Exploring Applicability of Learner Autonomy in Turkish EFL Classrooms: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised in Turkish EFL classrooms at high school level?

Eda Kocar

School of Education

Saint Andrews Building

University of Glasgow

G3 6NH

A dissertation presented in part fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Philosophy at the University of Glasgow

<September 2020>

Abstract

In the Turkish context, the notion of learner autonomy has received increasing interest nationwide in the last decade through the efforts of the Ministry of Education. This research aimed to investigate and compare the applicability of learner autonomy in Turkish EFL classrooms in state and private schools at high school level. The findings of the current study reveal and compare Turkish EFL teachers' understandings of learner autonomy and their practices in this area, including beyond the private and state school settings. Similarly, this research helps us to understand Turkish EFL students' interpretations of and practices in learner autonomy. The participant of present study consisted of 20 EFL teachers and 66 students in 9th grade from private and state schools in one of the Turkish cities. Data were collected by using semi-structured interviews, focus groups and classroom observations. The data revealed that most of the participating teachers in state and private schools expressed some views about learner autonomy, however, many of the participants' views were not clear and consistent. Also, the current study revealed some alignments and mismatches between teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy and their practices relating to it. The data also indicated that, while some of the students share their interpretations of learner autonomy, as their teachers do, the rest of the students unfortunately do not have a clear understanding of learner autonomy. Moreover, the current research found that students in private and state schools engaged in autonomous learning activities beyond the classroom despite differences in activities between those groups.

Contents

Acknowledgements

I owe sincere thankfulness to my family for their encouragement. Besides, I am obliged to many of my colleagues and students in Turkey for their contribution and participation in my research study. Lastly, I would like to show my gratitude to my supervisors for the guidance and support they provided me throughout my research. This research study would not have been completed without all these people's supports.

Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Eda Kocar

Signature: EDA KOCAR

Abbreviations

CALL……. Computer Assisted Language Learning

CEFR……..Common European Framework of Reference

CRAPEL……Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues

EF EPI…….EF English Proficiency Index

EFL ……..English as Foreign Language

ELP……..English Language Portfolio

ELT…….English Language Teaching

EU…… European Union

EUROSTAT……. European Statistical Office

ICT…… Information and Communications Technology

LA……...Learner Autonomy

MoNE……..Ministry of National Education

NATO…….North Atlantic Treaty Organization

OECD……. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PBL……..Project-Based Learning

UN…….United Nations

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

CHAPTER 1 – Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will first discuss the way learner autonomy became a widespread concept within the Turkish educational system. Following this, I will focus on the issues that the current research tries to address. The chapter will conclude with the introduction of the intended aims of the research and a discussion of its possible contributions.

1.2 Background to the Study

It has been over four decades since Holec et al. presented the term ''Learner Autonomy'' in foreign language learning through the Council of Europe's modern languages project in 1971 (for details, see chapter 2, section 2.2). Since then, learner autonomy has been referred to by various scholars and academics as follows:

> The ability to take charge of one's own learning (Holec, 1988)
>
> A situation that learners are totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with their learning and the implementation of those decisions (Dickinson, 1994)
>
> Recognition of the rights of learners within educational systems (Benson, 2011)
>
> A matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning (Little, 2011)

The concept of learner autonomy is a popular theme in foreign language education globally. Several different definitions and views have therefore emerged from scholars from different cultures, alongside a vast output of journals, articles and books (Benson, 2013). Several studies have already been conducted to highlight the importance and application of learner autonomy in language classrooms (Chan,

2001; Dam, 2011; Little, 2007, 2011; Kuchah and Smith, 2011). The findings presented in these studies illustrate that other essential components such as self-motivation (Murphy, 2011), self-monitoring and self-assessment (Scharle and Szabo, 2000; Little, 2002), co-operation (Tassinari, 2011; Dearden, 1975), curriculum (Cotterall, 2000), materials (Nuan, 2000) and teacher training in learner autonomy (Smith, 2008) need to be fulfilled to successfully foster an autonomous learning environment.

In the Turkish context, the notion of learner autonomy has received increasing interest nationwide and has been in vogue in the last decade through the efforts of the Ministry of Education (MoNE, 2012). Since becoming a candidate country to join the European Union (EU) and becoming a member of the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), numerous reforms have taken place in Turkey's education system in line with the requirements of globalisation (Kirkgoz, 2009). Fostering learner autonomy in foreign language classrooms is assumed by Turkish policy-makers as a main target in educational reform to enable adaptation to new developments in the global world (MoNE, 2006) and follow the principles of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) (MoNE, 2013).

According to the Turkish Ministry of National Education (2013), if young Turkish students are trained in an authentic communicative and autonomous learning environment where learners feel comfortable and supported throughout the learning process, they will develop a positive attitude towards English from the earliest possible stage. In addition, Turkish citizens' competency in the English language is arguably essential for their communication at international level in the fields of politics, science, academia and the social and workforce area. Language learning is therefore intended to become a lifelong undertaking (MoNE, 2013). To accomplish these targets, the characteristics of English teaching and learning have recently been identified by the MoNE (2014), through which students are encouraged to be autonomous in their own language learning inside and beyond the classroom. Through guiding learners to become productive, innovative and

autonomous individuals, the aim is also to prepare learners to become effective communicators of English in the global world (ibid).

Learner autonomy is also a necessity to increase English language proficiency levels in Turkey, transforming its educational system to a learner-centred system by implementing new educational policies (MoNE, 2013). However, according to recent figures, Turkish learners' performance in English has still not reached the required levels when compared with other countries in Europe (EUROSTAT, 2014; EF EPI, 2014). Turkey has a teacher-centred educational school culture and a traditional classroom environment (Sahin, 2011). However, use of mainly traditional classroom environments and teacher-centred approaches should not be perceived as the only variables that inhibit the development of Turkish EFL learners' proficiency levels. For example, the Turkish Ministry of National Education's recent report (MoNE, 2013) stated that 'a significant percentage of students leave school without the ability to interact successfully in an English-language medium despite efforts to improve Turkish learners' English language education' (2). Ambiguity in terms of the ways in which learner autonomy can be promoted in countries such as Turkey, which does not share the same socio-cultural, political or economic features with countries where learner autonomy is relatively prominent, is also possible. Despite recent attempts to promote learner autonomy and student-centred learning in the Turkish education system, a related issue that Turkish EFL teachers have faced is lack of knowledge and practices to apply constructivist pedagogies and learner autonomy in their classrooms (Inozu, 2011). Moreover, Turkish EFL learners are described as lacking in crucial knowledge and motivation in how to adopt learner autonomy while learning a foreign language (Egel, 2009). Various components have a potential impact on the applicability of learner autonomy in Turkish EFL classrooms and these variables are explored in the literature review chapter through examination of the connection between learner autonomy and Turkey's socio-cultural structure.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There has been a growing recognition of the role of learner autonomy in foreign language education in Turkey. However, little research has been undertaken into the place of learner autonomy in the Turkish context and its applicability in circumstances that share similarities with Turkey. The delicate nature of transferring educational policies from one cultural context to another has been highlighted by Apaydin (2008), who noted the importance of preventing inappropriate application of principles and methods. Consequently, difficulties or misinterpretations may have emerged during the implementation of these new educational reforms. Turkey is among governments looking at how to successfully implement innovation and policies in its education structure to improve results in international and national exams and improve learners' English proficiency levels (Gur et al., 2012). However, in relation to issues between new educational reforms and difficulties faced while implementing these new reforms, the recent OECD report (2015: 5) stated that:

> But such changes are not easy to make: education changes take time, options for improvement may not be evident, groups with vested interests may hamper reforms, and politicians may face conflicting priorities or lack evidence of what can be best within the context.

In Turkey, which is ranked as an upper-middle-income country (World Bank, 2016) with a dominantly collectivist culture (Hoftstede, 2016), a considerable number of studies (Balcikanli, 2010; Yildirim, 2008; Turan-Ozturk, 2016; Ali, 2015; Cakici, 2017; Kirkgoz, 2017) have been conducted to investigate the application of learner autonomy. However, most of these studies only take into account teachers' views (Dogan and Mirici, 2017; Unal et al., 2017; Yilmaz et al., 2017) using quantitative methods rather than investigating teachers' and learners' perceptions and their activities in private and state schools in depth, to understand autonomy in the Turkish context.

