

**Table 4.1.** *Group Statistics for Responsibilities Section and Year of Study*

Item no:	Year of Study	Mean	Std. Deviation
1- make progress during lessons	first year	3,59	0,829
	second year	3,81	0,825
	third year	3,87	0,891
	fourth year	4,33	3,852
	Total	3,92	2,177
2- make progress outside class	first year	3,39	1,097
	second year	3,74	1,144
	third year	3,83	0,986
	fourth year	3,7	0,926
	Total	3,67	1,039
3- stimulate their interest in learning English	first year	3,72	0,784
	second year	4,09	0,812
	third year	4	0,952
	fourth year	3,93	0,936
	Total	3,93	0,883
4- identify their weaknesses in English	first year	3,94	0,935
	second year	3,94	0,965
	third year	4,02	0,858
	fourth year	3,92	0,85
	Total	3,95	0,893
5- make them work harder	first year	3,26	1,157
	second year	3,26	1,124
	third year	3,26	0,923
	fourth year	3,37	0,963
	Total	3,29	1,034

6- decide the objectives of their English classes	first year	3,39	1,002
	second year	3,23	1,068
	third year	3,44	0,925
	fourth year	3,19	0,973
	Total	3,31	0,989
7- decide what they should learn next in their English lessons	first year	3,41	1,004
	second year	3,11	1,289
	third year	3	1,274
	fourth year	3,38	1,059
	Total	3,23	1,164
8- choose what activities to use to learn English in their English lessons	first year	3,4	0,969
	second year	3,21	1,25
	third year	3,41	1,125
	fourth year	3,28	1,121
	Total	3,33	1,114
9- decide how long to spend on each activity	first year	3,06	0,988
	second year	2,89	1,147
	third year	3,15	1,139
	fourth year	3,08	1,239
	Total	3,05	1,132
10- choose what materials to to learn English in their English lessons	first year	3,16	1,007
	second year	3,21	1,215
	third year	3,36	1,21
	fourth year	3,25	1,083
	Total	3,25	1,124
11- evaluate their learning	first year	3,55	1,101
	second year	3,7	1,093
	third year	3,8	0,979
	fourth year	3,62	1,043
	Total	3,66	1,049
<b>12- evaluate the course</b>	<b>first year</b>	<b>3,29</b>	<b>1,006</b>
	second year	3,72	1,089
	third year	3,91	0,83
	<b>fourth year</b>	<b>3,62</b>	<b>0,922</b>
	Total	3,64	0,978
13- decide what they learn outside class	first year	3,33	1,211
	second year	3,65	1,059
	third year	3,67	1,099
	fourth year	3,78	1,01
	Total	3,62	1,1

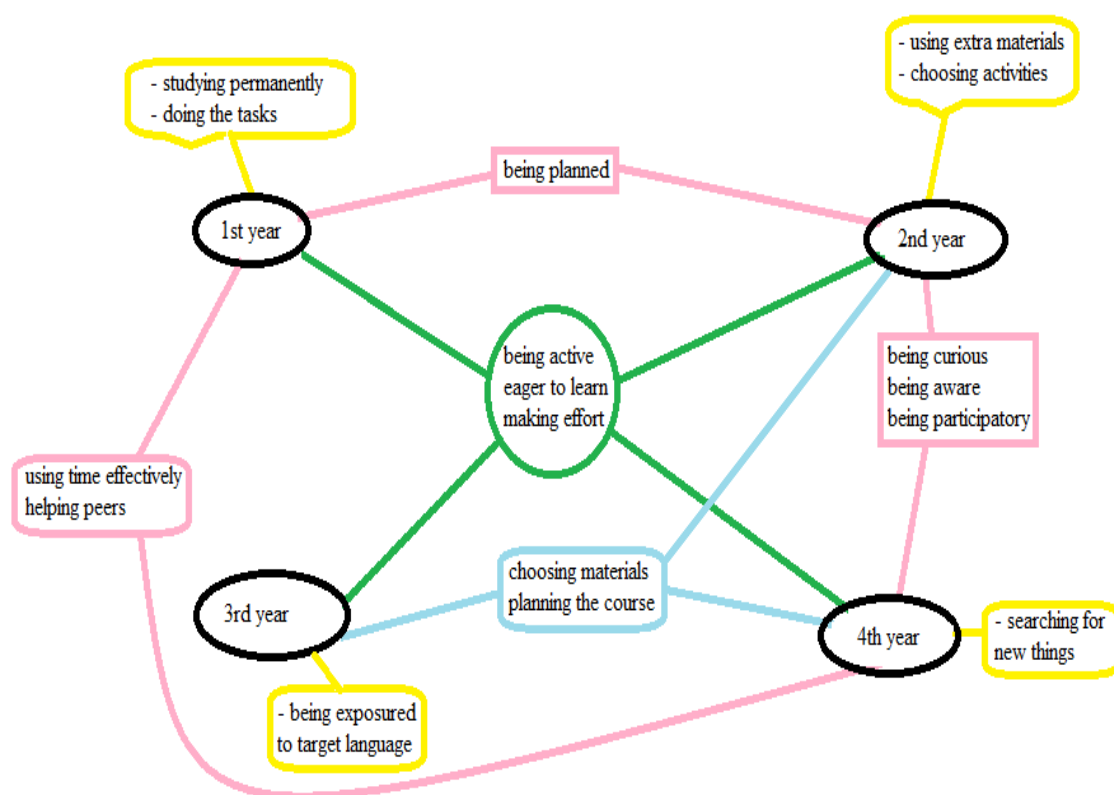
Note: Bold items are significant at  $p < 0,05$



In order to explore similarities and differences between the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on learner autonomy and learners' study year for each item in Section 2, One- way ANOVA tests are conducted. The results presented in Table 4.1. show that there is statistically significant difference among four groups ( $F(3; 207) = 3,716, p = 0,012$ ) for Item 12. A posthoc test, Tukey's HSD, is administered in order to find where the difference is. Post-hoc results indicate that the only statistically significant difference is between the first year ( $M = 3,29; SD = 0,948$ ) and the fourth year ( $M = 3,91; SD = 0,830$ ) in terms of the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on learner autonomy for the item 12 at  $p < 0,01$  level.

#### 4.1.1.2. Qualitative results

Regarding interview data, the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on learner autonomy have been analyzed according to the participants' study years, from the first year to the fourth year, in ELT department at Anadolu University. Figure 4.1. presents the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to responsibility and year of study on learner autonomy.



**Figure 4.1:** *The Relationship Between the Perceptions of Learners related to Responsibilities and Year of Study*

According to Figure 4.1., the results indicate that interviewees from the first year to the fourth year accept that learners should be responsible for “*being active*” in language learning. One of the interviewees (P2- the fourth year) says: “Learner should be the most active person in language learning process. Learning process is not transferring the knowledge, but, it is a process of searching new things..... Concludingly, learners should be active and responsible for their learning.”

The other important responsibilities for all the interviewees are the learners’ being “*eager to learn*” new things, and “*making effort*” in the language learning process. Learners should desire to learn new things in the target language because learning can be achieved only through the endeavors of learner although the roles of learners are indispensable in learning settings. Accordingly, an interviewee (P15- the first year) explains: “The biggest responsibility in learning should belong to the learner. Even though the teacher spends a great effort and tries to teach something new, the teacher’s effort can be wasted unless the learner is eager to learn.”. As understood from the explanation of the interviewee, the roles of the learners in language learning are highly important in that they should make a great effort to increase their knowledge in the target language.

Different from the first year students, interviewees who are in the second, third, and fourth years in ELT Department report that learners should have responsibilities in “*choosing learning materials*” and “*planning the course*”. In traditional teacher-centered education, generally learners are not given any options to take part in any stages of learning a language. However, with the new approaches to language learning, it has been realized that the learners should be given certain roles in all stages of the learning process. At this point, an interviewee (P6- the third year) says: “Learners should be active in all stages of learning, because as I said before, learners should choose materials and make plans according to their aims, and in learning a language and the aspects or areas of language they want to learn as well”.

Interestingly, the first and the fourth year interviewees state that learners should be responsible for “*using time effectively*” although the other interviewees who are at the second and the third year don’t mention about it. In addition, they also perceive that “*helping their peers*” is one of the responsibilities of learners in language learning.

According to interview data, the first and the second year students explain that “being planned” is crucial when working on the subjects because doing a plan in language learning may guide learners to increase their knowledge in the target language. Learners can develop their autonomy through organizing the things that they should do. An interviewee (P20- the first year) states: “A learner should observe his/her development with a check list, therefore he/she can realize his/her weaknesses in that way”.

For the interviewees who are at the second and fourth years, on the other hand, “*being curious*” about learning about what to learn, “*being aware*” of his/her learning process and “*being participatory*” are the other responsibilities in language learning. Involvement of learners in the classes is one of the goals of the new approaches to language learning. Learner autonomy, in itself, aims to integrate learners to decision making processes because autonomy is defined as a process that learners are aware of their learning process.

Other than the responsibilities uttered above, “*studying permanently*” and “*doing the tasks*” given by the teacher are the responsibilities which are defined only by the first year students in the interviews. Again, “*using extra materials*” and “*choosing/deciding activities*” are the responsibilities mentioned only by the second year students. For the third year interviewees, “*being exposed to target language*” is defined as an important responsibility in language learning. Lastly, for the fourth year interviewees, learners should be responsible for “searching for new things” because they can develop their language by being curious about the things they newly learn.

#### **4.1.2. Year of study and Turkish ELT students’ perceptions related to abilities on learner autonomy**

In this section, the results are given in two sub- parts: quantitative results and qualitative results.

##### ***4.1.2.1. Quantitative results***

For defining the perceptions of learners related to abilities on learner autonomy with regard to their study years, students graded 11 items in this section ranging from (1) “very poor” to (5) “very good”. One- way ANOVA was conducted to compare mean scores of four groups (from the 1st year to the 4th year) in order to see the effect of year of study on the perceptions of learners related to abilities on learner autonomy. The

findings revealed that there is not a statistically significant difference among four groups in terms of the learners' perceived abilities on learner autonomy ( $F(3; 208) = 0,668, p = 0,572$ ). Table 4.2. presents the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to abilities and year of study on learner autonomy.

**Table 4.2.** *Group Statistics for Abilities Section and Year of Study*

Item no:	Year of Study	Mean	Std. Deviation
14- choose learning activities in class	first year	3,04	0,824
	second year	3,02	0,989
	third year	2,72	0,94
	fourth year	3,18	0,911
	Total	3	0,926
15- choose learning activities outside class	first year	2,96	0,958
	second year	2,89	1,068
	third year	2,81	1,065
	fourth year	2,73	1,056
	Total	2,84	1,035
16- choose learning objectives in class	first year	3,18	0,91
	second year	3,11	0,994
	third year	2,72	1,017
	fourth year	2,93	1,103
	Total	2,98	1,021
17- choose learning objectives outside class	first year	2,86	0,895
	second year	2,98	1,113
	third year	2,79	1,007
	fourth year	2,73	1,056
	Total	2,83	1,017
<b>18- choose learning materials in class</b>	first year	3,02	1,029
	second year	2,79	1,062
	<b>third year</b>	<b>2,76</b>	<b>1,045</b>
	<b>fourth year</b>	<b>3,27</b>	<b>1,039</b>
	Total	2,97	1,057
19- choose learning materials outside class	first year	2,88	0,982
	second year	2,87	0,969
	third year	2,98	1,009
	fourth year	2,85	1,005
	Total	2,9	0,987
20- evaluate their learning	first year	3,33	0,931
	second year	3,28	1,117
	third year	2,91	0,946
	fourth year	3,18	1,017
	Total	3,17	1,009

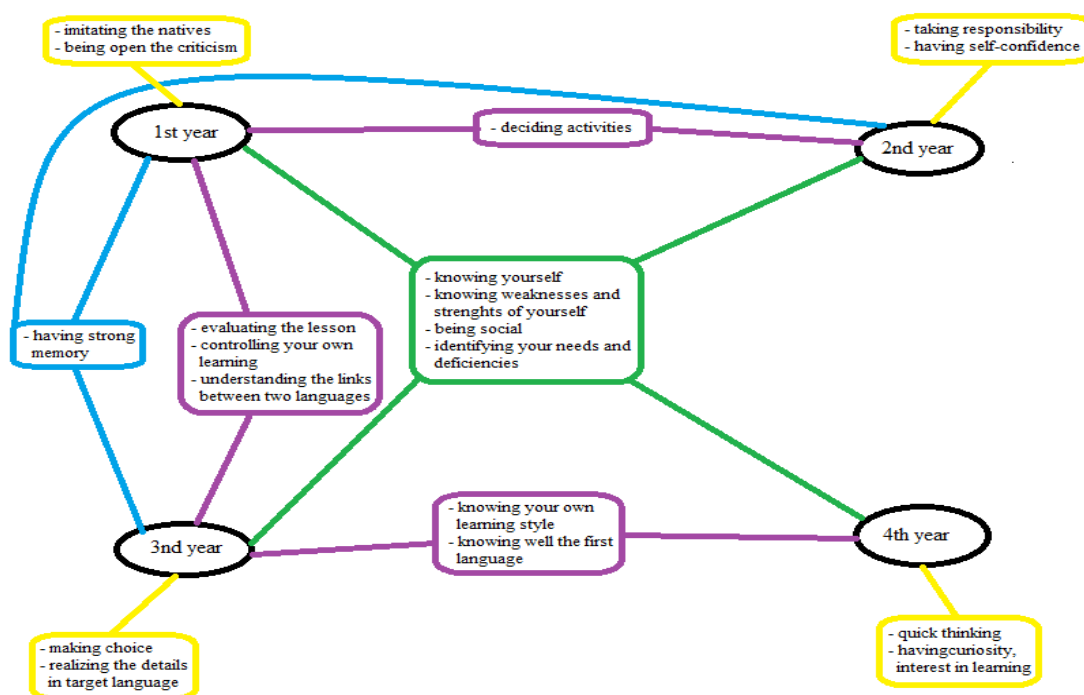
21- evaluate the course	first year	3,27	0,918
	second year	3,26	1,01
	third year	3,04	0,971
	fourth year	3,1	1,003
	Total	3,16	0,975
22- identify their weaknesses in English	first year	3,31	1,029
	second year	3,21	1,16
	third year	3,41	0,981
	fourth year	3,28	1,151
	Total	3,31	1,078
23- decide what they should learn next in their English lessons	first year	3,49	4,347
	second year	2,74	1,242
	third year	2,81	1,178
	fourth year	2,95	1,268
	Total	3	2,39
24- decide how long to spend on each activity	first year	2,86	0,96
	second year	2,87	1,209
	third year	2,91	1,165
	fourth year	2,93	1,205
	Total	2,9	1,133

**Note: bold items are significant at  $p < 0,05$**

When we investigated the students' perceptions related to the abilities on learner autonomy for every item, we found that there is a statistically significant difference among the four groups ( $F(3; 208) = 2,870, p = 0,037$ ) for Item 18. In order to find where the significant difference was, Tukey's HSD post hoc test was run. The results indicated that the only difference was between the third year ( $M = 2,76; SD = 1,045$ ) and the fourth year students ( $M = 3,27; SD = 1,039$ ) at  $p < 0,05$  level. However, the other items didn't produce any statistically significant differences.