A gap evidently exists in the literature that investigates the place of learner autonomy in the Turkish context in the area of considering teachers' and learners'

perceptions and practices through conducting qualitative research in state and private schools. This research seeks to fill this gap by gaining rich insights into learner autonomy in secondary education in Turkey. It also aims to investigate and compare the effectiveness of this borrowed educational policy in state and private high schools. For this reason, data obtained from this research will be used to shed light on the applicability of learner autonomy in Turkey and provide insight into the promotion of this theme in different contexts that share similarities with Turkey's socio-cultural and economic structures.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This research aims to investigate and compare the applicability of learner autonomy in Turkish EFL classrooms in state and private schools. First, teachers' understandings of learner autonomy, their willingness to apply it and their practices for it will be explored. How teachers view and practise the term learning autonomy might be open to different interpretations, as what learning autonomy means to foreign language teachers might be different in each cultural and educational context (Oxford, 2003). Moreover, little is yet known about the applicability of learner autonomy in different cultural contexts (Borg and Al-busaidi, 2012). Exploring Turkish EFL teachers' understandings of the term learner autonomy therefore offers an opportunity to teachers to improve the process of teaching, help students in their language learning process and design activities with the purpose of learner autonomy promotion, particularly as its importance has been valued in the recent curriculum (MoNE, 2016). In addition, this study, as well as exploring teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy, also aims to reveal students' perceptions, willingness and practices, unlike previous studies. Consequently, the present study is an attempt to contribute to the growing literature with data relating to Turkish EFL teachers' and students' perceptions, willingness and activities regarding developing learner autonomy at high school level through considering and comparing its application in both private and state schools.

1.5 Research Questions

The current study aims to look for the answers to the following research questions:

1) How is learner autonomy defined and interpreted by Turkish EFL teachers at secondary level, in both private and state schools?

2) How is learner autonomy encouraged in the practices of Turkish EFL teachers at secondary level, in both private and state schools? What are the challenges for teachers in promotion of learner autonomy?

3) How is learner autonomy defined and interpreted by Turkish EFL students at secondary level in both private and state schools?

4) How is learner autonomy practised by Turkish EFL students at secondary level in both private and state schools?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Studies that have attempted to investigate learner autonomy within the private and state high school contexts in Turkey are limited, and the current research is an effort to contextualise and compare the study of autonomous learning in both the private and state school context. The findings of the current study reveal and compare Turkish EFL teachers' understandings of learner autonomy and their practices in this area, including beyond the private and state school settings. Similarly, this research helps us to understand Turkish EFL students' interpretations of and practices in learner autonomy. This study thus increases both teachers' and students' awareness of learner autonomy and its significance in language learning and teaching. Finally, this research will also guide other researchers in Turkey to explore relevant aspects of learner autonomy. Uncovering how learner autonomy is interpreted and practised will therefore offer some important insights into the influence of learners, teachers and institutional factors on the development of autonomous learning in Turkish EFL classrooms. In addition, Turkey might also be an interesting case study in understanding policy transfer and learner autonomy from an international perspective.

CHAPTER 2 – Learner Autonomy: Definitions, Practices and Implications

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the contextual background of the current research, focusing on educational and cultural contexts to understand the situation of learner autonomy within Turkish EFL learning and teaching. First, I briefly present a review of some of the literature on definitions of learner autonomy, before discussing the history and background of the term in philosophy, psychology and foreign language education. In the following section, I address the characteristics of autonomous learners and teachers' roles in the promotion of learner autonomy. In addition, I discuss the factors that have an impact on the promotion of learner autonomy, before considering learner autonomy in the Turkish context and its cultural appropriateness. In the final section, perceptions and practices of learner autonomy in foreign language teaching and learning are described and discussed by reviewing several studies in various contexts regarding students' and teachers' perceptions and practices in relation to learner autonomy.

2.2 Definitions of Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy as a global phenomenon (Benson, 2009) — also defined as a 'buzz-word' (Little, 1991:2) — is prominent within the literature. As highlighted by Benson (2011), the definition of learner autonomy in language learning and teaching has been subject to debate since it first appeared in the field through the Council of Europe's modern languages project in 1971. One of the outcomes of this project was the foundation of the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications Pédagogiques en Langues (CRAPEL), where the first self-access language learning — which has recently been associated with autonomous learning — and self-access language learning centres were established under the leadership of Henry Holec (Benson, 2011). Since then, learner autonomy and its importance have been on the rise in foreign language teaching and learning, resulting in a broad interest among researchers and scholars in the field of education (Benson, 2011). As Benson (2011)

stated, one of the most used and cited definitions of learner autonomy in the literature is that of Holec and his colleagues. According to Holec, learner autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning, which includes learners fixing their learning objectives, defining content and progression, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring acquisition procedures and evaluating what has been acquired (Holec, 1988). This broad definition highlights giving learners the opportunity to organise, choose and evaluate their own learning through involving them actively in the learning and teaching process (Benson, 2013).

In addition, Holec et al. published a compendium with the co-operation of the Council of Europe, which includes reports and articles on the subject of learner autonomy (Benson, 2011). They also held seminars in Europe with the aim of encouraging the development of autonomy-centred education and self-directed learning alongside defining approaches while implementing learner autonomy (Holec, 1988). Holec (1988) emphasised three basic categories while inviting practitioners to define learner autonomy. According to Holec, the meaning of autonomy was first referred to as 'independence' that makes learners self-sufficient through giving them the opportunity to choose the materials and content of their learning (Holec, 1988:7). Second, it was reported that autonomy was the active exercise of learner responsibility (Benson, 2011) so that learners were no longer depositories and the teacher was no longer a depositor (Freire, 2000). This enabled learners to become more active and involved in the learning process individually and collaboratively. Finally, learner autonomy was defined as 'the ability to learn', meaning that learners are self-directed and aware of 'what' is going to be learned, 'where and when to learn' and 'how to learn' (Benson, 2011:8). Similarly, Dam (1990) defined learner autonomy as 'readiness to take charge of one's own learning in service of one's needs and purposes', noting that it also requires readiness to be involved in individual and social activities in order to become an autonomous learner (17).

Consensus exists on the importance of learner autonomy in foreign language learning and teaching (Dickinson, 1994; Little, 2017; Cotterall, 2000; Benson, 2011), and there are some indications that it helps to increase success in language learning (Reinders, 2010). However, ambiguity remains as to the real meaning and practices of learner autonomy (Benson, 2011). The vagueness in the meaning of the concept of learner autonomy makes it open to different interpretations. Thus, it might be important to discuss what learner autonomy is not, to clarify its meaning.

Little (1991) points out several misconceptions relating to learner autonomy. The first misconception is that it is synonymous with self-instruction, self-access learning, distance learning or independence – that it is essentially a matter of deciding to learn without a teacher (ibid). As Little (2001) stated, each of these approaches can help to develop learner autonomy. However, none have the same broad meaning as learner autonomy. The second misconception is that it refers to the unconditional freedom of learners and control is handed over completely to learners – in other words, learner autonomy cannot be promoted without an instructor (Little, 1991). According to Little (2001), educators can determine the limits of freedom and the responsibilities of learners. Third, it is assumed to be a single, easily described behaviour and it is absolute (Little, 1991). However, Little (1991) highlighted that there are degrees in learner autonomy and it can take various different forms depending on, for example, learner age, how far they have progressed with their learning and what they perceive their immediate learning needs to be. The last misconception is that it is a fixed and steady state achieved by certain learners that, once acquired, can be applied to areas of learning (ibid). On the contrary, learner autonomy is likely to be hard worn and a sequence of actions that do not stop changing. It must therefore be constantly nurtured and maintained (Little, 1991; Benson, 2011). After briefly discussing definitions of and misconceptions about learner autonomy, the next section examines its background in different fields, such as philosophy, psychology and foreign language instruction.

2.3 Background to Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy has been the focus of global discussions in education following rapid changes and developments in politics, technology, economics and education systems (Smith et al., 2018). Gremmo and Riley (1995) associate the emergence of autonomy with social changes concerning psychology, education and politics. The rising interest in learner autonomy, especially in the field of foreign (English) language education, has therefore led to discussion and inspiration in many cultures, not only in Europe but also in Asia and the Middle East (Benson and Huang, 2008; Huang and Benson, 2013). It is thus important to understand what autonomy represents in different cultures.

Autonomy is a recently widely used and practised concept in education, and its etymology is derived from the Greek word *autonomous*, which refers to 'having its own laws', 'having the freedom to act independently' and 'having the freedom to govern itself or control its own affairs' (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). It was thus argued that the origins of the concept lie in ancient Greece, where Greek philosophers referred to people described as autonomous and self-governed as they developed their own rules and laws (Benson, 2007). Similarly, Dearden (1975) placed the origins of the word autonomy in Greek etymology and stated that autonomy applied to the cities and people who were responsible for their own lives, developing their own laws in terms of living as free individuals. Unlike some assumptions related to autonomy and its concepts that are seen as having individualistic stances, the roots of autonomy were applied to groups, not to individuals alone (Nauta, 1984; Cayir, 2015). In line with this thinking, Benson (1997) draws attention to the complexity of descriptions of the origins of learner autonomy and independence, and the tendency to perceive these as individualistic terms.

For instance, although the prominence of autonomy was accepted through the Enlightenment (Christman, 2015), and the concept of learner autonomy was declared a Western notion by writers such as Pennycook (1997), Jones (1995) and

Schmenk (2005), Pierson (1996) highlighted that learner autonomy has also been practised and advocated at different periods of time with various descriptions in collectivist cultures. In other words, autonomy was also advocated by many scholars in ancient Chinese philosophy and the teaching of Confucius, as well as in Buddhism, to highlight concepts such as reasoning, rationality and critical thinking (Kanniyakonil, 2007). In the following sections, the origins of autonomy and the place of learner autonomy in different fields are mentioned briefly to understand the relationships of learner autonomy with philosophy, psychology and pedagogy.