#### **4.1.2.2. Qualitative results**

Figure 4.2. shows the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to ability and year of study on learner autonomy. It seeks to find whether year of study has an effect on the learners' perceptions related to abilities.



**Figure 4.2:** *The Relationship Between the Perceptions of Learners Related to Abilities and Year of Study*

For the abilities that a learner should have in language learning, findings of interview data analysis indicate that the interviewees, from the first year to the fourth year, explain that “*knowing yourself*”, that is to say, knowing what you are in general as a learner is an important issue in learning a language. Knowing yourself means knowing how to learn a language as a learner. For example, an interviewee (P5- the third year) states: “A learner may know how to learn better or decide in which way he/she can be successful in language learning”. Therefore, knowing yourself as a learner may result in “*knowing weaknesses and strengths of yourself*” which is one other ability that interviewees, from the first year to the fourth year, define as the ability learners should have in language learning. Another interviewee (P1- the fourth year) says: “At least, I know my deficiencies, my weaknesses, and strengths in and study according to this and I use the language that I learn by taking into consideration my weaknesses and strengths”.

One of the important abilities in language learning, “*being social*” is an ability that is uttered by the interviewees from all years. They state being social is important because language is something which has communicative aspects and learners should be social to develop a communicative side of the language. Therefore, an interviewee (P16- the second year) explains the importance of being social with these words:

“Because, as I have mentioned before, language can be developed through communicating with others, not individually, can be developed through interacting with others, I think, with the practice, more practice, not through the tests. It will be better to gain experience to the learners, learning by experiencing is better, I think.”

The interviewees among all groups also state that learners should have the ability of “*identifying your needs and deficiencies*” in learning a language because knowing what is lacking in your target knowledge and knowing what you need may help you decide what to learn first as a learner. Identifying these needs is crucial in language learning and at this point, an interviewee (P18- the first year) states: “First of all, to be able to learn the language better, a learner should be able to identify what he/she needs, and accordingly, he/she should do activities related to these subjects”.

Apart from the fourth year interviewees, the others state that “*having strong memory*” is a crucial ability that learners should have in language learning because there are a lot of things to be memorized such as vocabulary, linguistic features of a language, and even some expressions peculiar to that language. Therefore, learners should have a strong memory since they need to remember the things in the target language.

According to interviewees who are the first and second-year students, “*deciding activities*” to be used in the language is also an important ability to be developed for the learners. On the other hand, having the ability to “*evaluate the lesson*” is important for the first and the third year interviewees. Besides this, “*controlling your own learning*” and “*understanding the links between the two languages*”, that is, understanding the relationship between the first language and the target language are the other important abilities the learners should have while learning a language. At this point, an interviewee (P9- the first year) states: “There are some words and these words have the same meanings in both languages, and how to combine these, how to know the meaning the word both in the mother tongue and the language that we learn”. In other words, learning the words or the things that are similar in two languages may make easier to learn a language.

For the third and fourth year interviewees, “*knowing your own learning style*”, that is, knowing whether you are learning a language better with visuals or you are a better learner by listening audios is one of the most important abilities that learners should have in language learning. In addition, “*knowing well the first language*” of yourself can be said an important ability to be developed for the third and fourth year interviewees

because knowing the rules of your language may help learners to understand how important a rule is in the target language.

An interviewee (P9- the first year) informs that the ability to “*imitate the natives*” is crucial especially for having a target like accent in the target language. In addition, another first-year interviewee (P20) explains that “*being open to criticism*” is a significant ability to be developed for the language learners. She says: “A learner should be open to criticism. That is, learners should see their development, how they develop themselves, what deficiencies they have. They should see these in a concrete way”.

For the second year interviewees, they perceive that being able to “*take responsibility*” and “*having self- confidence*” are the other important abilities the learners should have in language learning. Learners should have abilities of “*taking responsibilities*” for their own learning because they are at the center of learning in terms of the new approaches to language learning. For doing this, they should have enough courage to achieve their goals in learning a language. In other words, learners should increase their self- confidence to be successful in language learning.

Moreover, a third-year interviewee (P7) states that learners should be given responsibilities for their own learning. At this point, learners should be given choices by the teachers. Therefore, at least, learners should be able to “*making choices*” among the choices that the teachers give to the organization of language learning settings. For the third year interviewees, again, “*realizing the details*” is an important ability to be developed in language learning, because learners can develop their linguistic knowledge by realizing the details in the target language.

Lastly, in the interview data, a fourth-year interviewee states that learning lasts throughout the lives of the learners, for this reason, learners should have the ability of “*quick thinking*”. Other fourth year interviewees also inform that “*having curiosity and interest in learning*” is noteworthy because, without curiosity and interest for learning a language, learners may not have the desire to do extra works other than the tasks given by the teachers.



### 4.1.3. Year of study and Turkish ELT students' perceptions related to activities on learner autonomy

The results are given in two sub- parts: quantitative results and qualitative results.

#### 4.1.3.1. Quantitative results

The students are asked to define how often language learners should do the activities related to learner autonomy regarding year of study. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA is conducted to compare the effects of study year on the students' perceptions on activity choices related to learner autonomy. The results show that there is not a statistically significant difference among the four groups (from the 1st year to 4th year) ( $F(3; 208) = 0,305, p = 0,822$ ). It could be said that year of study doesn't have a statistically significant effect on the perceptions of learners on activities related to learner autonomy. Table 4.3. presents the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activities and year of study on learner autonomy.

**Table 4.3.** *Group Statistics for Activities and Year of Study*

Item no:	Year of Study	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>25- read grammar books on their own</b>	<b>first year</b>	<b>3,31</b>	<b>0,948</b>
	second year	3,15	1,135
	<b>third year</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>1,002</b>
	fourth year	2,98	0,701
	Total	3,03	0,966
26- read newspapers in English	first year	3,54	1,014
	second year	3,74	1,052
	third year	3,72	1,071
	fourth year	3,67	0,914
	Total	3,67	1,007
27- read books or magazines in English	first year	3,8	0,98
	second year	4,15	0,908
	third year	4,04	0,919
	fourth year	4,02	0,93
	Total	4	0,936
28- watch English TV programs	first year	4,31	0,787
	second year	4,38	0,768
	third year	4,36	0,834
	fourth year	4,32	0,813
	Total	4,34	0,797

29- listen to English radio	first year	3,75	1,214
	second year	3,77	1,108
	third year	3,81	1,065
	fourth year	3,87	1,049
	Total	3,8	1,101
30- listen to English songs	first year	4,55	0,73
	second year	4,47	0,718
	third year	4,41	0,858
	fourth year	4,5	0,725
	Total	4,48	0,757
31- practice using English with friends	first year	4	1,114
	second year	3,96	1,25
	third year	4,17	1,069
	fourth year	4,33	0,857
	Total	4,13	1,072
<b>32- do English self- study in a group</b>	<b>first year</b>	<b>3,31</b>	<b>0,99</b>
	second year	3,72	1,015
	third year	3,77	1,068
	<b>fourth year</b>	<b>3,8</b>	<b>0,798</b>
	Total	3,66	0,979
33- do grammar exercises on their own	first year	3,29	0,855
	second year	3,22	1,172
	third year	2,96	0,951
	fourth year	3,4	0,995
	Total	3,22	1,001
34- watch English movies	first year	4,55	0,61
	second year	4,51	0,777
	third year	4,52	0,72
	fourth year	4,58	0,645
	Total	4,54	0,684
35- write a diary in English	first year	3,55	4,374
	second year	3,19	1,424
	third year	3,43	1,238
	fourth year	3,58	1,03
	Total	3,45	2,383
36- use the internet in English	first year	4,39	0,896
	second year	4,34	0,891
	third year	4,3	0,944
	fourth year	4,35	0,709
	Total	4,34	0,854

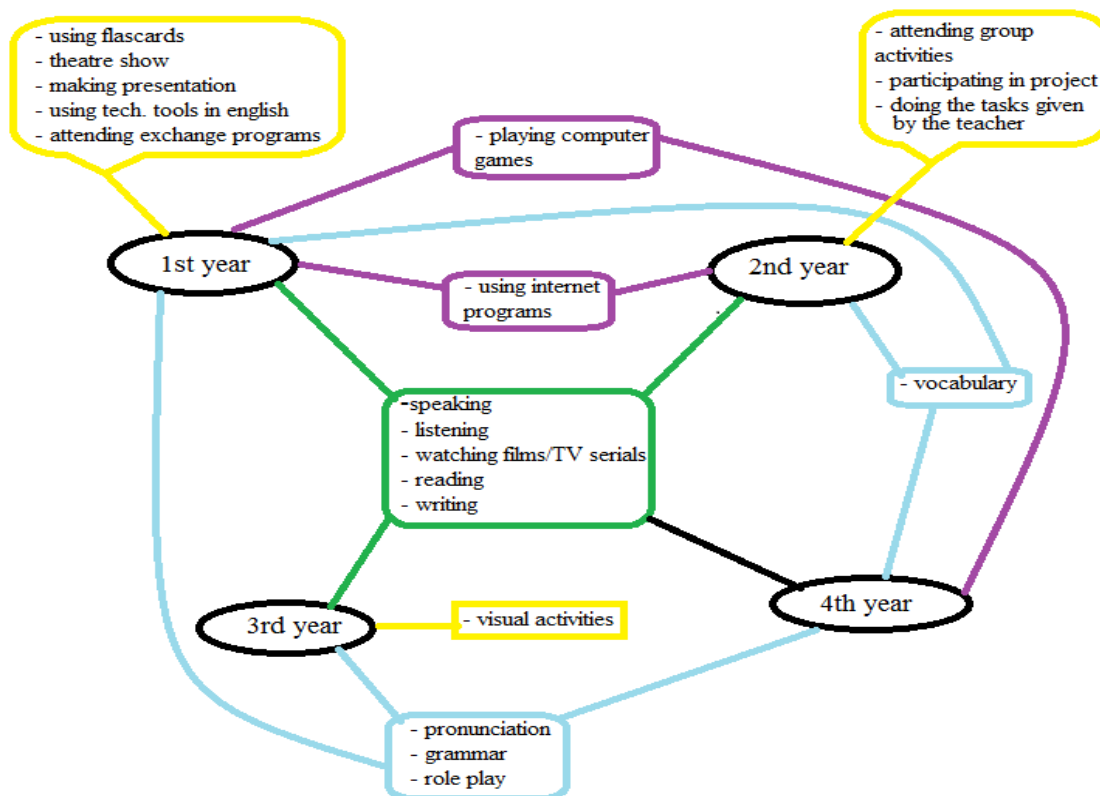
	first year	3,86	1,096
	second year	4,02	1,207
37- use English with a native speaker	third year	4,04	1,081
	fourth year	4,08	0,926
	Total	4	1,069

**Note: bold items are significant at  $p < 0,05$**

For the last part of the questionnaire, we also examine whether there are similarities and differences among the four groups for every item in terms of the students' perceptions related to activity choice on learner autonomy. Therefore, One-way ANOVA tests are run to explore the similarities and differences among the four groups. The results yield statistically significant results among the four groups for the items 25 and 32. In order to find where the significance is, Tamhane's T2 is conducted as a post-test for these items. The findings indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between the first year ( $M = 3,31$ ;  $SD = 0,948$ ) and the third year students ( $M = 2,70$ ;  $SD = 1,002$ ) for the Item 25 (read grammar books on their own); and the first year ( $M = 3,31$ ;  $SD = 0,990$ ) and the fourth year students ( $M = 3,80$ ;  $SD = 0,798$ ) for Item 32 (do English self-study in a group) at  $p < 0,05$  level. This means that first year students believe that language learners should read grammar books more on their own to increase their linguistic knowledge in the target language. On the other hand, when compared to first year students, fourth year students believe that language learners should do self-study to develop their language skills in the target language.

#### ***4.1.3.2. Qualitative results***

Figure 4.3. shows the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activities and year of study on learner autonomy.



**Figure 4.3:** *The Relationship Between the Perceptions of Learners Related to Activities and Year of Study*

For the perceptions of learners related to activities in the interview data we can say that learners’ perceptions related to activity choices don’t differ much according to the learners’ study years in ELT department. All the interviewees from the first year to the fourth year inform that they have the same perceptions related to applying activities concerning the basic language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. For example, an interviewee (P1- the fourth year) states the value of speaking activities with these words: “For me, the best evidence of knowing a language is to communicate with others in that language, therefore learners should pay attention to speaking activities more when learning a language”. Again, another interviewee (P11- the second year) informs that she applies many activities to improve her language skills. For example, she says: “For example, as everyone does, by listening to songs in the target language, even writing something on my own in English”. As understood from the explanation of the interviewee, she does many activities based on the basic language skills as in listening to songs in the target language in order to improve her listening skills.

Apart from the basic language skills, “watching films/TV serials” is one of the most applied activities for all the interviewees. For example, an interviewee (P8- the third year) states: “What can be done? Films and videos are really useful in learning because they provide us new information both visually and orally. They give us new inputs, that is, films are really helpful”.

On the other hand, according to the interviewees who are at the first, second and fourth years, doing “*vocabulary activities*” is useful for the learners to improve their language proficiency. Besides this, for the interviewees who are at the first, third, and fourth years, “*pronunciation activities*” should be done to improve learners’ speaking skills. Interviewees also state that “*studying on grammar*” and “*doing grammar activities*” are crucial although language education in Turkey put much emphasis on this issue because they state that they will be English teachers in near future, therefore they need to develop the linguistic competence of themselves more when compared to other learners of English. They also inform that “*role play activities*” are valuable for language learners, because an interviewee (P19- the third year) makes clear the importance of role play activities with these words:

“Specifically, and I believe it works, role play activities can be an example to this because, as I said before, language emanates with dialogues and since we acquire this language by feedbacks in a context, in a society, role plays should be applied in language learning”.

With the development of technologies and web tools, we see that many internet applications are used by the learners. At this point, the first and second-year interviewees explain that internet programs can be used for learning a language as well as the other sources. An interviewee (P16- the second year) says: “There are English teaching programs, for example, a student does activities by speaking, speaking activities are expected to be done by the students through the internet in an interactive way”. In addition, “*playing computer games*” for language learning is mentioned by the interviewees who are at the first and fourth years. They state that they play computer games and after a while, they realize that they have acquired some new words through this way because of the language of the computer games. In other words, they improve their knowledge in the target language with the things they get fun like computer games.

For the interviewees who are in the first year, “*using flash cards*” can be helpful in language learning to make different kinds of classroom activities. They also state that

learners can be given opportunities to make “*theater show*” and by this way they can improve their communicative skills. In this direction, the first year interviewees add that learners should “*make presentations*” in the class, therefore, they learn how to speak in the target language at least in the foreign language contexts because learners most probably don’t get the chance of practicing the language in real life situations. In addition, an interviewee (P15- the first year) admits that she makes the language of technological tools in English and she adds: “Even with the simplest activities, language can be developed” as she uses technological tools in English. Again, one of the first year interviewees says that learners can “*attend to student exchange programs*” and they can experience the language with all aspects because they are exposed to the language they learn.

For the interviewees who are at the second year, “*attending group activities*” can be a good way of developing your language because, as stated earlier, language is a communicative act, and therefore, learners can develop their communicative skills with a variety of activities that can be done within a group. In addition, one of the second year interviewees states that “*participating projects*” which can be achieved through communicating with the others in the project by using the target language. One interviewee in the second year also states that “*doing the tasks given by the teacher*” is important because teachers have larger knowledge about the language, and therefore, they can help learners with their knowledge and experience in learning a language. On the other hand, apart from these activities, one of the third year interviewees states that using “*visual activities*” can be useful especially for those who learn visually.

## **4.2. Perceptions of Learners on Learner Autonomy in terms of Gender**

In this part, the results are organized according to the sections (responsibilities, abilities, activities) of the questionnaire within the light of research questions: (1) Does gender have an effect on the perceptions of ELT students related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities on learner autonomy?

### **4.2.1. Gender and Turkish ELT students’ perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy**

In this section, the results are given in two sub- parts: quantitative results and qualitative results.

#### 4.2.1.1. Quantitative results

In the second section of the questionnaire, the students are asked to define how responsible they perceive themselves in planning the language teaching process. The students grade the 13 items about their perceptions related to responsibilities in language teaching process on a five point- Likert scale from (1) “not at all” to (5) “completely. In order to define whether there are similarities and differences between male students and female students in terms of their perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy, independent samples t- test is conducted. The findings reveal that there is not any significant difference between female students (M= 3,58; SD= 0,57) and male students (M= 3,49; SD= 0,60) in terms of the perceptions of learners related to the perceived responsibilities of students on learner autonomy (t (210): 1.162, p: 0,246). Table 4.4. presents the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to responsibility and gender.

**Table 4.4.** *Group Statistics for Responsibilities Section and Gender*

Item no:	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation
1- make progress during lessons	female	3,82	0,836
	male	4,11	3,534
2- make progress outside outside class	female	3,63	1,026
	male	3,74	1,068
3- stimulate their interest in learning English	female	3,96	0,883
	male	3,88	0,887
4- identify their weaknesses in English	female	3,94	0,907
	male	3,97	0,872
5- make them work harder	female	3,33	0,985
	male	3,22	1,121
6- decide the objectives of their English classes	female	3,35	0,908
	male	3,24	1,132
7- decide what they should learn next in their English lessons	female	3,31	1,128
	male	3,08	1,222
<b>8- choose what activities to use to learn English in their English lessons</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>3,45</b>	<b>1,098</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>3,08</b>	<b>1,11</b>
9- decide how long to spend on each activity	female	3,06	1,137
	male	3,03	1,13
10- choose what materials to use to learn English in their English lessons	female	3,33	1,122
	male	3,1	1,12
11- evaluate their learning	female	3,74	1,013
	male	3,52	1,107

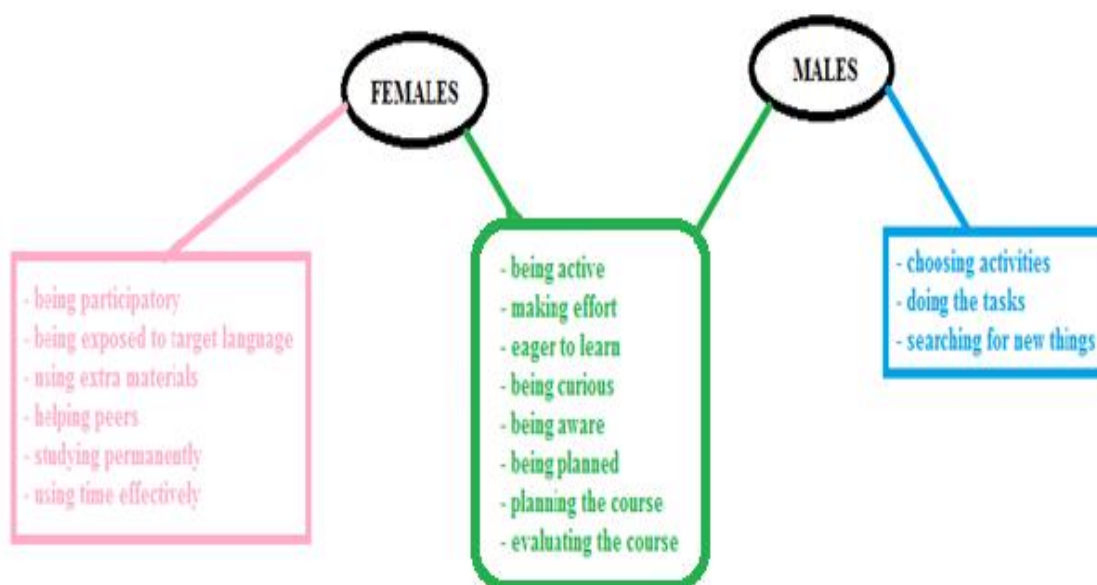
<b>12- evaluate the course</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>3,75</b>	<b>0,897</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>3,42</b>	<b>1,092</b>
13- decide what they learn outside class	female	3,62	1,095
	male	3,6	1,115

Note: bold items are significant at  $p < 0,05$

When we analyze the responses given to each item related to responsibility, the independent samples t-test results indicated that both female students and male students give different responses to items 8 and 12. In other words, there is a statistically significant difference between female students ( $M = 3,45$ ;  $SD = 1,098$ ) and male students ( $M = 3,08$ ;  $SD = 1,110$ ) in terms of the perceptions of learners on learner autonomy related to Item 8 ( $t(209) = 2,311$ ,  $p = 0,02$ ). In addition, the results yield a statically significant difference between females ( $M = 3,75$   $SD = 0,897$ ) and males ( $M = 3,42$   $SD = 1,092$ ) in terms of the perceptions of ELT students on learner autonomy for the item 12 ( $t(124,215) = 2,296$ ,  $p = 0,03$ ) although the responses given to other items related to learner' perceptions on responsibility produced non- significant results.

#### 4.2.1.2. Qualitative results

Figure 4.4. shows the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities and gender.



**Figure 4.4.** *The Relationship Between the Perceptions of Learners Related to Responsibilities and Gender*



In the interview data, learners' perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy have been asked to the interviewees. Both female and male interviewees report that "*being active*" and "*making effort*" are the most important responsibilities that learners perceive in language learning because it is only the endeavors of learners that language learning can be achieved. A male interviewee (P2) talks about his efforts to be a successful learner: "As I said before, I was responsible for language learning since when I was young. To me, neither my family gave education in English, nor did my high school, because I graduated from a different study area in high school. Yet, I was the only person who was responsible for my learning process, I mean, learning English".

On the other hand, both female and male interviewees state that learners being also "*eager to learn*" and "*being curious*" about learning a language is important. In this respect, a female interviewee (P6) says: "Learner should have the biggest role in language learning. All in all, a learner is a person who desires to learn the language, and therefore, the only thing a teacher can do is to become a tool for guiding learning.... That is, a learner has a great role in learning a language".

Besides, in the interview data, it is stated that "*being aware*" of the learning process is an important responsibility for both female and male interviewees. Because learners should be aware of what they learn, and how they learn. A female interviewee, therefore, says: "A learner should be responsible for being aware of what she learns in the course or she should know what to learn in a language course". Again, both female and male interviewees inform that "*being planned*" in language learning is one of the responsibilities that learners should have. Being planned is crucial because learners can be successful by planning what and when to learn. A female interviewee (P14) states: "I think learners cannot be successful unless they don't know when to study and which lesson, or for tomorrow, learners should study their lessons at least a day before the lessons".

Interviewees also mention the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities on "*planning the course*". One of the stages of learning, planning the course is valuable because learners should have control over their learning. A male interviewee (P16) states that learners should be responsible for their learning, especially in the planning stage, because he says: "This is the stage which reveals the learning outcomes and the knowledge of learners in a language, henceforth, learners should be responsible for

planning the course”. As well as planning the course, “*evaluating the course*” is perceived as an important responsibility for learners according to both female and male interviewees. A female interviewee (P7) states that evaluating the course is important because the success of learners depends on how frequently they evaluate the course. She also says that evaluation occurs naturally because it is the nature of people, which makes evaluation related to things they experience, and adds “This shows how interested they are in learning a language. If a person makes more evaluation, it shows how she is interested in learning a language”.

In terms of gender, it could be said that there are a few differences between female and male explanations in the interview data. Female interviewees report that “*being participatory*” in classroom activities is one of the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities in language learning since they are actively involved in language learning process. In addition, they perceive that “*being exposed to target language*” is also an important responsibility for the language learners. A female interviewee (P6) states: “A teacher can only help learners in classroom activities. In times other than class time, being exposed to the target language is the responsibility of learners”. Female interviewees also state that learners should be responsible for “*using extra materials*” in learning a language, since the materials provided by the teachers may not be enough to increase knowledge of learners in the target language.

A number of methods to learning, such as Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory, emphasize the significance of collaborative learning, therefore, learners should help each other. In this regard, female interviewees inform that learners should be responsible for “*helping peers*”. Besides, female learners perceive that “*studying permanently*” is an important responsibility for the learners because learning a language may not be achieved in a short time span. The female interviewees also inform that learners should “*use time effectively*” in language learning. In other words, they should manage the time they spend in order to get maximum benefit from the time which they study English.

For the male interviewees, learners perceive that they should have the responsibility of “*choosing activities*” used in the classroom. As stated earlier, learners should have the opportunity to control over their learning, therefore, they should be responsible for every aspect of learning such as choosing activities. Male interviewees also inform that learners should be responsible for “*doing the tasks*” given by the teachers because teachers have

experience in teaching a language, therefore the tasks given by teachers are valuable for the learners to develop their target language. In addition, for the male interviewees, learners should be curious about “*searching for new things*” related to the target language. According to male interviewees, learning new things in the target language increases interests of learners to learn much more about target culture, and by this way, they can increase their knowledge in the target language.

#### **4.2.2. Gender and Turkish ELT students’ perceptions related to abilities on learner autonomy**

In this section, the results are given in two sub- parts: quantitative results and qualitative results.

##### **4.2.2.1. Quantitative results**

For the second section of the questionnaire, ELT learners were asked to grade 11 items related to the learners’ abilities on learner autonomy, which were prepared as five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) “very poor” to (5) “very good”. In order to identify whether there are similarities and differences between males and females related to perceived abilities of learners on learner autonomy, independent samples t- test was applied. The findings indicated that there is a statistically significant difference between females (M= 3,09; SD= 0,73) and males (M= 2,84; SD= 0,77) in terms of their perceived abilities on learner autonomy ( $t(210)= 2,297, p= 0,023$ ). Table 4.5. presents the relationship between abilities and gender.

**Table 4.5. Group Statistics for Abilities and Gender**

Item no:	Gender	mean	Std. Deviation
14- choose learning activities in class	female	3,07	0,922
	male	2,85	0,923
15- choose learning activities outside class	female	2,94	0,95
	male	2,67	1,167
16- choose learning objectives in class	female	3,07	1,027
	male	2,81	0,995
<b>17- choose learning objectives outside class</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>2,98</b>	<b>0,978</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>2,56</b>	<b>1,041</b>
18- choose learning materials in class	female	3,04	1,031
	male	2,85	1,101
19- choose learning materials outside class	female	2,97	0,923
	male	2,75	1,09

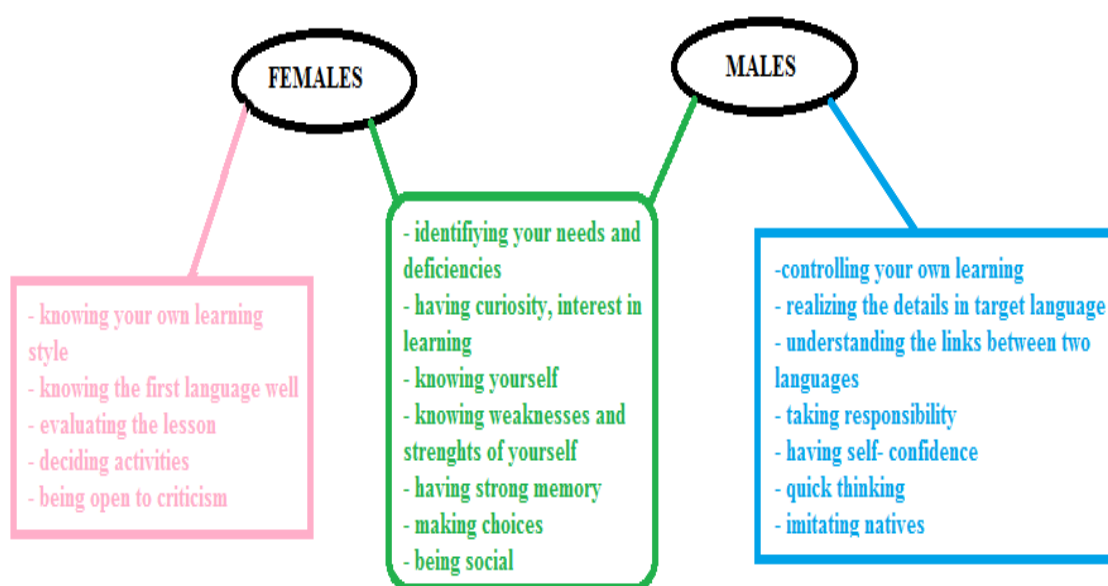
20- evaluate their learning	female	3,25	0,982
	male	3,01	1,047
21- evaluate the course	female	3,22	0,941
	male	3,04	1,033
22- identify their weaknesses in English	female	3,37	1,051
	male	3,18	1,122
23- decide what they should learn next in their English lessons	female	3,13	2,818
	male	2,75	1,211
24- decide how long to spend on each activity	female	2,96	1,164
	male	2,78	1,07

**Note: bold items are significant at  $p < 0,05$**

When we looked through the perceived abilities of learners on learner autonomy for every item in the second section, we realized that there is only one Item (17) which shows differentiations in the responses of ELT students. In other words, results of the independent samples t- test revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between females ( $M= 2,98$ ;  $SD= 0,978$ ) and males ( $M= 2,56$ ;  $SD= 1,041$ ) in terms of the learners' perceived abilities for item 17 ( $t(209)= 2,879$ ,  $p= 0,004$ ) although the other items related to abilities of learners on learner autonomy didn't produce any significant results between male and female students.