2.3.1 Learner Autonomy in Philosophy

From the Kantian position, autonomy is defined as the ability to use reason whereby individuals choose their own actions, meaning that individuals understand themselves as free (Christman, 2015). Nonetheless, a person also needs to respect other individuals' freedom and reasoning as a result of holding their autonomy as a basis for society (ibid). Furthermore, in Kant's model, the notion of autonomy and the nature of the self relate to ideas such as maturity, strength of will and self-governance (Christman, 2015). In his Enlightenment definition, Kant (1724–1804) argues that emancipation of an individual occurs when a person has the courage to use their own reason and the ability to use their own understanding when taking a decision, instead of being directed perpetually by *guardians* such as teachers, politicians, family members, administrators and religious officers in every stage of their lives while taking any decision (Christman, 2015; Benson, 2012). As in Kant's view of autonomy, John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) also highlighted autonomy as an essential element to fulfilment of individual lives regarding their having free will while taking responsibility for their own actions, and having mutual respect for other people's actions (Benson, 2012). In parallel with this thinking, the importance of individual free will, the ability to take responsibility for actions and respecting other individuals' autonomy might also represent a basis of learner autonomy.

While the notion of autonomy was supported in European philosophy, it was also advocated by some scholars in ancient Chinese philosophy and in the teaching of Confucius in order to highlight critical thinking, taking responsibility for one's own learning, self-awareness and intrinsic motivation while taking actions in learning (Pierson, 1996; Kanniyakonil, 2007). Although it has some different interpretations, for Pierson (1996), the concept of autonomy in education was supported by scholars in Chinese dynasties. For example, in the Sung dynasty, according to Chu Hsi (1130–1200), importance was placed on being an independent learner who acquires knowledge through action caused by internal motivation, emphasised thus:

> If you are in doubt, think it out by yourself. Do not depend on others for explanations. Suppose there was no one you could ask, should you stop learning? If you could get rid of the habit of being dependent on others you will make your advancement in your study. (cited in Pierson, 1996:56)

Pierson (1996:56) also explains that Chu Hsi associated autonomy and *true knowledge* with the essential human habit of *eating*. According to Chu Hsi, eating is a habit that is decided by a person individually without any interference from other individuals (Pierson, 1996). Similarly, in order to gain knowledge, individuals need to decide whether they are ambitious to learn, and only an individual can decide to suppress their own hunger for knowledge by their own volition, rather than via external factors such as family members, educators and friends (ibid).

2.3.2 Learner Autonomy and Psychology

Although the origins of learner autonomy are mainly associated with philosophy, various researchers (Benson, 2001; Ryan and Deci, 2008; Little, 1991; Ushioda, 2013) argue that it is also possible to observe the effects of psychology on the background of learner autonomy. According to Benson (2001:67), psychological variables such as "personality', 'aptitude', 'motivation' and 'beliefs' of learners influence their foreign language learning process and the outcomes of their efforts. He thus argued for a connection between learner autonomy and the psychology of learning. Correlatively, various psychologists study both psychology

and education in their work and refer to connections between learner autonomy and psychology, as psychological factors can have an influence on learning (Benson, 2011). Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) and humanist psychologist Carl Rogers (1902–1987) are considered by Benson (2001) as among the most distinctive and cited scholars, embodying the nature of learner autonomy and the psychology of learning for their successors through their contributions.

For instance, Benson (2001:38) described Vygotsky's contribution to learner autonomy, noting that learning occurs with learners' existing knowledge, experience and social interaction, leading to the concept of the *Zone of Proximal Development*. According to this concept, Vygotsky identified the idea of 'self-directive inner speech', in which learners are first guided by teachers or more experienced peers, before internalising their knowledge through interaction with others that transforms their inner speech, reflecting a connection between self-direction and social interaction (Benson, 2001:39, 40). Affected by Rousseau's ideas on education, Rogers discovered client-centred therapy, applying this from his work on humanistic psychology to the field of education with the idea of person-centred learning, in which learner autonomy, individual identity and integrity are seen as essential for the process of self-actualisation (Benson, 2001:31). According to Rogers, as learning is a unique process for each individual and incorporates individual experiences, results and changes in behaviours, the role of the teacher as a facilitator is to help learners to gain qualities such as personal assumption of responsibility and self-concept (ibid).

Moreover, Dickinson (1994) and Ushioda (2013) argue that giving students responsibility for their learning might enhance their learning motivation. According to Ushioda (2013), developing effective motivational thinking is an integral dimension of learner autonomy. In addition to these researchers, Little (1991) also argued that, when autonomous learners accept responsibility for their learning process, they draw on their intrinsic motivation, thus developing the skills of reflective learners. Their sense of achievement in their learning leads to their nourishing their intrinsic motivation (ibid). Little (1991) therefore attempts to add

a psychological dimension to learner autonomy and defined learner autonomy as follows:

> … a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. It presupposes but also entails that the learner will develop a kind of psychological relation to the process and content learning. The capacity of learner autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way she or he transfers what has been learned to wider contexts. (Little, 1991:4)

According to Ryan and Deci (2008), individuals have autonomous and/or controlled motivations that give them a reason to learn. They explained that individuals who are driven by autonomous motivation are self-directed learners and internalise their activities because they learn for interest, enjoyment or satisfaction (ibid). Meanwhile, individuals with controlled motivation might experience little or no autonomy as they feel pressure and seek approval to behave in certain ways (Ryan and Deci, 2009). On the other hand, Murase (2015:44) expanded the construct of learner autonomy in foreign language education, including three sub-dimensions: metacognitive sub-dimension (learners' ability to use metacognitive strategies), motivational sub-dimension (learners' willingness, desire and responsibility) and affective sub-dimension (learners' anxiety, emotions and self-esteem).

Similarly, Zarei and Gahremani (2010) suggested that developing learner autonomy might be a way to solve learners' motivation problem. They argued that students' motivation to complete tasks is positively correlated with high student autonomy. The connection between autonomous foreign language learners and their motivation to learn is also emphasised by Little (2003), who argues that learners solve their motivation problems if they are proactively committed to learning. He also added that autonomous learners do not always feel entirely positive about all aspects of their learning but have skills to develop reflective and attitudinal resources to overcome temporary motivational setbacks (Little, 2003). Regarding these researchers' statements, promoting autonomous learning in foreign language education arguably closely depends on students' willingness to learn and their strategies in dealing with motivational issues that they might be faced with.

2.3.3 Learner Autonomy in Foreign Language Education

The popularity of autonomy in applied linguistics stemmed from its importance, and its potential has been acknowledged by many scholars represented in the literature (Benson, 2001; Dam, 1990; Winch, 2006; Waterhouse, 1990; Hamilton, 1990). In addition, its application and implications in foreign language education have been investigated widely by various researchers, both in Turkey (Inozu, 2011; Yuksel and Toker, 2013; Egel, 2009; Balcikankli, 2008, 2010; Tok, 2011; Yildirim,2008; Ustunoglu, 2009; Dislen, 2011; Buyukyavuz, 2014; Dincer et al., 2012) and abroad (Reeve and Jang, 2006; Chan, 2001; Benson, 2010, Dam, 2011). Additionally, the meaning of learner autonomy in language learning is explained by many researchers (Holec, 1979; Thanasoulas, 2000; Benson, 2001; Illes, 2012; Dang, 2012; Little, 2010).

Further, Little (2003, 2007) and Benson (2013) specify approaches and practices for learner autonomy in foreign language education. For example, Little (2007) suggested that three basic pedagogical norms promote learner autonomy in foreign language classrooms. The first is defined by Little (2007) as learner involvement – making learners share responsibility for the learning process (affective and metacognitive dimensions). The principle of learner involvement refers to teachers drawing learners into their own learning process, making them share responsibility for setting the learning agenda, selecting learning activities and materials, managing classroom interaction and evaluating learning outcomes (Little, 2007). The second is defined by Little (2007) as learner reflection – assisting learners to think critically in the process of planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning (metacognitive dimensions). Although learner reflection is already implied in the first principle, this also requires reflective intervention as a key feature of the learning–teaching process (ibid). According to Little (2007), learners acquire reflective skills gradually and with very modest beginnings. Also, he noted that this kind of reflection begins in a dialogue between teachers and learners or within learner groups – following Vygotsky's principle of internalisation, what begins as social speech is gradually transformed into the capacity for inner speech in the target language (Little, 2007:25). Little (2007) defined the third principle as

appropriate target language use – using the target language as the primary medium of language learning (communicative and metacognitive dimension). It is useful to highlight that, while the principles outlined apply to learning across the broad, Little (2001) has drawn attention to activities and goals relevant specifically to language learning, such as target language use. Little (2007) stated that this principle requires the target language as the medium and classroom activities conducted to be organised, reflective and communicative. Learner autonomy in foreign language education is described by Little (2003:2) as follows:

> Effective communication depends on a complex of procedural skills that develop only through use, and if language learning depends crucially on language use, learners who enjoy a high degree of social autonomy in their learning environment should find it easier than otherwise to master the full range of discourse roles on which effective spontaneous communication depends.

In the context of foreign language education and appropriate target language use, Little (2010) believes that learner autonomy depends on learners' language proficiency in the target language, meaning that learners need to be taught mostly in the target language and encouraged to undertake various activities and roles – for example, responding to and initiating conversations and supporting their abilities in relation to both internal (e.g. perception, self-esteem, learning styles) and external factors (e.g. curriculum, socio-economic status) in language use. Moreover, Benson (2013:37) explains the implications of learner autonomy in foreign language education as follows:

> autonomy in language learning implies learners setting their own directions for learning that will lead to divergent outcomes because the ultimate importance of foreign language learning is not the acquisition of a shared body of knowledge, but the ability to say what one wants to say in more than one language.

Moreover, Benson (2013:215) distinguished six different types of practice for learner autonomy regarding promoting autonomous learning in foreign and second language education:

a) Resource-based approaches seek to promote autonomy through emphasising independent interaction with learning materials: e.g. individualised learning or peer teaching.

b) Technology-based approaches are characterised by emphasising interaction with educational technologies: e.g. computers, mobile phones.

c) Learner-based approaches focus on the direct production of behavioural and psychological changes that are necessary for learners to be able to take control over their learning: e.g. various forms of learning strategy training.

c) Teacher-based approaches emphasise a change in the role of teachers from informer or knowledge keeper to facilitator and counsellor.

d) Classroom-based approaches seek changes in the relationship between learners and teachers in the classroom and learner control over planning and evaluation.

e) Curriculum-based approaches attempt to extend the idea of control over planning and evaluation of learning to the curriculum as a whole and involve learners in decision-making processes at curriculum level.

Benson (2013) also argues that these approaches might gradually encourage learners to take over some roles for choosing learning content and method, allowing learners to facilitate their decision-making, flexibility and adaptability for autonomous learning and enabling them to reflect on their learning experience.

2.4 Autonomous Learners

Different overlapping definitions have been proposed by researchers and theorists to describe the characteristics of autonomous learners, including taking responsibility (Holec, 1979; Benson, 2011), raising awareness (Horai and Wright, 2011), self-assessment (Murase, 2015; Little, 2009), collaboration (Blidi, 2017; Martin-Gutierrez et. al, 2014), thinking critically (Schmenk, 2005), confidence and resilience (Lamb, 2008). According to the literature, students' ability to take charge of their learning through identifying their needs and setting goals is mostly

considered as a first step to being autonomous, as only learners can tell how much they already know (Fenner and Newby, 2000) and build their knowledge according to their own reality, of which they have full control (Holec, 1988). Scharle and Szabo (2007:3) describe autonomous learners as responsible learners:

> who accept the idea that their own efforts are crucial to progress in learning and behave accordingly. So, when doing their homework or answering a question in class, they are not aspiring to please the teacher or to get a good mark. They are simply making an effort in order to learn something.

Nuan (2000) characterised autonomous learners as individuals who are active in their learning process, a process which starts with awareness of their own needs and making choices for those needs. Little (2001) agreed with Nuan on students' ability to make decisions for their learning, noting that autonomous learners can identify their own learning needs and make a conscious choice of learning strategies from a range of alternatives. Similarly, Dickinson (1994) stated that autonomous learners need to identify what has been taught and have the ability to formulate their learning objectives. Betts et al. (2016) agree with Dickinson's definition and describe autonomous learners as increasing their knowledge in a variety of areas and demonstrating the ability to select a topic that is meaningful to them. If learners are not aware of their aims and what they are trying to achieve, they might face difficulties in their learning and this might result in obstruction of their learning progress as they are not taking responsibility for their learning (Cotterall, 2000). Autonomous learners are thus those who are aware of their own learning goals and take responsibility for their learning by selecting these goals (Holec, 1988; Little, 2001). On the other hand, Blidi (2017:2) points out the difficulties in the practicability of learners making decisions about their learning as learning content (materials), stages (syllabus), methods and techniques (learning styles and strategies), process and environment (pace, time and place) objectives and evaluation procedures are normally determined by institutions, teachers and textbooks.

Another characteristic of the autonomous learner is the ability to do self-assessment, self-monitor and engage in self-reflection on their learning. Benson (2011) describes autonomous learning as the learner's ability to monitor their own learning and to assess themselves to gain a new and better perspective of their learning. Similarly, learners' self-assessment skills are highlighted by Cotterall (2000) as enabling learners to evaluate the quality of their learning through understanding their abilities. She added that learners need to be aware of their own needs, their existing knowledge and the ways in which they learn. This will help them to learn efficiently and make progress on what they can do with the skills they have acquired (ibid). With the same vision, Fenner (2000) emphasised the importance of self-assessment and self-reflection, considering these essential factors for autonomous learners. She argued that making learners aware of their own needs involves a continuous process of evaluation on the part of both teachers and students. Scharle and Szabo (2007) agree on autonomous learners' ability to evaluate and reflect upon their learning, stating that, 'when we encourage students to focus on the process of their learning (rather than the outcome) we help them consciously examine their own contribution to their learning' (p.7). Additionally, as highlighted in the literature, learner autonomy takes place as part of dialogue and interaction with other individuals (Dickinson, 1994; Little, 2017; Fenner, 2000; Tassinari, 2011), requiring collaboration with other students and teachers rather than isolation (Benson, 2016).

According to Betts et al. (2016), autonomous learners: (1) comprehend their own abilities in their relationship to the self and society to ensure that they are ready to meet the challenges of global societal needs and (2) develop a more positive self-concept and self-esteem so that they can face any opportunity with resilience and confidence in and beyond the classroom. They also stated that autonomous learners need to develop critical and creative thinking skills to integrate activities that facilitate responsibility for their own learning in and out of the school setting (ibid). Similarly, autonomous learners are defined by Hedge (2000) as individuals who are aware of their needs and their objectives, know how to use resources and materials independently and can build on them, learn through thinking critically and adjust their learning strategies when necessary to improve learning. On the

other hand, Betts et al. (2016) introduced another perspective relating to the characteristics of autonomous learners, addressing the unique needs of learners as consumed by social media, with immediate information and feedback (p.207). They stated that the definition of autonomous learners can be altered as the world is continually changing, leading to autonomous learners adapting their needs in their societies (ibid).

As outlined in these definitions, autonomous learning requires learners to be ready and willing to change their ways of learning and thinking when they experience challenges or face different learning situations. However, as Chan (2001) stated, it might be difficult for learners to become ready and willing to change their learning habits when most learners from collectivist cultures might already be culturally conditioned to accept their teachers as the only authority to make decisions for their learning. On the other hand, Cotterall (1999) highlighted that autonomous learners can overcome the obstacles put in their way in relation to their educational background and cultural norms. In other words, learners have the capacity to monitor, think critically, evaluate and reflect upon their own learning process (Benson, 2001), and these capacities can be learned afterwards and may grow with practice independently and co-operatively, or may be lost if they are not used (Little, 2001; Tassinari, 2010).

2.5 Teachers' Roles in the Implementation of Learner Autonomy

As already mentioned, although learner autonomy is generally defined as learners taking responsibility for their learning, many scholars and researchers highlight the role of teachers as important in the development of learner autonomy (Little, 2003; Benson and Voller, 1997; Benson, 2001; Camilleri, 2007; Borg, 2006; Dam, 2003). It is widely assumed that teachers' conceptions and beliefs play an important role in the promotion of learner autonomy (Benson, 2011; Camilleri, 2007) because their perceptions might have an impact on their performance (Borg,

2006). Teachers' understandings of learner autonomy can therefore provide opportunities to their students for autonomous learning (Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012).

As learner autonomy is based on the idea that teachers teach how to learn autonomously, according to the literature teachers first need to assist learners to develop an awareness of their language learning (Camilleri, 2007; Smith, 2008; Nuan, 2000). To do this, teachers need to make clear to their learners what is expected of them regarding curriculum aims and assessment demands (Dam, 2003). In addition, learners should be aware of the pedagogical goals and content of materials (Nuan, 2000). Borg (2006) similarly argued that teachers need to assist learners to develop an awareness of their language learning strategies as well as their beliefs about the language learning process.

Developing learners' awareness of the autonomous learning process also requires teachers to train learners to become more active and critical thinkers in order to use learning strategies for their own learning in and beyond the classroom setting (Dam, 2003). To achieve this goal, Benson and Voller (2014) argued that teachers role-play the facilitator, counsellor and resource, asserting that teaching practices that reflect transfer of control from teachers to learners are also based on a process of negotiation. Teachers thus encourage learners to be involved in the decision-making process through assisting them to set up reachable learning goals based on feedback from self-assessment and evaluation (Dam, 2003). As asserted by Little (2000), to develop learner autonomy and learning processes in various ways, teachers are required to act as facilitators, consultants, counsellors and observers. Other qualities of teachers required for the promotion of learner autonomy are described by Benson (2011) as supportiveness, empathy, patience and the ability to consider learners as partners in achieving learning goals prepared together. On the other hand, although creating a learning environment conducive to promoting learner autonomy is arguably the teacher's responsibility, Benson (2011) has asserted that teachers also need autonomy and freedom so that they

can develop autonomous learning in a teaching context. In summary, according to the literature, as part of the development of learner autonomy, teachers need to encourage and assist learners, identify their learning needs, set goals, select materials and evaluate their progress to address their needs.