#### 4.2.2.2. Qualitative results

Figure 4.5. shows the relationship between abilities and gender.



**Figure 4.5.** *The Relationship Between Abilities and Gender*

When we investigate the interview data, we realize that interviewees state a number of abilities learners should have in language learning. Some of them are stated by both female and male interviewees. One of them, for example, is the ability of “*identifying your needs and deficiencies*” as a learner. Both female and male interviewees define it as an important ability because identifying needs and deficiencies make learners aware of the learning process. Both genders also state that “*having curiosity and interest in learning*” as an ability in language learning is useful because it helps learners to develop their language. In this regard, a male interviewee says: “A learner should identify his interests and desires and how much he desires to achieve these interests and by this way, he can see the development in learning process”.

One of the most uttered ability by both female and male interviewees is the ability of “*knowing yourself*” in language learning. They define knowing yourself as an important ability in language learning because knowing yourself may mean knowing your learning styles, your desires, your needs, that is, everything related to you as a learner. A female interviewee explains this ability with knowing or being aware of what she has learned before. Another female interviewee (P12) also defines this ability as: “A learner should know herself, that is, she should know where she faces hardships and struggle with these hardships”. Additionally, both female and male interviewees state that “*knowing weaknesses and strengths of yourself*” makes you realize what you need most, and therefore you can organize your learning according to your strengths and weaknesses in language learning.

For both female and male interviewees, “*having a strong memory*” should be one of the fundamental abilities of learners, since they need to memorize a lot of words and rules of the target language. In this respect, a female interviewee says: “Learners should have a strong memory because, new words, new things, all, are important elements for a language”. They also add that learners should have the ability to “*make choices*” in the learning process. Making choices is an important ability in language learning because learners need to make choices, for example in activities, materials etc. in order to be autonomous learners. Besides this, both female and male interviewees clarify that “*being social*” is a beneficial ability that learners should have in language learning because language, itself, can be regarded as a product of social interaction. A number of

interviewees admit the importance of being social to develop their language communicatively as it is accepted that a language is a tool for communication.

In terms of explanations of female interviewees, “*knowing your own learning style*” is an important ability in language learning. An interviewee (P6- female) talks about how a learner can learn, visually or auditorily, and knowing your learning style helps learners to decide on the materials and activities they use when learning a language. She also informs about the importance of “*knowing the first language well*” because learners can understand the place of rules in a language and they can easily make connections between the first language and the target language.

Female interviewees, additionally, state that “*evaluating the lesson*” is an important ability to be developed by the learners because learners can define their improvements by evaluating the lesson, that is, what they have learned in the lesson. They also add that “*deciding activities*” is crucial for the learners as it promotes autonomy. In other words, deciding/choosing activities in a language classroom indicates that learners have control over their learning, or at least they share the responsibilities with their teacher in planning the lesson. A female interviewee (P20) also points out that learners should “*be open to criticism*” in language learning, henceforth, they can realize their deficiencies and weaknesses and make attempts to compensate these deficiencies.

For the male interviewees, “*controlling your own learning*” is an important ability to be developed. Indeed, one of the most prominent definitions of learner autonomy is the learners’ control over their learning; therefore, it can be said that controlling your own learning is the core learner ability to foster autonomy. Male interviewees also state that “*realizing the details in the target language*” and “*understanding the links between two languages*” can be beneficial to develop their language skills in the target language. An interviewee (P8- male) talks about how important to realize the details in the target language, and the interaction between the two languages. He says: “For example, realizing the details in the (target) language, grammatically for example, and how a language affects the other language or what are their similarities and differences, these are the things that all learners should have in language learning”.

In addition, male interviewees explain that “*taking responsibility*” for their own learning is crucial because learner autonomy can also be defined as one’s taking

responsibility for his learning. In other words, the main differences in traditional teacher based methods and the new methods are the roles of learners in language learning. Learners are now more active and responsible for their own learning because it is their responsibility to develop their language skills. A male interviewee (P16- male) also mentions about the learners' "*having self- confidence*" in language learning. He says: "For example, first of all, having self- confidence and many things cannot be achieved without self- confidence".

A male interviewee (P13) also mentions about "quick thinking" as the ability learners should have, because learning continues throughout the lives of learners, therefore learners should be able to think quickly to increase their knowledge because there are lots of things to be learned. Lastly, another male interviewee (P9) states that "*imitating natives*" is crucial in order to have a native accent because, we, at first, learn by imitating others as we learn the first language in our childhood.

#### **4.2.3. Gender and Turkish ELT students' perceptions related to activities on learner autonomy**

In this section, the results are given in two sub- parts: quantitative results and qualitative results.

##### ***4.2.3.1. Quantitative results***

For the last section of the questionnaire, the students are asked about their perceptions on how often language learners should do activities related to learner autonomy. This section is also prepared on a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "never" to (5) "very often". The aim of this section is to define the learners' perceptions related to activity choices on learner autonomy, therefore an independent samples t- test is run to explore the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activity choices on learner autonomy and gender. The findings show that there is a statistically significant difference between female students (M= 3,97; SD= 0,63) and male students (M= 3,75; SD= 0,58) in terms of their perceptions related to activity choice on learner autonomy ( $t(210)= 2,427$ ,  $p= 0,016$ ). Table 4.6. presents the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activities on learner autonomy and gender.

**Table 4.6. Group Statistics for Activities and Gender**

Item no:	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation
25- read grammar books on their own	female	3,02	0,947
	male	3,04	1,006
26- read newspapers in English	female	3,72	0,996
	male	3,58	1,026
27- read books or magazines in English	female	4,07	0,922
	male	3,88	0,957
28- watch english TV programs	female	4,35	0,815
	male	4,32	0,766
<b>29- listen to English radio</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>4,02</b>	<b>0,951</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>3,38</b>	<b>1,243</b>
30- listen to English songs	female	4,51	0,716
	male	4,42	0,832
31- practice using English with friends	female	4,18	1,048
	male	4,03	1,118
<b>32- do English self- study in a group</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>3,76</b>	<b>0,932</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>3,47</b>	<b>1,042</b>
33- do grammar exercises on their own	female	3,3	0,964
	male	3,07	1,058
34- watch English movies	female	4,56	0,693
	male	4,51	0,669
<b>35- write a diary in English</b>	<b>female</b>	<b>3,73</b>	<b>2,76</b>
	<b>male</b>	<b>2,9</b>	<b>1,26</b>
36- use the internet in English	female	4,38	0,811
	male	4,27	0,932
37- use English with a native speaker	female	4,01	1,097
	male	3,99	1,021

**Note: bold items are significant at  $p < 0,05$**

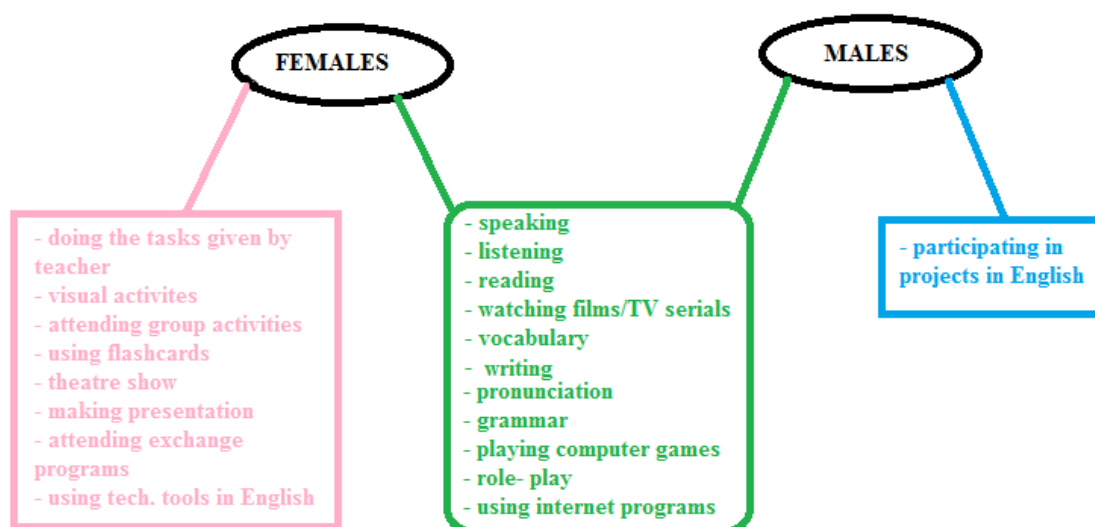
When we analyze the learners' perceptions related to activity choices for every item in the last section of the questionnaire, three items show statistically significant differences between the genders. These items were 29, 32, and 35. For the item 29 (listen to English radio), there is a statistically significant difference between females ( $M = 4,02$ ;  $SD = 0,815$ ) and males ( $M = 3,38$ ;  $SD = 0,766$ ) in terms of their perceptions related to activity choices ( $t(117,328) = 3,835$ ,  $p = 0,0002$ ). For the item 32 (Do English self-study in a group), there is a statistically significant difference between females ( $M = 3,76$ ;  $SD = 0,932$ ) and males ( $M = 3,47$ ;  $SD = 1,042$ ) in terms of their perceptions related to activities on learner autonomy ( $t(209) = 2,099$ ,  $p = 0,037$ ). Again, the item 35 (write a diary in English) reveals that there is a statistically significant difference between the perceptions



of female students (M= 3,73; SD= 2,760) and male students (M= 2,90; SD= 1,260) regarding the perceptions of learners related to activities on learner autonomy ( $t(210)= 2,437, p= 0, 016$ ). Although the other items related to activity choices of learners on learner autonomy don't show any statistically significant difference between the male and female students, they grade these activities mostly as “frequently” and “very often”.

#### 4.2.3.2. Qualitative results

Figure 4.6. shows the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activities and gender.



**Figure 4.6.** *The Relationship Between the Perceptions of Learners Related to Activities and Gender*

When we look through the interview data, we see that both female and male interviewees, to a great extent, inform the similar activities in language learning. They state that learning can be achieved through communicating with others, therefore “*speaking and listening activities*” are highly emphasized. It is also informed that doing activities on the other language skills such as reading and writing can be beneficial for increasing the knowledge in the target language.

As mentioned earlier, perceptions of Turkish ELT students is in the direction of choosing enjoyable activities, specifically “*watching films and TV serials*” regardless of the genders of the interviewees. In other words, both female and male interviewees state that they watch films, TV serials, cartoons, etc. to learn new things, new words, in the target language. Since enlarging vocabulary knowledge in the target languages, both

female and male interviewees also state that vocabulary activities are valuable for developing their vocabulary knowledge.

Besides, a number of interviewees agree that a language is a tool for communication and therefore, learners should know how to pronounce the words. They state that they care about having a target like speaking, thus they do pronunciation activities to be able to speak with English accent. At this point, an interviewee (P9- male) says: “There are a number of activities to be done, grammar activities, vocabulary activities, however, before these, pronunciation activities because is more important than these activities”. On the other hand, both female and male interviewees report that doing “*grammar activities*” is beneficial for your linguistic knowledge although some state that there is an over-emphasis on grammar in language teaching policy.

In addition, both female and male interviewees state that “*playing computer games*” can be useful for the learners because you can learn new vocabulary through playing computer games with a great fun. As a communicative act, both female and male interviewees inform that “*role play activities*” can be used to create an authentic atmosphere for learners to use the language. Additionally, the influence of technology on education is increasing with the developments in educational technologies. It is therefore natural to see many applications to be used in language learning for the learners at that age. Not surprisingly, both female and male learners approve that they “*use internet programs*” to enlarge their knowledge in the target language.

For female interviewees, there are a great variety of activities to be used for learning a language. One of them, for example, is “*doing the tasks given by teachers*”. Female interviewees believe that teachers have more experience than the learners, therefore, they can know better how to learn a language. For this reason, they state that doing the tasks given by teachers can be useful for increasing knowledge in the target language. Furthermore, learners may have different learning styles and thus female learners state that using visual activities can be helpful for those who have a visual learning style.

Female interviewees also mention about the importance of “*attending group activities*” in language learning. As stated earlier, communication with others in the target language is one of the ultimate goals for the learners, and to develop their communicative competence in the target language needs doing some activities such as attending group

activities and interaction with others in the group can help learners to develop such capabilities. Additionally, female interviewees state that “using flash cards” can be beneficial especially for the situations in which authentic materials are hard to be obtained.

Developing speaking skills of learners is one of the things that the interviewees give importance, therefore, female interviewees propose making “*theater show*” as an activity to be applied in language learning. In this regard, an interviewee (P12- female) inform that one of the ways of developing speaking skills is “*making presentation*” in class. This activity can be used especially in settings where learners don’t get the opportunity to experience the language as in foreign language contexts. Besides, another female interviewee (P20- female) informs that “*attending exchange programs*” will be helpful especially for overcoming the challenges of getting the opportunity to speak in settings which provide authenticity. Lastly, “using technological tools in English” is an activity to be implemented for a female interviewee (P15- female). She says: “There are many activities to be done, simple ones. For example, using the technological tools in English”. Such simple activities are easy to implement because, nowadays, technology is an indispensable part of our lives, and using such tools help us to the language unconsciously.

### **4.3. Autonomy Definitions**

One of the most outstanding findings in the interview data is the participants’ learner autonomy definitions. There are a number of definitions of autonomy made by the researchers in the literature; however, it has not been enlightened how learners define the concept of autonomy to that day. The interview findings reveal that definition of learner autonomy cannot be narrowed down with a few expressions. In other words, the definition of learner autonomy should include all the things which affect the learning process. Therefore, interviewees define learner autonomy as:

- Being aware of your duties, responsibilities and implementing them,
- Knowing your strengths and weaknesses,
- Being responsible for your learning process,
- Participating the learning processes,
- Being aware of your progress,

Being ready for acquiring the knowledge,  
Being curious about learning,  
To be able to organize your own learning process,  
To be able to reach the expected goal in learning,  
To be able to control your own learning process,  
Being involved in decision-making processes,  
Being in the center of learning,  
Being aware of what to do

As understood from the definitions of interviewees, learner autonomy can be discussed in many aspects. In general, learner autonomy definitions can be organized in these headings: (1) learners' active involvement to the learning process, (2) self-realization of learners, and (3) being responsible for organizing/controlling learning process. Learners' active involvement means being active and responsible for their own learning. To do this, learners should be actively involved in the tasks and do the activities to increase their knowledge in the target language. On the other hand, self-realization of yourself can be explained with learners' being aware of their conditions. Lastly, being responsible for organizing/controlling can be explained by sharing responsibility with teachers in decision-making processes.