2.6 Factors that have an Impact on the Development of Learner Autonomy

Although the definition of learner autonomy is mostly associated with learners' ability to take control of their learning, students' capability to direct their own learning may also depend on other influences, such as the curriculum, within which learners are able to select the content of lessons and materials according to their own needs and interests, as well as evaluating their own learning (Benson, 2013). The following sections consequently deal with the variables with potential to influence learner autonomy and their place in the development of learner autonomy.

As noted by Neupane (2010), the curriculum is concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose and experience, evaluation and the relationship between learners and teachers (p.118). Language lessons that aim to promote learner autonomy should incorporate means of transferring responsibility for aspects of the language learning process (setting goals, selecting learning strategies and evaluating progress) from teachers to learners (Cotterall, 2000). In order to implement autonomous learning, the English curriculum should, as Cotterall (2000) stated, reflect learners' goals and needs, replicate real-world communicative tasks and activities, incorporate discussions and promote students' reflection on and awareness of their own learning (pp.111–112). A curriculum based on mutual understanding between language learners and teachers therefore helps in promoting learner autonomy as learners are involved in the decision-making process for the content of their own learning (Benson, 2001; Nuan, 2000). To develop learner autonomy in language classrooms, the curriculum should also

be flexible, leading teachers and learners to exercise their individuality and making learning more meaningful for learners (Little, 2001). In addition, as Boggu and Sundarsingh (2019) highlighted, a curriculum involving experiential project-based learning helps to foster learner autonomy. In summary, an ideal curriculum should be flexible to involve learners in the decision-making process, helping them to feel ownership over their own learning (Benson, 2001; Chan, 2003).

On the other hand, considering the materials used in autonomous learning, Finch (2000) and Little and Dam (1998) have argued that learners should be encouraged to use as many materials as meet their needs and interests if the aim is to support the development of learner autonomy. In this case, learners might need more input than is provided by their teachers and coursebooks (Sinclair, 2009). Thus, learners should be provided with as wide a range of created and authentic materials as possible, including audio-visual materials, written texts and magazines that relate more closely to learners' needs, supporting a more creative approach to teaching and motivating learners (Richards, 2006).

In relation to assessment and autonomous learning, there are various answers to the question of whether assessment of learner autonomy is possible or not (Benson, 2010). Richards (2006) has suggested that a new form of assessment is needed to replace traditional multiple-choice questions and other items that do not help learners to develop higher order thinking skills, incorporating critical and creative thinking. Richards (2006:26) added that, "multiple forms of assessment (e.g. observation, interviews, journals, portfolios) can be used to build a comprehensive picture of what students can do in second language". The Council of Europe, for example, uses an English Language Portfolio (ELP), which reflects the Council of Europe's concern with the development of language learners' autonomy (Benson, 2011). According to the council, students' ability to accept their own responsibility is not the only development in their metacognitive mastery of their learning process and autonomy has another dimension – self-assessment – which aims to support the development of learner autonomy by

means of goal settings and self-assessment (ibid). As stated by Little (2009), through using an ELP, learners are able to record their progression in their target language and their experiences during the learning process.

Similarly, Tassinari (2011) highlighted self-assessment as an assessment tool that can be used to develop learners, defining this as a natural element of autonomous learning that gives learners a sense of consciousness of learning. Gardner and Miller (2011) also consider self-assessment as a self-monitoring device, providing learners with immediate feedback on their language proficiency and learning strategies. To make learners capable of self-assessment, teachers can take different approaches – for example, allowing students to work in groups, in which they give and receive criticism, letting them evaluate together some texts that they have written and the diaries that the students write about what they have done in class (Little, 2009; Tassinari, 2012; Murase, 2015).

2.7 Recent Educational Policies in Turkish EFL Classrooms at High School Level

For historic, economic and political reasons, the penetration of English and its usage in daily life is increasing, making it possible to encounter English in Turkey, in the same way as it is found globally in many areas, such as academia, entertainment, commerce, technology, tourism, science, media, workplaces and politics (Bayyurt, 2013; Oral, 2010). Turkey is among a number of countries looking to improve its level of English to communicate and integrate with other countries. To achieve this, English has been introduced as a compulsory lesson in Turkish schools from grade 2 since 2014 and is used as a medium of instruction in many universities (Kirkgoz et al., 2016). Discussing the function of English in Turkish national education, Dogancay-Aktuna (2005) noted its status as "the most studied foreign language and the most popular medium of education after Turkish" (p.37). Additionally, English instruction starts at different levels in the Turkish educational system, with new legislation passed by the Grand National Assembly in 2012 (Kirkgoz et al., 2016).

Instruction in English in Turkish national education has undergone various changes over the last decade, with new educational laws passed in 2006 and 2012 (Aydinli and Ortactepe, 2018). Learner autonomy is a policy that is encouraged and promoted by the Turkish government, while being relatively new in foreign language education in the country (ibid). With the recent Turkish educational policy introduced in 2012, secondary education consists of four years of compulsory education, starting with 9th grade and finishing with 12th grade (MoNE, 2014). In 9th grade, English is taught for six hours a week. At this level, it is aimed to revise most of the content learnt up to 8th grade in the English programme. In the 10th, 11th and 12th grades, the curriculum is designed based on four English lesson hours in a week. Students in these grades are taught four language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) along with functions of the language such as grammar and vocabulary (MoNE, 2014). As the new curriculum is adapted to meet the specific needs of learners, the order of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels are intended to be followed. Consequently, learners are expected to start high school English classes at CEFR A1 level, and to graduate with a minimum of CEFR B2+ level in English (MoNW, 2014).

According to the Turkish Ministry of National Education (2013), the new curricular model uses language learning as communication to meet the expectations and diverse needs of students and to reveal their voices and opinions. By using a communicative approach and constructive classroom environment, the aim is to engage learners in activities in which actual communication between students and their teacher is required (MoNE, 2013). For this reason, classroom materials and teaching tools are chosen from authentic materials by any means necessary to make a connection between daily life and language learning (ibid). Using classroom materials from authentic sources is also intended to make learning English engaging and interesting and is presented as essential for students' motivation and success (MoNE, 2013). To achieve these goals, the CEFR's three descriptors, *learner autonomy*, *self-assessment* and *appreciation of cultural diversity*, have been considered (MoNE, 2013).

Additionally, as a suggestion of the CEFR and as another element of the new curriculum, self-assessment is highlighted as encouraging learners to monitor their own progression (MoNE, 2014). Learners are prompted to answer questions such as 'What did I learn?', 'How much do I think I learned?' and 'What do I think I can do in real life, based on what I learned in class?' (MoNE, 2013). In addition, the ELP, which lets students keep a dossier of their language learning development, is also recommended by the CEFR to help learners to track their progress independently (ibid). Moreover, compared with previous curricula in state high schools, the new 9th to 12th grade English curriculum is intended to foster communicative skills through encouraging learner autonomy and collaboration, authentic assessment techniques and self-assessment, the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and blended learning (MoNE, 2014).

On the other hand, it is useful to bear in mind that instruction of English in public educational institutions is represented and structured differently in terms of lesson hours, characteristics of teachers, assessments, activities and content used during the lesson when compared with private educational institutions (Dag, 2015; Tuncer et al., 2005). The curriculum in private schools in Turkey is subject to the same requirements as in public schools (Tunc, 2006, as cited in Dag, 2015). However, the quality and quantity of English instruction in private schools can outweigh and be more distinctive than in state high schools (Dag, 2015). Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005) draw attention to the diversities of Turkish high school learners' levels of academic performance in English.

For example, compared with public/state schools, instruction of English in the private schools might be different because of, for example, support of the management, facilities and technology provided for students and teachers, physical equipment available in private schools, following a flexible curriculum, having fewer students than government schools and the readiness of the students (Dag, 2015). Additionally, in private schools, students start to learn English as early as kindergarten level. In private primary schools, English is taught for three to four

periods a week as an extracurricular activity from 1st grade to familiarise young learners with the English sound system (Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe, 2005:256). Students in private schools therefore receive more English instruction than students in public schools. In addition, in private schools, learners receive instruction from both local and native-speaking English teachers, while, in public schools, students receive instruction from local teachers only (Dag, 2015). As well as the diversity in the numbers of hours of English instruction, classroom size, curriculum models and the materials and methods used by teachers are also considered by Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005:256) when comparing private and public schools. According to Dogancay-Aktuna and Kiziltepe (2005:257), 'lack of standardization of instruction' and 'varying competitiveness' in private schools causes notable diversity in Turkish learners' English proficiency levels. Consequently, English instruction in Turkish secondary education might show diversities in different types of high school.

2.7.1 Implications of Learner Autonomy as Challenges in the Turkish Context

Education has been recognised by scholars and experts as one of the indicators of a country's development, also leading to interest in the international exchange of ideas and the demands of educational policy borrowing (Fan, 2007). To meet the educational demands of recent decades and meet language learners' needs, Turkey has been transforming its educational system by implementing new educational policies in which learner-centred education, learner autonomy and critical thinking are highlighted (Ozen et al., 2013). However, putting a new educational curriculum into practice might not be concluded as effectually as intended by policy-makers, administrators, educators and other specialists (Verger et al., 2018; Altinyelken, 2018). Similarly, as highlighted by Schweisfurth (2011), intentions to promote new educational policies (such as developing learner autonomy in the Turkish context) might not always match what happens on the ground and the benefits of the new policy might not be apparent. In addition, meeting the challenges of diverse teaching contexts, in which language learners

and teachers share different needs and expectations, can be intimidating when putting learner autonomy into practice (Jimenez Raya and Sercu, 2007).

As has been reported in recent research (Kara et al., 2017; Han et al., 2019; Tokoz-Goztepe, 2014), there is a broadly accepted belief that students are mostly still having difficulties in learning English in terms of using it in practice, despite the recent reforms and implementations of new policies in the Turkish educational system. In addition, recent studies (EUROSTAT, 2014; EF EPI, 2014) conducted related to learners' English proficiency levels have revealed that Turkish learners' performance in English has still not reached the requested level when compared with other countries in Europe. On the other hand, Turkish EFL learners reveal their dissatisfaction with the learning process and courses that heavily depend on grammar-centred language teaching and theory-based approaches (Solak and Bayar, 2015). They are offered materials that do not relate to students' interests or needs and do activities that do not take into consideration individual differences and learners' characteristics (ibid). As well as teachers and learners in the public administration context, shortages of inspectors, incapable educational administrators mostly concerned with investigation and inspection rather than guidance and improvement, lack of openness and transparency (Ozdemir et al., 2010) and the amount of money spent on education (Koru and Akesson, 2011) are noted as other factors with an impact on English language education in Turkey.

Turkish EFL learners, teachers and other stakeholders in society, including school principals, parents, administrators, university tutors and policy-makers, express their discontent with English learning and teaching in today's circumstances in the Turkish classroom environment (Ozen et al., 2013). From teachers' perspectives, some of the most salient reasons for their discontent include lack of equipment and support, crowded classrooms, lack of implementation in decision-making (Incecay, 2012), quality of materials, students' lack of motivation (Tilfalioglu and Ozturk, 2007), the standardised EFL curriculum (Kirkgoz et. al, 2006), classroom environments and lack of in-service training for teachers (Demirpolat, 2015). From a teacher perspective, for instance, Turkish EFL teachers questioned the

achievability of the new policies, citing the challenges caused by lack of necessary equipment, lack of support from policy-makers, administrators and colleagues (Incecay and Incecay, 2009), failure to implement decision-making, continuous changes to curricula, the existing examination system, inconsistent practices (Samancioglu et al., 2015) and overloaded weekly timetables because of instructor shortages (Tilfarlioglu and Ozturk, 2007). The results of the current study could therefore enable understanding of teachers' and students' perceptions and practices in learner autonomy, comparing its application in state and private schools. In other words, this study has potential to help explore the influence of factors such as learners, teachers and school types (institutional factors) on developing learner autonomy in the Turkish context.

2.8 Learner Autonomy and Culture

The influence of culture on thought, behaviour and education has been emphasised by many scholars (Hofstede, 2011; Chirkov, 2009; Brislin, 1993; Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005). The influence of socio-cultural factors on learner autonomy and language learning has also been put forward in publications (Palfreyman, 2003; Littlewood, 1999; Oxford, 2003). However, the cultural appropriateness of the idea of learner autonomy is open to discussion and is a controversial issue in the literature. Doubts have been raised about the validity of learner autonomy in some cultural contexts (Oxford, 2003).

As scholars have emphasised the strong connection between learner autonomy and culture (Benson, 2001; Oxford, 2003; Palfreyman, 2003), some aspects of this need to be outlined regarding the adaptation of learner autonomy as a convenient educational target across cultures. For example, although autonomy in language learning has sometimes been put forward as practical in countries where Western culture dominates (Pennycook, 1997; Jones, 1995; Schmenk, 2005), others (Littlewood, 1999; Pierson, 1996; Benson, 2010; Aoki and Smith, 1999) claim that learner autonomy can be presented in every culture as long as the characteristics

and needs of learners have been considered in specific contexts. In addition, Smith, Kuchah and Lamb (2018) remarked that the feasibility of learner autonomy in settings with under-resourced contexts should not be under-estimated although the concept is mostly associated with self-access and technology. According to Aoki and Smith (1999), misconceptions exist regarding the influence of culture on the promotion of learner autonomy. They stated that the practicability of the concept is not necessarily unfavourable in cultural contexts that do not entail individualism. Further, the validity of learner autonomy does not depend solely on cultural considerations, but on other variables, such as psychological and political variables (ibid).

In relation to the applicability of learner autonomy in different cultural contexts, Smith (2003) stated that learner autonomy can take different shapes in different cultural and historical contexts, suggesting that learner autonomy might require different forms of pedagogy – 'weak' and 'strong' versions of pedagogy for autonomy. In weak versions of pedagogy for autonomy, Smith (2003:131) describes instruction as tending to be based on a deficit model of students' present capacities, while autonomy is seen as a deferred goal and a product of instruction rather than something that students are currently ready to exercise directly. In weak versions of pedagogy, learning arrangements also tend to be relevant to students' own needs. However, they also tend to be determined by the teacher, syllabus and/or institution rather than negotiated with learners (Smith, 2003). In Smith's view, 'weak' approaches to autonomous learning should be avoided. He advocates 'strong' versions for autonomy, based on the assumption that students are, to a greater or lesser extent, already autonomous and capable of exercising this capacity (Smith, 2003:132). Smith (2003) also stated that the 'strong' approach is a conscious attempt on the part of the teacher to shift the initiative in classroom-based decision-making to learners (p.18).

2.8.1 Learner Autonomy in Turkish EFL Classrooms

In order to improve the level of autonomy of more student-centred approaches and to enhance Turkish learners' English language proficiency levels, autonomous learning and learner-centred approaches have been implemented in the English language curriculum by the Ministry of National Education (MONE, 2012). However, the complexities of Turkey's social culture and the impacts of this on the field of education need to be taken into account in order to understand learner autonomy in the Turkish context (Kartal and Ballcikanli, 2019). According to Littlewood (2001:4–6), various perspectives exist on the influences of different cultures on learners' thinking and behaviour. He outlines three perspectives which are believed to have important effects on learners when learning English in collectivist-oriented societies: 'collectivism and individualism', 'motivational orientation' and 'attitudes to authority'. Furthermore, Littlewood (1999) argues that language classrooms in these societies can provide an environment that develops learners' capacity for autonomy. However, he notes the importance of matching the context in which learning takes place with learners' past experiences, and with cultural and educational traditions.

Regarding the impact of collectivism and individualism on educational settings, Cotterall (1998) emphasises that introducing learner autonomy in collectivist cultures might lead to resistance to new educational concepts and roles because of cultural identity, which consists of an individual's beliefs and values relating to education. In addition, Cotterall (1998) explains the challenges to learning situations in collectivist societies, in which learners might not fully comprehend learning-to-learn tactics (helping students learn how to learn) or might be unwilling to participate in discussions of the communication process (answering open questions or speaking up in group discussions). Teachers might also be disheartened about students' failure or reluctance to express their personal views, participate in group discussions and respond to open questions (ibid).

Turkey is identified as a country that mainly shares collectivist features (Hofstede, 2016) but at the same time is moving from a collectivist to an individualistic society as a consequence of cultural changes (Aygun and Imamoglu, 2002). Regarding classroom environments, most Turkish classrooms are in-group collectivist environments (Apaydin, 2008), which normally operate within the norms of Turkish culture. In other words, this means that components such as the aims of education, classroom participation, group harmony, losing face and family involvement might have an impact on students' learning behaviours (ibid). For example, Cagiltay and Bichelmeyer (2000) argue that variables such as unwritten social rules and values influence Turkish students' relationships in the classroom environment. They also state that children are traditionally accepted as well behaved if they are quiet. Teachers therefore expect a quiet student in the classroom environment to be a well-behaved student (ibid). It is thus possible to encounter reluctance to speak up among Turkish students, potentially affecting their participation in and contributions to activities such as group discussions (Tatar, 2005). According to Tatar (2005:288), various dimensions of silence are experienced by Turkish EFL learners as follows: 'a face-saving strategy', 'a means of participation', 'a reaction to others' contributions', 'a sign of respect for authority and concern for others' and ' the product of feelings of inarticulacy'.

As well as Turkish learners' disinclination to express their views in the classroom environment, other cultural aspects with potential to affect their roles in the classroom include family bonds and family involvement (Cagiltay and Bichelmeyer, 2000). In a study conducted by Cagiltay and Bichelmeyer (2000), Turkish students indicated that they have close relationships with their families compared with other students from individualistic societies. This means that most Turkish families offer both financial and emotional support. Emotional, and particularly financial, support from families might lead to impact on learners' freedom of direction in their learning and choices to maintain harmony and avoid conflict with families (Hofstede, 2011). Furthermore, Turkish learners prefer to be a part of a classroom or group rather than working as individuals (Cagiltay and Bichelmeyer, 2000). Although being group members is important for Turkish learners, they tend to work individually. For this reason, collaboration in the classroom environment might be

limited to sharing notes and resources or working as a whole class with competitive team efforts because of variables such as widespread use of ‘rote learning’ and ‘memorisation-based competition’ (Cagiltay and Bichelmeyer, 2000:11).