#### **4.4. Summary of the Results**

The findings of the present research indicate that the participants from all the groups have similar perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy. The mean scores of responsibility section of the questionnaire for all the groups are above average level. In other words, Turkish ELT students, regardless of their study years, have positive perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy. The qualitative data also indicate that all the groups have similar perceptions related to responsibilities on learner autonomy simply because most of the codes in the responsibility theme are mentioned by at least two groups. On the other hand, although the item 1 (making progress during lesson), item 3 (stimulating interest in learning), and item 4 (identifying the weaknesses in English) are not statistically significant among all the groups, the participants give the highest scores to these items. Besides, a number of codes in the qualitative data have similar characteristics with the findings of quantitative data. For example, item 3

(stimulating interest in learning English) in the questionnaire is in the same direction with the codes “being eager to learn” and “being curious” about learning.

For the perceptions of learners related to abilities on learner autonomy, it can be said that the participants from all the groups have similar perceptions related to abilities on learner autonomy. In other words, most of the items of the ability section in the questionnaire have been graded closer to the average level by the participants of the study from all the groups. Again, the qualitative findings of the present research indicate that the interviewees believe that language learners should have a number of abilities to be successful in learning a language. Most of the codes found in abilities theme are mentioned by at least two groups.

Regarding the perceptions of learners related to activities on learner autonomy, it can be said that most of the items/codes uttered both in quantitative and qualitative data have been mentioned at least two groups. Additionally, most of the codes in activities theme can be associated with the basic language skills such speaking activities because the participants from all the groups value the communicative aspect of language.

In terms of gender, it can be said that female students have more positive perceptions related to abilities and activities than male students although there is not any statistically significant difference between the perceptions of genders related to responsibilities. The findings of the qualitative data, to a great extent, goes parallel with the findings of the questionnaire in that female students give more activity types to be applied for language learning. On the other hand, for the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities in terms of gender, the codes of both female and male students are similar in that most of the codes are shared by both genders.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.1. The Relationship between Year of Study and Learner Autonomy

In this section, the findings are discussed regarding the sub-sections of the first research question, that is, the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activity choices with the findings of the relevant literature in terms of the relationship between year of study and learner autonomy.

##### 5.1.1. The relationship between the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities and learner autonomy in terms of year of study

When we investigate the relationship between year of study and perceptions of ELT students related to Learner autonomy, One-Way ANOVA results indicate that there is not any statistically significant difference among the groups in the responsibility scores. The present study has similarities with the results of other studies in terms of perceptions of learners related to responsibilities. For example, Yıldırım (2005) investigates the first and the fourth year ELT students' perceptions related to their responsibilities. He finds that there is not any statistically significant difference between first year and fourth-year students regarding the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities in language learning.

In the current study, out of 20 interviewees, 12 of them state that both learners and teachers should share the responsibilities, although 6 interviewees argue that learners should have more responsibilities than the teachers have, and only 2 interviewees accept that teachers should be more responsible in language learning. In Yıldırım's study (2005) majority of the learners believe that learners should be responsible as well as teachers. In other words, it can be understood that learners are aware of how important taking active roles are and they agree that teachers' supports in language learning are indispensable. In addition, in Cotteral's study (1999), 76 percent of the participants inform that learners should be given responsibilities in order to find opportunities to experience the language. In this regard, Tanyeli and Kuter (2013) say that learners' taking responsibilities for their own learning is beneficial, and therefore teachers should help learners to take responsibilities for their own learning. In order to develop the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities in language learning, it can be said that the relationship between

teachers and learners must be strengthened because learners cannot be autonomous without the support of their teachers (Arshiyani & Pishkar, 2015).

However, constructing learners' willingness to take responsibilities is not easy. In other words, learners need to gain experience in taking responsibilities for their learning. In Okumuş Ceylan's study, (2015), which focuses on strategy training on learner autonomy and achievements of learners in language learning, learners accept that they should be responsible for their learning, but, they see their teachers as authority figures because of their experience in language learning, and they perceive that teachers are experts on how to teach/learn a language. In addition, Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002) state in their studies that learners believe that teachers should be responsible for a number of issues such as selecting the materials in language learning, because learners inform that they don't have experience in such issues, but teachers have, and therefore, teachers can reach the right decision in selecting the materials, deciding on the activities etc. in language learning.

When we make further investigation for every item on learners' perceptions related to responsibilities in order to see whether there are any similarities and differences among the groups, the only difference has been found in item 12 (evaluating the course) at  $p < 0,05$  value. In the post hoc test, it has been realized that the fourth year students prioritize the evaluation of the course than the first year students do. The literature indicates that this result is also in line with the studies made before. For instance, in Yıldırım's study (2005), 72% of the fourth year students respond item 12 as mainly and completely although 45% of the first year students respond it as mainly and completely. In other words, the fourth year students give much more importance to the evaluation of the course than the first year students. Little (1991) says that an autonomous learner should have the potential to determine reachable goals, and choose appropriate method and techniques to be used in the classroom. In this regard, learners should be responsible for evaluating the course to promote their autonomy. As stated in the results section of this research, an interviewee (P7) explains why evaluating the course is important for language learning. She says that the degree of evaluating the course for a learner shows how interested she is and how much she adapts herself to the learning process. The significance of evaluating the course to take responsibility for learning a language is also emphasized by Okumuş Ceylan

(2015). In her study, more than 70% of the participants report that it is their responsibility to evaluate the course to take more control over their learning.

Although only item 12 (evaluating the course) is statistically significant among the groups, the participants give the highest mean scores to the item 1 (making progress during lesson) (M= 3.92), item 3 (stimulating their interest in learning English) (M= 3.93), and item 4 (identifying their weaknesses in English) (M= 3.95). The findings also are in line with the findings of Yıldırım's study (2005) in that nearly 90% of the participants respond these items mainly and completely. In other words, learners agree that making progress, stimulating interest and identifying their weaknesses are their responsibilities for increasing their knowledge in English.

### **5.1.2. The relationship between the perceptions of learners related to abilities on learner autonomy and year of study**

One of the aims of this study is to define whether the year of study (from the first year to the fourth year) has an effect on the perceptions of learners in terms of their abilities in learning a language. In this regard, the findings of one-way ANOVA reveal that there is not any statistically significant difference among four groups. The findings of the study show parallelism with the studies in the literature. Again, in findings of Yıldırım's (2005) study, the differences between the mean scores of the first and fourth year students are not statistically significant regarding the perceptions of learners related to abilities to promote learner autonomy although the mean scores of the fourth year students are slightly higher than the mean scores of the first year students. In the study made by Okumuş Ceylan (2015), although there is a statistically significant difference between the control and experimental group in strategy use, it doesn't differ significantly between the groups in terms of abilities of learners.

In addition, we investigate the relationship between the perceptions of learners related to their abilities in learning and year of study for every item. One- way ANOVA results indicate that only item 18 (choosing learning materials in class) has a statistically significant difference among the four groups. The findings of post hoc test, Tukey's HSD, reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between the third year and the fourth year student. In other words, fourth year students give much more priority to choosing learning materials in class than the third year students did. It can be interpreted



that the fourth year students have more knowledge on how to learn a language than the other students.

On the other hand, the overall mean scores of learners show that learners grades item 20 (evaluate their learning), item 21 (evaluate the course), and item 22 (identify their weaknesses in English) above average level. The findings of the questionnaire related to learners' abilities, to a large extent, are similar with the interview data, because, interviewees from all years inform that identifying weaknesses is an important ability to promote learner autonomy. These findings are also in line with the study of Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002) in that learners give more remarks to the item "identifying their weaknesses in English". The learners give more remarks to the items "choosing learning materials and choosing learning activities" in class although these items are averagely remarked in the current study.

In the interviews, learners state that learners should have the ability to know themselves in language learning. It can be deduced that knowing yourself can be achieved through identifying how much you are aware of yourself, therefore evaluating your learning is also an important ability to know your development in language learning. At this point, Arshiyani and Pishkar (2015) reveal that nearly 80% of teachers believe that learners should be able to evaluate themselves to increase their knowledge in the target language. They also state that learners should be competent in monitoring their learning, as it is crucial to define how close you are to your goals in language learning. In other words, learners' ability to monitor themselves and self- assessment are the key elements in language learning and promoting learner autonomy, as well.

The other items in the ability section of the questionnaire have been scored much closer to the average level. Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan (2002) state that learners don't have clear minds related to their abilities to promote learner autonomy. The findings in our study support this idea in that learners don't remark items in the ability section of the questionnaire too far from the average level.

Although the findings don't differ significantly among the groups, to develop abilities of learners is crucial for promoting learner autonomy, Littlewood (1999) emphasizes the importance of abilities in learners gaining control over their learning. He says that learners' abilities and willingness constitute the basis of the notion of autonomy.

### **5.1.3. The relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activity choices on learner autonomy and year of study**

The one-way ANOVA results indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference among the groups in that how often they apply these activities to become an autonomous learner. Although the results don't statistically differ in terms of year of study, the participants grade most of the items above average level. This shows that Turkish ELT students are highly eager to learn a language. The findings of the study are consistent with the studies in the literature. For instance, in Yıldırım's study (2005) there are not big differences among the groups, which supports what we have found in this study. Again, in the study made by Ahmadzadeh and Zabardast (2014), nearly 50 percent of the participants accept to be involved in group/pair discussions and role play activities. It can be understood from the findings above, learners are aware of the importance of attending activities in order to increase their knowledge of target language.

The interview data has revealed that learners apply a wide range of activities in language learning such as reading books, newspapers, watching TV and movies, practicing English with their friends, etc. On the other hand, participants' perceptions related to activity choices indicate that they are generally in favor of activities which focus on developing communicative aspect of language such as speaking with natives, or activities for developing listening and speaking skills such as watching English movies. This shows the learners' tendency towards using/learning language for communicative purposes. Therefore, teachers should give learners opportunities to reinforce experience (Ahmadzadeh & Zabardast, 2014) in using the target language.

With the investigation of the results of every item in the activities section, the findings reveal that there are statistically significant differences among the four groups, from the first year to the fourth year, in the items 25 (read grammar books on their own) and 32 (do English self- study in a group). For conveying where the significances are, post- hoc tests, Tamhane's T2 are run. The results for the item 25 show that there is a statistically significant difference between the first year and the third year students. In other words, the first year Turkish ELT students read grammar books more than the third year students. One of the reasons of this may be explained with the students' preferences of learning in that they are not given opportunities to experience activities that foster learner autonomy in high schools. Okumuş Ceylan (2015) reveals that learners accept that

they don't participate activities to promote learner autonomy, therefore, their autonomy level is low when they enter university. In addition, a statistically significant difference has been realized between the first year students and the fourth year students in item 32 (do English self-study in a group). It can be said that the first year students tend not to participate self-studies. In other words, it shows how reluctant they are to study alone (Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002).

## **5.2. The Relationship between Gender and Learner Autonomy**

In this section, the findings are discussed regarding the sub- sections of the second research question, that is, the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activity choices with the findings of the relevant literature in terms of the relationship between gender and learner autonomy.

### **5.2.1. The relationship between the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities and learner autonomy in terms of gender**

The findings of this study reveal that learners' views related to responsibilities in language learning don't differ in general in terms of genders of learners. This result is in line with some of the studies in the literature. For example, Üstünoğlu (2009) investigates university students' perceptions related to learner autonomy regarding their perceptions related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities. She finds that there is not a statistically significant difference between the male and female students in terms of the responsibility scores. However, there are also studies which are opposing to the results of the present study. For instance, in a study made by Sakai, Takagi, and Chu, (2010) which is related to the responsibilities of university students in Japan and Taiwan, the findings indicate female learners are significantly more autonomous in every point of language learning, although they state that the number of female and male participants is not balanced because of the reality in ELT departments. They add that it shows that female students are desiring to learn English more than males.

On the other hand, item 12 (evaluating the course) in the questionnaire shows a statistically significant difference between genders. Responses of participants indicate that female students perceive themselves more responsible than male students in evaluating the course. In other words, it can be concluded that female students want to take more responsibilities in the evaluation process of the course when compared to the

male students. On the other hand, interview data give contradictory results related to the responsibility of evaluating the course, since both female and male students report that evaluating the course is an important responsibility for learners in language learning. Therefore, it can be said that although female learners grade item 12 (evaluating the course) more than the male learners in the questionnaire, it is also an important responsibility for the male learners. In other words, it can be concluded that evaluating the course is an important responsibility to be acquired in language learning. This result is also supported by the study of Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, (2002) in that “evaluating the course” is found significantly an important responsibility for the learners in their study.

Although there is only one item which significantly differs in terms of gender, both female and male participants give the highest mean scores to item 1 (making progress during the lesson), item 3 (stimulating their interest in learning English), and item 4 (identifying their weaknesses in English). The interview data analysis also indicates that both female and male participants want to take active roles in language learning. An interviewee (P6- female) states that being autonomous for learners is so important because teachers can only be helpful to the learners in the classroom. The role of the learner is to be responsible for her learning as much as possible. In this regard, Sakai, Takagi, and Chu (2010), in the interview data of their study, find that more than 35% of the learners expect to take part in deciding the goal of the study, deciding the materials and textbooks, and checking their progress.

Being autonomous or promoting autonomy can be achieved through getting rid of dependency to the teachers. Leathwood (2006) argues that learners expect to be more independent especially in universities. However, according to Leathwood, the problem with independence is not taking responsibilities, but not to be supported by teachers. Therefore, learners should be active and responsible for their learning process because being responsible is essential in learning a language (Tanyeli & Kuter, 2013) and learners need to gain their independence and work in cooperation with others.

It can be said that learners want to take responsibilities for their own learning because they think they are component in taking active roles in language learning. However, Üstünoğlu (2009) finds in the interview data that teachers don't want to give responsibilities to the learners because of fear of losing their power and control over the

classroom. Dependence to teachers hinders the promotion of learner autonomy, therefore both female and male learners should be taught to be aware of their responsibilities in language learning because unawareness of learners increases the dependency to the teachers (Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002).