In Turkey, classrooms are defined as places where students are generally accustomed to or exposed to teacher-centred learning, in which the teacher ‘as the authoritative source of expert knowledge passes on a fixed body of information to be practised alone and reproduced by students on-demand’ (Girgin and Stevens, 2005:95). This can help us to understand the nature of the student–teacher relationship and its impact on learner autonomy in the Turkish school setting. In relation to the recent educational reforms on the part of the Turkish Ministry of Education, sharing the teacher’s responsibility in the process of learning, having a voice in choosing lesson content, responsibility in monitoring students’ own progress and continuing learning beyond the classroom environment (such as virtually) are targeted for development in Turkish EFL classrooms to enhance learner autonomy and teacher–student interactions (MoNE, 2012). However, it has been identified that Turkish EFL learners display mainly passive behaviours while interacting with their teachers and tend to avoid active behaviours during interactions because of teachers’ roles as controllers and assessors (Aydin, 2014).

Turkish teachers are mostly expected to lead and educate learners in the classroom setting, while learners are expected to respect the social distance in their relationships with their teachers and generally not to question the information provided by teachers (Cagiltay and Bichelmeyer, 2000). Values and norms of society and students’ perceptions of teacher–student relationships can have an influence on student–teacher interactions (ibid). For instance, Turkish teachers are generally expected to be role models for their students and are required to enforce on students a more strictly defined set of behavioural norms (Cetin et al., 2014). Thus, in general, Turkish teachers are expected to direct students’ activities, to be dominant and maintain a high level of control on their behaviours in the classroom (ibid). In contrast to the expectations of society,

Turkish learners expect their teachers to display more closeness and co-operation than influence and control (Cetin et al., 2014).

Despite facing the challenges outlined, there are also successful outcomes in various cases when it comes to the extent to which learner autonomy can be fostered practically and productively. For example, using portfolios, projects, oral book reports and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are described as helpful factors when the aim is to develop learner autonomy in the Turkish context. According to Yildirim's research (2013), portfolios are seen as a tool to foster learner autonomy on the part of Turkish EFL learners, helping learners to follow and monitor themselves, to learn from others (teachers and peers) and to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Yildirim's research also reveals that the use of portfolios helped students in becoming autonomous in their personal development and the participants recorded positive changes concerning some aspects of autonomy, including awareness of their learning processes and taking responsibility.

Another study conducted by Yagcioglu (2015) reveals that using ICT (e.g. using the internet and Google) helps to increase learners' responsibilities as learners become more motivated and active participants. A case study, conducted by Mede and Incecay (2013) to foster learner autonomy, demonstrates that oral book reports have a positive effect on fostering Turkish EFL learners' autonomy. According to teachers' and students' responses, the research suggested that oral book reports help to raise awareness, enable taking responsibility for learning, improvement of reading and speaking skills and enhancement of motivation in language learning. In addition, Guven's (2014) case study research indicates that project-based learning (PBL) might help Turkish EFL learners to advance their autonomous learning skills. According to Guven (2014), the positive attitude exhibited by the students towards collaborative learning suggests that PBL might bring innovation to the monotonous teacher-led language education that characterises English language education in Turkey.

2.9 Previous Studies of Promotion of Learner Autonomy in an EFL Context

Proponents of learner autonomy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms have conducted a considerable number of studies in different socio-cultural contexts. In this section, I will review studies focusing on perceptions of learner autonomy in EFL teaching and learning, and how these have influenced teachers' teaching and students' learning. As it is essential to understand the perceptions of both teachers and learners in promoting learner autonomy, I will focus in this section on studies that attempt to explore both teachers' and learners' perceptions and practices of learner autonomy. The chosen studies in this section represent a wide range of contexts including Oman, Malaysia, Turkey, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Thailand. However, these contexts are not without limitations. This section is divided into three sub-sections: the first section focuses on literature that attempts to explore EFL teachers' perceptions and practices in relation to learner autonomy, the second reviews studies on learners' perceptions and practices and the third section discusses teachers' and students' perceptions and practices in the area of learner autonomy.

2.9.1 Studies of Teachers' Perceptions or Practices in relation to Learner Autonomy

As argued by Borg and Al Busaidi (2012), not enough attention has been granted to teachers' perspectives of learner autonomy. However, teachers play a significant role in developing learner autonomy and their practices in the promotion of it can be influenced according to their beliefs on autonomous learning (Borg and Busaidi, 2012). For this reason, it is important to explore teachers' perspectives on learner autonomy, as it shapes their practices (Borg and Al Busaidi, 2012). This section will review some studies of EFL teachers' perceptions and how their beliefs influence their teaching practices.

Borg and Busaidi (2012) completed a study with the participation of 61 English language tutors in a university language centre in Oman. They believe that

exploring teachers' perspectives concerning autonomous learning is a crucial factor in designing professional development activities aiming to develop learner autonomy. To collect data, they used questionnaires and interviews. They found that the participants had favourable views of learner autonomy. However, the tutors also stated that a fixed curriculum and students' lack of understanding of and enthusiasm for taking responsibility of their own learning prevented them from practising learner autonomy in their classrooms.

Similarly, Yunus and Arshad (2015) conducted a study with 35 in-service English teachers working in Malaysian public secondary schools by distributing questionnaires. The objective of their study was to explore teachers' perceptions of autonomous language learning and their practices in learner autonomy in their classrooms. In parallel to the findings of Borg and Busaidi (2012), their data also revealed that participants are very positive towards the implementation of learner autonomy, despite discouraging situations and barriers such as teaching in multi-cultural classrooms where students share different educational backgrounds and perceptions in relation to learner autonomy.

Urun et al. (2014), on the other hand, carried out a study with 118 EFL teachers at high school level in Turkey, collecting data from a questionnaire, which was a structured quantitative and qualitative measure. The objective of their study was to identify Turkish EFL high school teachers' practices to foster learner autonomy in their classrooms in relation to the four categories of curriculum implementation: determining objectives and content, planning for the instructional process and evaluation. In addition, they set out to examine teachers' opinions of their strengths and needs, and their suggestions to stakeholders from the perspectives of challenges encountered regarding objectives, activities, materials and evaluation in developing an autonomous learning environment. The results of their study revealed that teachers are highly motivated to foster learner autonomy through some practices, such as activity-based, material-based, student-centred and objective-based practices. According to data from this study, teachers remarked that they frequently offer variety in classroom activities by means of

considering the different learning styles of their students, making use of activities related to their daily lives, using activities that contribute to their social progress and giving them various responsibilities (such as board arrangement, today's proverb, important events and phonetics) in and beyond the classroom. Moreover, the results of this study indicated that teachers saw their eagerness and positive attitude towards learner autonomy as a strength, enabling them to foster the concept in their classrooms. They also revealed negative influences related to learners themselves and the contexts in which they worked, noting, for example, lack of technological devices and authentic materials. Finally, the findings of their study showed that participants shared solutions such as improving ICT in English classrooms, improving coursebooks and enhancing students' motivation for learning English to overcome those challenges.

2.9.2 Studies of Students' Perceptions and Practices in relation to Learner Autonomy

Students from different educational backgrounds sometimes have different perceptions of responsibility and differences in how they perceive learner autonomy and autonomous learning. In the second section, I will focus on studies that attempt to identify and explore students' perceptions and practices in learner autonomy.

Working with 20 English language students at university level in Hong Kong, Chan (2001) conducted a study to explore learners' perceptions of learner autonomy. To collect data, she administered a questionnaire and completed interviews exploring learners' attitudes to and expectations of language learning, teacher and learner roles, learning preferences and perceptions of learner autonomy. The results of her study showed that students gained an initial awareness of the different roles of the teachers and themselves, the existence of various learning preferences and the choices to be made between different learning practices. The data also revealed that students demonstrated a notable ability to be autonomous learners – for example, having clear learning goals and being aware of their preferred learning

styles, preferences and expectations. On the other hand, the results revealed that students still expressed heavy dependence on their teachers to guide them towards such autonomous learning.

Focusing on students' perceptions of teacher and learner responsibilities, students' opinions of their own abilities to practise learner autonomy, and exploring the extent to which learner autonomy can work in Turkish EFL classrooms, Yildirim (2008) conducted a study with 103 university-level Turkish EFL learners. Yildirim's study revealed a significant relationship between students' perceptions of their own and their teachers' responsibilities. The study showed that students in most cases expressed willingness to share responsibility with their teachers. In addition, the results indicated that students perceived themselves as capable of acting independently. According to the students' responses, the data also indicated signs of autonomous behaviours among most students in their engagement in out-of-class activities, such as deciding what to learn outside class.