### **5.2.2. The relationship between the perceptions of learners related to abilities on learner autonomy and gender**

When we investigate perceptions of ELT students regarding the relationship between gender and learner autonomy, we found that there is a statistically significant difference between the genders in terms of the abilities attributed to learner autonomy. We realize that the scores of female students are higher than the scores of male students in terms of the abilities related to learner autonomy. These results show parallelism with Üstünoğlu's (2009) study. On the other hand, there are some certain factors which have deep influence in decision making abilities (Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002). These are: motivation to learn a language, level of interest, the need of being autonomous learner, gaining opportunity to learn by taking control over your learning, the previous experiences, and self-confidence. Therefore, it can be concluded that female learners are more wishful for learning a language because of the factors above.

When we closely look at the items in the ability section of the questionnaire, only there is one item (able to choose learning objectives outside class) which is statistically significant with regard to gender variable. What is interesting is that Spratt, M, Humphreys, & Chan (2002) find a statistically significant relationship between the item 13 (decide what you learn outside class) in the responsibility section of the questionnaire and item 17 (able to choose learning objectives outside class). However, item 13 does not significantly differ in terms of gender in this study.

Interestingly, Üstünoğlu (2009) inform that although learners regard themselves able to evaluate, choose, and decide on the materials and activities to be used in classes, they prefer to give the responsibility to the teachers. One of the reasons of this is that teachers have more experience in language learning than the students. In addition, although they are aware of how important learner autonomy is, they accept the teachers as authority figures. In this regard, teachers should support their students to gain control over learning because, learner autonomy can be defined as a situation where learners act

independently and define their needs and make their own choices (Tanyeli & Kuter, 2013).

### **5.2.3. The relationship between the perceptions of learners related to activity choices on learner autonomy and gender**

Similarly, the findings reveal that there is a statistically significant difference between female and male students in terms of their perceptions related to activity choices on learner autonomy. This is also in line with Üstünoğlu's study (2009), in which female students have positive perceptions related to the activities more often than the male students. Although female students have positive perceptions related to the activities more than the male students, they all agree that activities are important for language learning. Chan (2001) also states that learners believe that they are needed to be involved in selecting learning tasks and activities, since the materials, and activities should meet the needs of learners. In the study of Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002), learners rarely grade items "seldom or never" which shows how strong learners desire to learn language. In the present study, most of the items in the activities section have also been graded above average level, which is consistent with the studies in the literature.

In the investigation of every item related to activities in the last section of the questionnaire, we reveal that items 29, 32 and 35 differ significantly between the scores of male and female students. These are "listening to English radio" (item 29), "do English self- study in a group" (item 32) and "write a diary in English" (item 35). However, in the study of Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, (2002), most students report that they have rarely (nearly 50% of the students) or never (18% of the students) listened to English radio although Turkish ELT students apply it more. Additionally, they also informed that a great percentage of the students (nearly 80% of them) never or rarely did "English self-study in a group" although Turkish students apply it more. The situation for the item 35 is similar in their study in that more than half of their students reported that they don't write any diary in English, although writing a diary in English is more frequent for Turkish students.

Additionally, interview data analysis approves that female students consider a great variety of activities when compared to male students although they share certain basic language learning activities such as listening to songs, use the internet in English. In the

study of Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002), they realize that there is no difference between the students whose major is English and the other student in the engagement of the language learning activities. Therefore, motivation level of learners has a strong influence on the learner participation to the activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that female students are more motivated to learn a language than male students.

### **5.3. Autonomy Definitions**

Definitions of terms and concepts are generally made by the researchers or the scholars who have deeper knowledge in a specific area. Sometimes the definitions of these terms may not be understood clearly by the learners of these terms because of some reasons such as the complexity of the term or it can be too abstract to be understood. Therefore, the definitions of such concepts can be made by the learners of these concepts. By this way, we can understand how much learners grasp the meaning of the concept especially these which are controversial and multifaceted such as learner autonomy (Atkinson, 1999). Besides, definitions of terms and concepts make explicit the implicit meaning and this explicit meaning can be analyzed by the learners (Kikas, 1998). The rigid definitions of terms made by scholars may also limit understanding and create barriers for learners, therefore, the students' definitions on a concept may be valuable. In this regard, the present research reveals how Turkish ELT students define learner autonomy.

The definitions made by the participants indicate that the concept of learner autonomy can be discussed in different perspectives. For example, some learner autonomy definitions of the participants indicate that learners perceive the concept of autonomy as to take part in learning process. This is also supported with the new methods such as learner-centered approach, because learners are expected to make contributions to the course content and the learning procedure in learner-centered approaches (Hedge, 2000, p. 34).

### **5.4. Limitations of the Study**

The present study is limited with the Turkish ELT students enrolled in Anadolu University. Therefore, it may not be easy to generalize the results of the present study to the whole population. The number of participants for both quantitative and qualitative

data is limited, therefore, it is suggested to do same study with more participants in order to obtain more reliable results for the population.

Another limitation of the present study is that the validity of the questionnaire is not granted because of the time limitation. However, the validity of the instrument has been granted by Yıldırım (2005) by taking expert opinion, and the present study have similar context with the study made by Yıldırım (2005).

### **5.5. Conclusion**

One of the aims of this study is to investigate the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy in terms of the perceptions of learners related to responsibilities, abilities, and activities across learners' year of study. Although the findings of the present research indicate that there is not much difference between the perceptions of learners regarding their year of study in learning English, it can be concluded that Turkish ELT students accept that learner autonomy is an important concept in language learning. In other words, the present study reveals that year of study doesn't have any significant influence on the perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to learner autonomy. It confirms that the education taken in ELT department at Anadolu University, to a great extent, doesn't have significant effect on the perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy. According to responsibilities section of the questionnaire, the participants of the present study grade the items 1 (making progress during the lesson), 3 (stimulating their interest in learning English), and 4 (identifying their weaknesses in English) as the most important responsibilities in language learning although responsibilities section doesn't differ significantly across year of study. Similarly, in abilities section, the participants grade the items 20 (evaluating their learning), 21 (evaluating the course), and 22 (identifying their weaknesses in English) as the most important abilities learners should have in language learning although there are not any significant differences across the groups regarding year of study. For the activities section, again, the participants believe that language learners should apply a number of activities in English, specifically those which help the learners to communicate in the target language such as doing speaking and listening activities. This sub-section of the questionnaire confirms that there are not significant differences across the participants' year of study.



Both quantitative and qualitative data approve that the participants, regardless of their year of study, have similar perceptions related to learner autonomy. They also believe that learner autonomy is a cornerstone for increasing learners' knowledge in language learning. In other words, the stereotype that learner autonomy includes values belonging to Western culture can be refuted in a way that learners from other cultures may approve the values of learner autonomy in language learning. In order to do this, learner autonomy should be practiced within the context of particular cultures (Ho & Crookall, 1995). According to Alptekin (2002), for example, the association of both teacher and learner autonomy with the concept of authenticity restrains the selection of materials and activities. Today we can talk about native- nonnative interaction, as well as nonnative- nonnative interaction. Therefore, authenticity of the instructional materials and activities doesn't only mean that it should include values peculiar to natives. On the contrary, materials and activities should include local and international contexts which are suitable for the language learners' lives.

Another aim of this research is to investigate perceptions of learners related to learner autonomy in terms of gender. In the sub-sections of the questionnaire, both female and male students agree that taking responsibilities for their own learning is crucial for language learning. In this respect, the findings of the responsibilities section show that both female and male students have agreed on similar responsibilities for language learning. On the other hand, the investigation of every item in responsibilities section show that although both female and male students have similar perceptions related to responsibilities, female students grade item 8 (choosing what activities to use to learn English in their English lessons) and item 12 (evaluating the course) as important responsibilities in language learning more than male students. In other words, it can be concluded that for female students, "activity choice" and "course evaluation" are regarded as important responsibilities in the perceptions of learners.

The quantitative findings reveal that although perceptions of Turkish ELT students related to responsibilities don't differ much in terms of gender, statistically significant differences between the mean scores of female students and male students have been found regarding both abilities and activities sections. In other words, female students have more positive perceptions on abilities and activities related to learner autonomy. When we examine the sub-sections of the questionnaire, for example, item 17 (choosing

learning objectives outside class) in abilities section differs significantly in terms of gender. That is, female students have more positive perceptions on taking active roles in choosing learning objectives outside class than male students. On the other hand, it can also be concluded that the items in abilities section have been graded as closer to average level although the findings reveal that female students have more positive perceptions than male students related to abilities of learners. Additionally, the findings of activities section in the questionnaire indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between female and male students. Female students have more positive perceptions on activity choices related to learner autonomy than male students although both female and male students believe that language learners should apply a variety of activities in language classrooms. The qualitative data also inform that female students believe that learners apply a great variety of activities for language learning. As a result, it can be concluded that female learners have more positive perceptions towards the concept of autonomy.

It is an indispensable fact that learner autonomy is one of the most outstanding cornerstones in language learning since it provides many opportunities to learners during the learning process. Therefore, the basics of notion of learner autonomy should be defined by the learners' perspectives. However, there is no such definition in the literature, which focuses on how learners define learner autonomy. Interview findings reveal that Turkish ELT students consider many aspects of learner autonomy and thus it shows how the concept of learner autonomy is multifaceted. In other words, the participants define learner autonomy from different perspectives such as learners' active involvement to learning process, their self-realization, and taking responsibility for controlling/organizing learning process. Concludingly, Turkish ELT students have positive perceptions related to learner autonomy and they are eager to be actively involved in learning process.

### **5.6. Implications for the Pedagogy**

One of the contributions of learner autonomy to pedagogy is that teacher and learner roles have been redefined. With this definition, teachers are given new roles in language learning as well as learners. Therefore, the role of teacher in an effective language learning process is indispensable whereas there are some misconceptions related to teachers' position in that they are not needed anymore. Since teachers are important

figures in language learning, teacher training is one of the significant elements for fostering learner autonomy. In other words, importance of teacher training (Yıldırım, 2005) cannot be disregarded in language learning. Furthermore, Little (1995) confirms that learner autonomy is a matter of teacher training since teachers can help learners to develop their autonomy; therefore, candidate teachers should have the opportunity to experience learner autonomy in their courses. In this respect, it is necessary to train candidate teachers to grasp the importance of learner autonomy and they should learn how to be an autonomous learner (Sofracı, 2016). Therefore, students who are enrolled in ELT departments should be provided sufficient training since they become English teachers (Merç, 2015) in near future.

Although learner autonomy is accepted as an important concept for developing the capacity to become a successful learner, there can be some hardships in the implementation of learner autonomy simply because of a number of reasons. For example, Tilfarliolu and Çiftçi (2011) complain about education system in Turkey and they state that Turkish education system can be defined as teacher-dominated and authority-oriented, which seems inappropriate to promote learner autonomy. Therefore, EFL learners should be instructed on the value of learner autonomy in order to guide them to become aware of their capacity in learning a language. On the other hand, to increase the learners' capacity in language learning can be achieved through teaching learners how to become autonomous learners. In other words, learners' being aware of learning techniques (Hurd, Beaven, & Ortega, 2001) is crucial for fostering learner autonomy. Learners can become more successful in language learning by getting training (Okumuş Ceylan, 2015), especially in EFL settings where learners don't get much chance of experiencing the target language.

### **5.7. Suggestions for Further Studies**

Concludingly, learner autonomy is one of the core issues in language learning. One of the main goals of both teachers and learners should be to promote learner autonomy through a number of efforts such as learner training on strategy use (Okumuş Ceylan, 2015), since such training may promote learner autonomy. On the other hand, the relationship between learner autonomy and success can be investigated because successful learners are more autonomous and responsible for their own learning (Arshiyani & Piskhar, 2015).

As mentioned before, learner autonomy is highly bound to teacher autonomy, there can be experimental studies which investigate the effects of teacher training on learner autonomy. In other words, it can be examined whether teacher training has effects on learner autonomy. On the other hand, it has been argued that educational system in Turkey is teacher-dominated and it hinders promoting learner autonomy. In order to decrease teacher-dominance in language learning, teacher-training models for fostering learner autonomy can be studied, as well.

It is accepted that materials to be used in language learning is important because, most probably, learners know their needs in learning a language and the materials which are selected should be able to answer the learners' needs. In addition, these materials should be prepared for fostering learner autonomy; therefore, it is crucial to investigate whether learning materials are convenient for fostering learner autonomy. In other words, researchers can make investigation whether language learning materials are appropriate for fostering learner autonomy.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. The Questionnaire

#### Learner Roles in Language Learning

Dear participant,

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect information about your views of the roles of learners. Please give us your opinion as indicated in the following pages. We hope the information collected by this questionnaire will enable us to design more effective learning programs. The success of this study depends on your sincere participation. The information collected through the questionnaire will have **NO** effect on your course grades.

#### Background Information

Gender:      a) Female      b) Male

Class:      a) 1<sup>st</sup>      b) 2<sup>nd</sup>      c) 3<sup>rd</sup>      d) 4<sup>th</sup>

This is to certify that I agree to the use of the information I have provided in this questionnaire for academic research purposes.

.....

(Signature)

**Section I**

**RESPONSIBILITIES (Please put a cross (X) in the appropriate box)**

<b>While learning English, how much RESPONSIBILITY should students have in ...</b>	<b>Not at all</b>	<b>A little</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Mainly</b>	<b>Completely</b>
1. making sure they make progress during lessons?					
2. making sure they make progress outside class?					
3. stimulating their interest in learning English?					
4. identifying their weaknesses in English?					
5. making them work harder.					
6. deciding the objectives of their English classes?					
7. deciding what they should learn next in their English lessons?					
8. choosing what activities to use to learn English in their English lessons?					
9. deciding how long to spend on each activity?					
10. choosing what materials to use to learn English in their English lessons?					
11. evaluating their learning?					
12. evaluating the course?					
13. deciding what they learn outside class?					
Other (please write if you have anything to add) .....					

**Section II**

**ABILITIES (Please put a cross (X) in the appropriate box)**

How would you rate language learners' ABILITIES to ...	Very Poor	Poor	OK	Good	Very Good
14. choose learning activities in class?					
15. choose learning activities outside class?					
16. choose learning objectives in class?					
17. choose learning objectives outside class?					
18. choose learning materials in class?					
19. choose learning materials outside class?					
20. evaluate their learning?					
21. evaluate the course?					
22. identify their weaknesses in English?					
23. decide what they should learn next in their English lessons?					
24. decide how long to spend on each activity?					
Other (please write if you have anything to add) .....					

**Section III**

**ACTIVITIES (Please put a cross (X) in the appropriate box)**

How often should language learners ...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very Often
25. read grammar books on their own?					
26. read newspapers in English?					
27. read books or magazines in English?					
28. watch English TV programs?					
29. listen to English radio?					
30. listen to English songs?					
31. practice using English with friends?					
32. do English self-study in a group?					
33. do grammar exercises on their own?					
34. watch English movies?					
35. write a diary in English?					
36. use the Internet in English?					
37. used English with a native speaker?					
Other (please write if you have anything to add) .....					



## Appendix B. Samples of Interview Questions

### B1) English version of samples of interview questions

1. What is the role of learners in learning process?
2. How much should a learner be active in the stages of language learning such as planning and evaluation?
3. Is it important whether a learner is autonomous or not in language learning?
4. How much responsible a learner should be in language learning?
5. Which abilities a learner should have in language learning process?
6. Which activities should be done in language learning?
7. Do you perceive yourself as an autonomous learner?

### B1) Turkish version of samples of interview questions

1. Öğrenme sürecinde öğrencilerin rolü nedir?
2. Öğrenimin aşamalarında örneğin, planlama değerlendirme gibi, ne kadar etkin olmalıdır?
3. Bir öğrencinin otonom olup olmaması önemli midir?
4. Bir öğrenci dil öğrenim sürecinden ne kadar sorumlu olmalıdır?
5. Bir öğrenci dil öğrenme sürecinde hangi becerilere sahip olmalıdır?
6. Dil öğrenim sürecinde hangi aktiviteler yapılmalı?
7. Kendini otonom biri olarak tanımlar mısın?

## Appendix C. Sample Interview Transcriptions

### Sample 1. First-year Female

A: İlk önce görüşmeyi kabul ettiğiniz için teşekkürler

B: önemli değil

A: Sizce dil öğrenim sürecinde öğrencinin rolü nedir?

B: Bence öğrencinin rolü ya şu anki sisteme bakılırsa en azından kendi bölüm hocalarımı düşünürsen daha çok bizi derse katılmaya yönelik hani kendi başımıza da bir şeyler yapabileceğimizi her şeyin öğretmene bırakılmadığını gösteren bir şekilde bir rol veriliyor bence bize. Bu bizi daha fazla hem cesaretlendiriyor hem de kendi başımıza bir şeyler yapabileceğimizi gösteriyor bence.

A: Yani öğrenci artık merkezi olduğunu düşünüyorsun. Peki bir öğrenci dil öğrenim aşamalarında örneğin planlama materyal seçimi gibi, ne kadar etkin olmalı?

B: Bence şu seviyede öğrencinin hiçbir şekilde bunlara dahil edilmediğini düşünüyorum. Çünkü kitaplarımız öğretmenler tarafından seçiliyor, seçilmesine rağmen atıyorum, dönem ortasında bu kaynak bize yeterli değil diyorlar. En başta seçen sizdiniz. Ama bunun yeterli olmadığını düşünüyorsunuz. Bence hani bi yerden sonra öğrenciye de sorulması gerektiğini düşünüyorum, hani sadece öğretmenler değil çünkü ama hani onlar bilgili birikimli kişiler ama bence Türkiye'deki eğitim sisteminde bunun çok abartıldığını hatta işin ticari boyutuna da döndüğünü düşünüyorum.

A: Yani bu yüzden öğrenciye de sorulması gerektiğini düşünüyorsun. Peki bir öğrencinin dil öğrenirken otonom olup olmaması önemli midir?

B: Kesinlikle önemlidir.

A: Neden?

B: Ya ona göre gidişatını kendisi çizebilir. Otonom olup olmadığını düşünüyorsa yardım alabilir ki bence her öğrenci otonom olabilmeli bu bir yetenek değil, bu aşama yapılan bir şey ve otonom olduğunda kendini daha iyi hisseder ve öğretmen olucak otonom olmamız lazım ve eğer bunu kendinde eksik hissediyorsa yardım alıp hani bu işi tek başına yapamayacağını anladığında da başka bir kişiden yardım alarak yapabilir.

A: yani aşama derken geliştirilebilir bir şey olduğunu mu düşünüyorsunuz.

B: Hı evet geliştirilebilir olduğunu düşünüyorum.

A: Tamam. Peki sizce bir öğrenci dil öğrenme sürecinde ne kadar sorumlu olmalı?

B: şöyle söylüyüm. Biz zaten dördüncü sınıftan beri dil öğreniyoruz. En azından İngilizce öğreniyoruz. En başından en sonuna kadar bu işin içine girdiğimiz için, neredeyse hani ölene kadar bu işin içindeyiz. Sadece hani biz sabitiz, gelen gidenler ya da kalıp işte ne bileyim duranlar olacak ama biz her zaman buna dahil olacağız.

A: Anlayamadım ne demek istediğini tam olarak

B: Yani bu sürecin merkezinde hep biz olucuz. En başından bu yolu seçtiğimiz için, İngilizce öğretmenliğini okuduğumuz için en başından en sonuna kadar buna dahil olucuz.

A: Dahil olacağınız için sorumlu olman gerektiğini mi düşünüyorsun?

B: Kesinlikle

A: Peki öğrenciyle öğretmeni karşılaştırdığın zaman öğrenciye yüzde kaç öğretmene yüzde kaç sorumluluk verirsin?

B: Bence eşit olmalı%50 yüzde %50

A: Neden?

B: çünkü öğretmenin bir profili var, hani ona güveniyorsun. Birikimli yani buralara gelmesi için çok fazla yol katetmiş, öğrencide kendince buralara gelmek için belli bir yol katetmiş ikisinin de aynı söz hakkına sahip olduğunu düşünüyorum.

A: olduğunu düşünüyorsun tamam. Peki bir öğrencinin dil öğrenirken dil öğrenmede hangi becerilere sahip olması gerekir.

B: Bence şöyle söylüyüm. Eleştiriye açık olmalı yani kendine somut olarak görmesi için bir çizelge bile tutabilir. Hani ne kadar ilerlediğini hangi alanda eksik olduğunu bunları kendisinin yapması lazım, planlı bir şekilde ilerlemesi lazım ve hani hepimiz tamam hani bir yolda ilerliyoruz ama eleştiriye açık olmadığımız sürece ne kadar ilerlediğimizi görmediğimiz sürece hiç bir şekilde ilerlediğimiz göremeyiz. Eleştiriye açık olması lazım. Hafızasının kuvvetli olması lazım, sonuçta yeni kelimeler yeni bilgiler bunların hepsi önemli Başka düşünecek olursam..şey, dışa dönük olması lazım çünkü nasıl desem... sonuçta bu çok aktif olması gereken yani kendisi aktif olması gereken bilgilerini kullanabilecek yönünün olması lazım

A: Anladım yani dışa dönük derken iletişim kurabilmeli falan tarzında ..

B: Evet

A: Peki sizce dil öğrenirken hangi aktiviteler yapılmalı?

B: Online chat yapılabilir. Yeni arkadaşlar değişim programlara katılabilir. Sonra mesela kendi okulumuzdan pay biçersen çok fazla yurtdışından öğrenciler var, bunlarla daha

aktif bir şekilde iletişime geçilebilir. Dizi film yabancı bunların hepsi izlenebilir. Kitap okumak bunlar bazı kişiler için sıkıcı gelebilir ama sadece alternatif zaten. Başka ne olabilir, bu kadar.

A: peki sen bu aktiviteleri yapıyor musun?

B: Evet, hangilerini yapıyorum. Kitap okumak, dizi film izlemek, müzik zaten herkesin hayatında olan bir şey. değişim programlarından seneye nasipse gideceğim. Burada çok fazla tanıştığımız kendi derslerimizden giden arkadaşlarımız var onlarla iletişime geçiyoruz, yani çoğunu yaptığımı düşünüyorum

A: Peki bunları hangi sıklıkta yapıyorsun?

B: Dizi film zaten her gün izleniyor, müzik hayatımızın bir parçası neredeyse değişim programına gidemiyorum.

A: Peki sen bütün bu süreçleri göz önünde bulundurduğun zaman kendini otonom biri olarak tanımlar mısın?

B: Hayır

A: Neden?

B: Çünkü ben tek başıma pek bir şeyler yapabildiğimi düşünmüyorum.

A: Demin birçok şeyi yaptığımı söylüyordun

B: Ama bunlar hani evet yapıyorum ama kendimde bir geliştirme görmüyorum. Demek ki bir şeyleri eksik yapıyorum. Bunun için yardım almayı çok düşündüm ama almadım. Neden almadım bilmiyorum.

A: Yardım almayı ihtiyaç olduğunu düşünüyorsun hani aktiviteleri yapmana rağmen.

B: Hani eğlenceli kısmı benim için iyi ama bunu benim çok fazla otonom olmaya yansıttığımı düşünmüyorum.

A: Tamam teşekkürler.

B: Ben teşekkür ederim.

### **Sample 2. Second-year Male**

A : Görüşmeye katıldığın için teşekkürler

B: ben teşekkür ederim.

A: sizce bir dil öğrenim sürecinde öğrencinin rolü nedir?

B: Ee öğrencinin rolü en başta sorumluluk almaktır. Aktif katılımıdır bence çünkü hani öğrenci istemedikten uğraşmadıktan sorumluluk almadıktan sonra verilen eğitimin hiçbir önemi yok.Ee yani bu süreçte ben şahsen öğrencinin istemesini çok önemli buluyorum ve hani sadece öğretmenin kendisine vermeye çalıştığı şeyleri değil, birazde kendi

çabalarıyla kendi hani kafasından ilerleyerek birazda otonom olmalı bence bu şekilde bu süreç sürdürülmeli

B: Ee peki bir öğrenci dil öğrenim aşamalarında örneğin planlama materyal seçimi gibi ne kadar etkin olmalı?

A: tabi belli bir ölçüde etkin olması gerekir. Ee çok aşırı miktarda olmasa da bile, bence bunun bir dengesi kurulmalı, hani öğrencinin de belli bir söz sahibi olmalı, öğrenciye sorulmadan da bir şey yapılmaması doğru değil bence özellikle planlama, değerlendirme kısımlarında ve materyal dönemde tabi ama planlama ve değerlendirme tabi bir adım önde. Bunlar öğrencinin edindiği bilgileri ve kazanımlarını ortaya çıkaran şeyler o yüzden öğrenci tabiki söz sahibi olmalı yoksa bi geçerliliği yok.

A: peki belli bir aşama dediğin o aşama hangi aşamadır?

B: Ee şimdi şimdi şöyle bence bu aktif uygulamaya geçilmeden önce öncesinde özellikle öğrencinin öğrenciye danışılmalı öğrenciye sorulmalı aktiviteler, planlamalar, materyallar başladıktan sonra değil karar aşamasındayken bunların öğrenciyle konuşulması, söylenmesi bence daha doğru olur diye düşünüyorum.

A: Peki bir öğrencinin dil öğrenirken otonom olup olmaması önemli midir?

B: kesinlikle çok önemlidir. Dil öğreniminde bence en başta gelen şeylerden biri otonom olmak çünkü dil ezber ve şey.. hani.. kağıt üzerinde olan bir şey değil dil insanın konuşmasının bir parçası hayatın bir parçası bu yüzden sadece dediğim kağıt üzerinde olan bir şey değil. Otonom olmadan olamayacağını düşünüyorum. Hayatın bir parçası bence, otonom olmak.

A: peki sizce bir öğrenci dil öğrenim sürecinden ne kadar sorumlu olmalı

B: Yine bu konuda da bence iyi bir denge bulunmalı tabi ki öğretmen biraz dana ağır basar böyle şeylerde ama, öğrencinin de bir katılımı olmalı, sağlıklı bir ee eğitim sürecinin oluşturabilmesi için.

Öğretmen biraz daha ağırlıklı ama öğrencinin de belli bir miktarda söz sahibi olmalı bence.

A: Peki öğretmenin yüzde kaç, öğrenciye yüzde kaç sorumluluk verirsin.

B: Ben %60'a %40 derim. Öğretmen ağırlıklı olmak üzere.

A: Tamam. Peki bir öğrencinin dil öğrenmede hangi becerilere sahip olması gerekir?

B: Ee şöyle söyle mesela öncelikle özgüven ve ee bu zaten en başı özgüven olmadan çoğu şey eksik kalıyo. Ondan sonra sosyal olma becerisidir. Ee çünkü dil dediğimiz gibi konuşarak gelişen tek başına olacak bir şey değil, karşılıklı hani ee konuşma havasında

gelişebilecek bir şey bence, daha çok pratik, pratiğe dayalı hani testlere sınavlara değilde böyle, öğrenciye tecrübe kazandırılmalı ve..belli bir şeyleri yaşayarak öğrenmesi daha iyi bence. Sosyal olma, özgüven olabilir. Sorumluluk alma becerisi, bunlar dil öğreniminde en başta gelen şeyler.

A: Ee peki sizce dil öğrenirken hangi aktiviteler yapılmalı?

B: Bence tabiki yazılı aktivitelere önem verilmeli ama ben özellikle dil öğreniminde daha çok tecrübeye ve konuşmaya dayalı gidilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Kendi tecrübelerimi düşündüğümde de açıkçası ben ee dili biraz daha bu şekilde öğrendim. Konuşarak işte İngilizceye maruz kalarak, expose olarak dendiği gibi bence bu daha önemli tabiki gramer hani... yazılı forma dayalı aktivitelerde önemli ama materyale dayalı aktivitelerde önemli ama, bence asıl tecrübe konuşmadan geliyor ve ee hani soru çözebilirsiniz dil konusundan ama konuşmadıktan sonra bir işinize yaramaz çünkü dil konuşulması gereken bir şey.

A: Peki konuşmaya dayalı nasıl aktiviteler yapıyorsunuz?

B: Ee mesela conversation önemli bence native speakerlarla öğrenci bağlantıya geçirilmeli bence bu zorunlu olmalı diye düşünüyorum. Çok işe yarayan bir şey olduğunu düşünüyorum bunun ee yabancı hocalar gelebilir bu olabilir işte konuşma dersleri olabilir belli programlar kullanılabilir mesela işte.. özel.

A: Nasıl programlar

B: İşte hani mesela İngilizce öğretim programlar oluyor atıyorum ee öğrenci konuşarak aktiviteler yapıyor öğrenciden speaking aktiviteleri isteniyor internet üzerinden interaktif native speakerlar başka okullardan başka ülkelerden böyle anlaşmalar yapılabilir. Üniversitemiz tarafından ki bu konuda bizim üniversitemiz aktif bir üniversite ee dediğim gibi böyle şeyler daha faydalı olur diye düşünüyorum.

A: Peki sen bu aktivitelere katılıyor musun?

B: Yani elimden geldiğince, fırsat buldukça satılmaya çalışıyorum. Sadece okul içinde değil okul dışında da bence bu önemli mesela öğrenci, öğrenciye belli bir sorumluluklar yüklenmeli dediğim gibi hani ne yapması gerektiğini iyi bilmeli öğrenci buda sürekli dilini geliştirmeye dayalı o bilinci öğrenciye vermek çok önemli bence asıl dil öğretmeden önce çünkü öğrenci bazı şeylerin farkında olursa zaten kendisi çabalayacaktır bu konuda kendisi bazı şeylerin farkında olursa zaten kendisi çabalayacaktır bu konuda kendisi bazı şeyleri öğrenecektir öğretmene çokta bir şey düşmez. Ee dediğim gibi işte native speakerlar bu tarz şeyler önemli diye düşünüyorum.

A: Peki sen kendini dil öğrenme bakımından otonom olarak tanımlar mısın?

B : yüzde yüz tanımlamam. Belli bir miktar otonom olduğumu düşünüyorum ama tamamen değil

A: Ne kadar o belli miktar?

B: Ee mesela planlama konularında bazı sıkıntılarım var benim zamanlama gibi böyle disipline dayalı şeylerde ama genel olarak otonom olduğumu düşünüyorum. Otonom bir şekilde çalışabiliyorum dil konusunda.

A: Him.. yani kendinde sorumluluk alabiliyorsun.

B: Alabiliyorum evet tabi geliştirmeye her zaman açıktır insan dil konusunda da özellikle öğrenmenin yaşı olmaz. Dilde daha da geçerli bir kural bu. O yüzden yine de öğrenmeyi geliştirmeye çalışıyoruz ama belli bir miktarda otonom olduğumu düşünüyorum.

3) third year- female

A: Öncelikle görüşmeyi kabul ettiğin için teşekkürler

B: Ben Teşekkür ederim

A: Sizce dil öğrenim sürecinde öğrencinin rolü nedir ?

B: En büyük rol öğrenciye aittir dil öğrenim sürecinde Sonuçta bir dili öğrenme de öğrenmeyi isteyen kişi öğrencidir Öğretmenin yapabileceği tek şey araç olmaktır Dolayısıyla amacına yönelik dilin hangi kısmını öğrenmek istiyorsa oraya yönelmelidir. Yani öğrencinin rolü çok büyüktür

A: Peki bir öğrenci dil öğreniminin aşamalarında Örneğin planlama değerlendirme gibi Ne kadar etkin olmalıdır ?

B: Oldukça Etkin olmalıdır Çünkü dediğim gibi amacına yönelik Materyal yada planlamaya gitmelidir Dediğim gibi dilin hangi alanına yönelik bir eğitim istiyorsa O alana yönelik planlamalar aktiviteler materyaller kullanmalıdır

A: Peki bir öğrencinin dili öğrenirken otonom olup olmaması önemli midir ?

B: Kesinlikle önemlidir Çünkü dediğim gibi bir öğretmen sadece araç rolü üstlendiği için Tek rol öğrenciye düşüyor Bu bağlamda etrafında dile ne kadar maruz kalabilirse tek başına o kadar iyi öğrenir Otonom olması o konuda çok önemli

A: Tamam olmayı tek başına kalmakla mı ilişkilendiriyorsun?

B: Bir şekilde Evet çünkü öğretmen sadece ders içerisinde öğrenciye yardımcı olabilir Belli bir süre içerisinde sadece. Onun dışındaki kalan süre içerisinde o dile maruz kalmak öğrencinin görevi. Ordada o maruz kalmayı kendi planlaması dahilinde bir şeyde tuttuğu sürece gayet iyi öğrenebilir. Bu da otonomluğunu geliştirir.

A: Peki Sence bir öğrenci dil öğrenme sürecinden ne kadar sorumlu olmalı ?

B: Tamamından sorumludur Az önce bahsettiğim gibi öğretmen sadece bir araçtır Bir insana zorla bir şey öğretemeyiz Her şey öğrencide bittiği için öğrenci Neyi öğrenmek istiyorsa neyi almak istiyorsa ancak o kadarını alabilir. Dolayısıyla sorumludur.

A: Peki öğrenci ile öğretmeni karşılaştırdığın zaman sorumluluk olarak yüzde kaç öğretmene yüzde kaç öğrenciye verirsin?

B: Yüzde 80 lik bir kısmını öğrenciye yüzde 20 lik kısmını öğretmene veriyorum çünkü öğrenci bir şeyi almak istemedikçe öğretmen hiçbir şey veremez Ama yine öğretmen hiçbir şeyi sağlamazsa bile Öğrenci yine kendi otonomluğu kendi merakıyla öğretmenden bir şekilde yada etraftan bir şeyler öğrenebilir.

A: Peki bir öğrencinin dili öğrenme de hangi becerilere sahip olması gerekir ?

B: Görsel işitsel hafızaya sahip olması gerekir Bu şekilde konuşma becerisine sahip olması gerekir Öncelikle Kendi diline çok hakim olması gerekir ki çok başka bir dile de aynı biçimde hakim olabilsin.

A: Yani kendi dilinize hakim olmaktan kastınız nedir ?

B: Ana diline hakim olmalı bütün gramer konularına Yani ana dilindeki becerilere Tamamiyle sahip olmalıdır ki öğrendiği dildeki becerilere de aynı derecede sahip olsun

A: Yani dilden dile bir aktarım olabileceğini düşünüyorsunuz. Peki sizce dil öğrenirken hangi aktiviteler yapılmalı ?

B: Ben görsel aktiviteleri en yararlı aktiviteler olarak buluyorum Aynı zamanda dinleme aktiviteleri de yararlı fakat Bu aktivitelerin hepsinin birlikte kullanıldığı aktiviteler daha çok kullanılmalı çünkü Beynin farklı taraflarını aktive edince Maksimum derecede öğrenme gerçekleşir

A: Peki sen bu bahsettiğin aktivitelerden yapıyor musun?

B: Evet zamanında da yaptım Hala da yapmaya devam ediyorum Dil Sonuçta bir süreç

A: Spesifik örnekler verebilir misin?

B: Spesifik Örnek vermek gerekirse yabancı dilde öğrenmek istediğim dilde kitaplar okumaya çalışıyorum haberleri okumaya çalışıyorum. Mümkün olduğu kadar çok kültüre maruz kalmaya çalışıyorum Müzikler filmler eeee aynı derecede belki o insanlarla tanışmak olsun bu da bu şekilde.

A: Peki bu aktiviteleri hangi sıklıkla yapıyorsun ?

B: Mümkün olduğunca sık yapmaya çalışıyorum En azından haftada birden fazla yapmaya çalışıyorum



A: Peki sen dili öğrenme konusunda kendini otonom biri olarak tanımlar mısın

B: Evet otonomi olarak tanımlayabilirim en azından Kendi amacım doğrultusunda ne istiyorsan kendi planlamamı. Kendi amacıma yönelik materyalle kendim seçebiliyorum. Dolayısıyla otonom biri olduğumu söyleyebilirim

4) fourth yea- male

A: Görüşmeyi katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim

B: Rica ederim

A: Sizce dil öğrenim sürecinde öğrencinin rolü nedir

B: Dil öğrenme sürecinde öğrenci Dil öğrenme sürecinden sorumlu kişidir bana soracak olursanız Dil öğrenme sürecinde en çok Aktif olması gereken kişi de öğrencidir bana sorarsanız Dil öğrenme süreci Aslında bilgi aktarma süreci değildir. Araştırma sürecidir. Öğrencinin kendi ilgisine bu alana olan yatkınlığını Bir şekilde kullanıp fark edip bir ürüne dönüştürülmesi sürecidir. Yani özetlemek gerekirse Öğrencinin rolü aktif bir roldür ve sorumlu olan kişidir.

A: Dil öğreniminin aşamalarında Örneğin planlama değerlendirme gibi ne kadar etkin olmalıdır?

B: Daha evvel de söylediğim gibi, Öğrenci dil öğrenme sürecinden sorumlu kişidir Aktif kişidir dil öğrenme sürecinde. Bundan yola çıkarak diyebilirim ki bir öğrencinin dil öğrenme Sürecinin her aşamasında rol alması gerekmektedir. Çünkü Dil öğrenme süreci tamamen ilgilere dayalı, öğrencinin motivasyonuna dayalı bir süreçtir. Öğrenci motivasyonu ve öğrenci ilgilerine ne kadar önem verilirse Öğrenci de o süreçten o kadar faydalanır diye düşünüyorum. Yani öğrenci hem materyal seçiminde rol almalıdır Kendi ilgisine yönelik materyaller üzerinde çalışması bir öğrencinin motivasyonu artırır. Hem de değerlendirme gibi süreçler içerisinde yer alırsa Öğrenmeyi İngilizceyi bir ders olarak görmektense bir süreç olarak görür. Kendisine katkı sağlayan bir süreç olarak görür daha çok. Kendisini geliştirme aracı olarak görür dersten ziyade. Bu amaçla daha çok faydalanır diye düşünüyorum.

A: Peki bir dil öğrenirken öğrencinin otonom olup olmaması önemli midir?

B: Bana sorarsanız Kesinlikle evet. Bana sorarsanız bile öğretilen bir şey değildir Bir kişi tarafından kavranan bir şeydir Kendi ilgisini kendi araştırma isteklerini bu amaçla Bu doğrultuda kullanarak Elde edebildiği bir özelliştir dil Bir başarıdır yani. Bu yüzden bir öğrencinin bu süreçte tamamen aktif olması lazım kendi öğreniminden sorumlu olması gerekmektedir.

A: Sizce bir öğrenci dil öğrenme sürecinden ne kadar sorumlu olmalı?

B: Daha önce de bahsettiğim gibi dil öğrenme sürecindeki en sorumlu kişi öğrencidir. Çünkü dil öğretilen bir şey değildir elde edilen bir şeydir birey tarafından. Bu doğrultuda diyebilirim ki sorumluluk tamamen öğrenciye aittir.

A: Peki öğrenci ile öğretmeni karşılaştırdığın zaman yüzde kaç verirdin öğretmene yüzde kaç öğrenciye yüzde kaç sorumluluk?

B: Öğrencinin payına ben minimum yüzde 75 verirdim çünkü Öğretmenin rolü bir yol göstericilikten ziyadedir diye düşünüyorum. Bilgi aktarandan kişiden ziyade öğrenciyi bilgiye yönlendiren ilgisini çekebilen kişidir. Bunu sağladığı sürece Öğrenci zaten kendi potansiyelini kullanacaktır Dili öğrenme sürecinde O yüzden yüzde 75 e yüzde 25 verirdim.

A: Peki bir Öğrencinin dil öğrenme sürecinde hangi becerilere sahip olması gerekir?

B: Öncelikle öğrencinin kendi benliğinin farkında olması gerekir, öğrenci kendini tanımalıdır. Kendi ilgilerini kendi isteklerini Ne kadar gerçekleştirmek istediğinin farkında olmalıdır ki Öğrenme sürecinde gelişme kat ettiğini fark etsin. Özellikle istediği alanlarda gelişme kat ettiğini fark etsin. Bunda başarılı olsun. Benim en birinci ölçütüm kendini tanımasıdır yani kendinin farkında olmasıdır. İkinci olarak Öğrenci kesinlikle araştırmacı ve aktif olmalıdır. Çünkü daha önce söylediğim gibi öğretmen yol gösterici boyutundadır, yol göstermekle kalır. Öğrenci bilgiye araştırmalı bulmalı ve bir çaba sarf etmeli ve öğrenme adına.

A: Sizce dil öğrenirken hangi aktiviteler yapılmalı?

B: Dil öğrenirken Bence öğrencilerin mümkün olduğunca Dilin orijinal olarak kullanıldığı Aktivitelerden faydalanılmalıdır yani...

A: Orijinalikten derken..

B: Orijinalikten kastım yani Dilin kendi ortamında incelenmesi, Kültürel açıdan özellikle, Bir kültür içerisinde verilmesi, Tamamen kültürden soyutlanıp bir ders programının içerisinde aktarılması bir dili, eee, öğrencileri herhangi bir dersmiş gibi yapılması zorunlu bir şeymiş gibi algılanmasına sebep olmakta. Onun yerine öğrencilerin dili ait olduğu ortamın ve kültürün içerisinde görmesi lazım. Bu amaç içerisinde diyebilirim ki ne kadar çok orijinal materyale, otantik materyale ulaşırsa, bu tip aktiviteler ne kadar çok kullanılırsa yani atıyorum..

A: Daha spesifik bir örnek verebilir misin?

B: Yani atıyorum listening ve speaking aktiviteleri diyebilirim. Listening olarak şarkılar dinletilebilir öğrenilen dile yönelik, yada atıyorum öğrenilen dille alakalı filmler diziler çizgifilmler izlenebilir. Yine o dile ait okuma materyallerinden faydalanılabilir. Ama dediğim gibi kültür ne kadar çok yedirilmiş olursa bu materyallerin ve bu aktivitelerin içerisine bu aktiviteler de o kadar çok faydalı olur diye düşünüyorum.

A: Peki siz bu aktiviteleri yapıyor musunuz?

B: eeee, Genellikle kendim kullanmayı Tercih ettiğim aktiviteler speaking ve listening aktiviteleri olarak dilin kültür içerisinde kullanıldığı, eeee yani, aktivitelerdir. Genellikle şarkı dinlediğim oluyor. Şarkının içerisindeki kullanım ve telaffuzları fark etmeye başladığım zaman ilgim artıyor ve başarı gösteriyorum. Bazen dizi sahnelerinden faydalandığım oluyor bu durumda da öğrencilerin ilgisinin arttığını dil becerisinde bir başarının sağlandığını söyleyebilirim.

A: Peki siz haftada ne kadar sıklıkla yapıyorsunuz bu aktiviteleri?

B: Kendim Aslında İngilizceyi kendi başına öğrenmiş biriyim ben. Herhangi bir okul sürecinde eğitim özel olarak almadığım bir alandı bu ve Bu aktiviteleri sürekli kullandığımı söyleyebilirim yani. Öğrenmeyi buna borçluyum sürekli Orijinal materyalleri maruz kalmaya, aktivitelere.

A: Peki siz kendinizi dil öğrenme bakımından otonom olarak tanımlar mısınız?

B: Daha evvel de söylediğim gibi dil öğrenme sürecim ben çok küçük yaştan beri ben sorumluydum yani. Ne aileden kaynaklı bir dil aktarımı oldu bana Ne de okul aracılığıyla çünkü dilden başka bir bölümden mezun oldum ben eşit ağırlıktan Eşit ağırlık bölümünden Ama bu süreç içerisinde sürekli kendi öğrenme sürecinden sorumlu oldum. Kültüre mümkün olduğunca maruz bırakmaya çalıştım kendimi. Şarkılar aracılığıyla Yabancı insanlarla konuşma aracılığıyla, elime geçirdiğim her türlü yazılı materyali okuma aracılığıyla mümkün olduğunca sorumlu olmaya çalıştım öğrenme sürecimden ve Bana faydası olduğunu düşünüyorum Bu sürecin

A: Okuldan çok evde ya da Kendi başınıza...

B: Evet. Kendi sorumluluğumu üstlendim yani öğrenme süreci içerisinde