Another important study to determine Turkish student teachers' attitudes and the Turkish education system's approach towards learner autonomy was conducted by Kirtik (2017). In this study, 50 students from ELT departments in three different universities participated, and their perceptions of whether the Turkish education system is suitable for developing learner autonomy were investigated using questionnaires. The results indicated that the Turkish education system was not suitable for autonomous learning because the school curriculum and course materials ignore learner differences, and as a result of teacher-dominant approaches, learning activities managed only by teachers and classroom settings set up for teacher dominance.

2.9.3 Studies of Teachers' and Students' Perceptions and Practices in relation to Learner Autonomy

Many researchers have examined autonomous learning and teaching in the field internationally. As it is essential to understand the perceptions of both teachers and learners in promoting learner autonomy, some researchers have investigated both teachers' and students' perspectives and their readiness for the concept. Thus, this section aims to review some studies in which the participants were both teachers and learners.

Ramadhiyah and Lengkanawati (2019) conducted a qualitative study using classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires with an EFL teacher and 36 students from 12 grades of one senior high school in Indonesia. The aim of this study was to explore in depth teachers' and students' perceptions of learner autonomy and the teacher's efforts in promoting learner autonomy. The findings of the study revealed that the teacher understood the basic features of learner autonomy as learners' independent learning activity beyond the classroom. The study also noted that the teacher perceived learner autonomy positively and felt confident in letting learners make decisions on their own learning, including deciding learning goals, materials and activities. On the other hand, the teacher was shown as unsure about the feasibility of learner autonomy and with less confidence about giving students the opportunity to take control of their learning. The findings of the study indicate a lack of consistency between the teacher's beliefs and practices. The study also revealed that students' perspectives on learner autonomy do not indicate the students to be autonomous learners as they are still accustomed to a teacher-centred learning environment.

Similarly, in a study with 361 Indonesian EFL students and 30 teachers at high school level, Cirocki et al. (2019) aimed to investigate how Indonesian learners conceptualise the construct of learner autonomy to ascertain how motivated they were to learn English and to estimate their readiness for autonomous learning. The study employed a mixed-method approach to data collection, using a questionnaire

and a set of focus group interviews with students and teachers from state and private secondary schools. They found that the majority of learners were not familiar with the concept of learner autonomy, and also had fairly low motivation to learn English. They were generally not ready to act as autonomous learners because of a lack of typical skills and competences. Moreover, Tayjasanant and Suraratdecha (2016) conducted a qualitative study (using interviews and focus groups) with 116 lower secondary school students and 76 English language teachers in Bangkok, Thailand. The aim of their study was to examine Thai teachers' and learners' beliefs about autonomous learning in the Thai culture of learning to determine readiness for autonomous learning. The findings of their study revealed that both teachers and students hold positive beliefs about autonomous learning.

As the studies briefly mentioned in these sections indicate, teachers' and students' roles are important in the promotion of learner autonomy because their awareness and practices are crucial to supporting the development of individuality and learning choices related to learner autonomy. However, the feasibility of learner autonomy remains a controversial issue in supporting change in the educational system from teacher-centred learning towards autonomous learning. According to Chan (2001), the appropriateness of learner autonomy and its practicability should be taken into consideration before applying it as different cultural contexts might require different practices and consequently produce different outcomes. This research attempts to fill the gap in the literature by exploring teachers' interpretations of, willingness to use and practices in learner autonomy as well as learners' perceptions of and practices in learner autonomy. Moreover, this research aims to compare the application of learner autonomy in private and state high schools, potentially helping to reveal some important insights into the influence of institutional and socio-economic factors and the school environment in promoting learner autonomy. In addition, most studies of learner autonomy in the Turkish context have limitations of a self-reported nature (mostly using interviews and/or focus groups). This research thus aims to go beyond this by adding classroom observations.

CHAPTER 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

A research paradigm is defined by Patton (2015) as a world view that reflects thinking about the real world and makes sense of its complexities. In other words, a researcher's intention, motivation and expectations are determined by the choice of research paradigm, also incorporating the chosen research methodology and methods (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). For this reason, this chapter addresses the research objectives, design and different stages. A qualitative research approach with an interpretivist/constructivist paradigm is adopted. The reasons for this choice of qualitative research approach are given, along with an overview of the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods of the thesis. Details of the data collection instruments used, participant selection and data analysis are then described. Finally, ethical considerations and related issues are discussed.

3.2 Research Objectives and Questions

The issue under investigation derives from the new EFL curriculum, introduced in 2006 and 2012, which aims to promote learner autonomy in the Turkish education system from primary to higher education levels. Discussion of the applicability of learner autonomy in the Turkish context incorporates EFL teachers' and students' perceptions. Their readiness to use these new concepts and practise their activities needs to be investigated to explore the compatibility of the theoretical and practical implications of these themes. In this research, the data therefore needs to be rich and deep to accommodate the objectives of the research. Such richness of information is necessary to identify Turkish EFL teachers' current assumptions and practices relating to learner autonomy, reflecting the applicability of learner autonomy in the Turkish context. The size of the sample is therefore narrow to explore learner autonomy in depth and elicit participants'

subjective views, beliefs and practices. Interviews, focus groups and classroom observations will provide rich data. In order to accommodate this aim, a qualitative research design will be applied in this study and the following objectives adopted:

1. To explore in depth Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs, readiness and classroom practices relating to learner autonomy.
2. To gain greater insight into Turkish EFL learners' beliefs, readiness and out-of-classroom activities relating to learner autonomy.
3. To detect whether there are differences or similarities in teachers' and students' beliefs and actual practices in terms of issues relating to autonomous learning.
4. To understand the place of learner autonomy and discuss emergent issues related to this concept in Turkish EFL classrooms at high school level, both in private and state schools.

My research questions reflect my research objectives. Thus, the present study aims to respond to the following questions:

1. How is learner autonomy perceived by Turkish EFL teachers at secondary level, both in private and state schools?
2. How is learner autonomy encouraged in the practices of Turkish EFL teachers in secondary schools? What are the challenges for teachers in the promotion of learner autonomy?
3. How is learner autonomy defined and interpreted by Turkish EFL students at secondary level, both in private and state schools?
4. How is learner autonomy practised by Turkish EFL students at secondary level, both in private and state schools?

3.3 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Approach

To describe why a qualitative research design has been chosen in this research study, it is useful to first briefly address quantitative and qualitative research strategies by setting out the distinctions of their paradigm. Various scholars have identified the distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research strategies (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015; Mason, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). One of the key distinctions is regarded as their paradigm, consisting of epistemological, ontological and methodological underpinnings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Corbetta, 2003; Patton, 2015).

Maxwell (2013) argued that, when the researcher chooses between qualitative and quantitative research methods, research questions and goals should be taken into account as these two research designs "are not simply different ways of doing the same thing" (p.29). Research questions, which represent what a researcher wants to understand by conducting a study, are also defined by Maxwell (2013) as the most important component of the research design, influencing other parts of the research. Similarly, Waring (2013:17) emphasised that "a person's conception of the world, its nature and their position in it" can be represented through researchers' paradigm choices. For instance, the aim of quantitative research is assumed as to test pre-determined hypotheses and produce generalisable results through answering *'what?'* questions, whereas qualitative research aims to provide illumination and understanding of complex issues through answering humanistic *'why?'* and *'how?'* questions (Marshall, 1996:522). Quantitative research design concerns can therefore be interpreted as quantity, amount, intensity and frequency, enabling researchers to measure and analyse the causal relationship between variables (Cohen et al., 2011). On the contrary, qualitative research design tries to explore 'individuals and their interpretations of the world them' (Cohen et al., 2011:18). The main purpose of qualitative research is described by Litchman (2013:17) as follows:

> In general, the main purpose of qualitative research is to provide an in-depth description and understanding of the human experience. It is about humans. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe, understand, and interpret human phenomena (lived experiences of humans), human interaction (how humans interact with each other, especially in terms of their culture), or human discourse (humans communicating with each other or communicating the ideas).

To conduct a qualitative research study, researchers aim to understand individual cases and situations, which can be subjective and socially constructed, rather than aiming to find general and objective explanations, as in a quantitative research design (Plomp, 2013). The criteria for qualitative research design are explained by Lichtman (2013) as "description, understanding, and interpretation and not examinations of cause and effects" (20). Patton (2015:91) defined the means of searching for knowledge in qualitative research as a naturalistic inquiry involving entering real-world settings to observe, interact and understand what emerges. Meanwhile, quantitative research, which takes a positivist approach and uses hypothetical-deductive inquiry, is described as specifying independent and dependent variables to test causal hypotheses (Patton, 2015:91). Moreover, there is a consensus that qualitative research is inductive and flexible rather than deductive and fixed, following strict sequences during the research process (Marshall, 1996; Maxwell, 2013). According to Lichtman (2013), qualitative research employs *inductive thinking* as it does not aim to test any hypotheses and moves from concrete to abstract, such that "researchers begin with data and use the data to gain an understanding of phenomena and interaction" (p.19). Marshall (1996) suggested that well-designed qualitative research studies require a flexible research design that includes an iterative and cyclical approach to sampling, data collection, analysis and interpretation, in contrast with quantitative research.

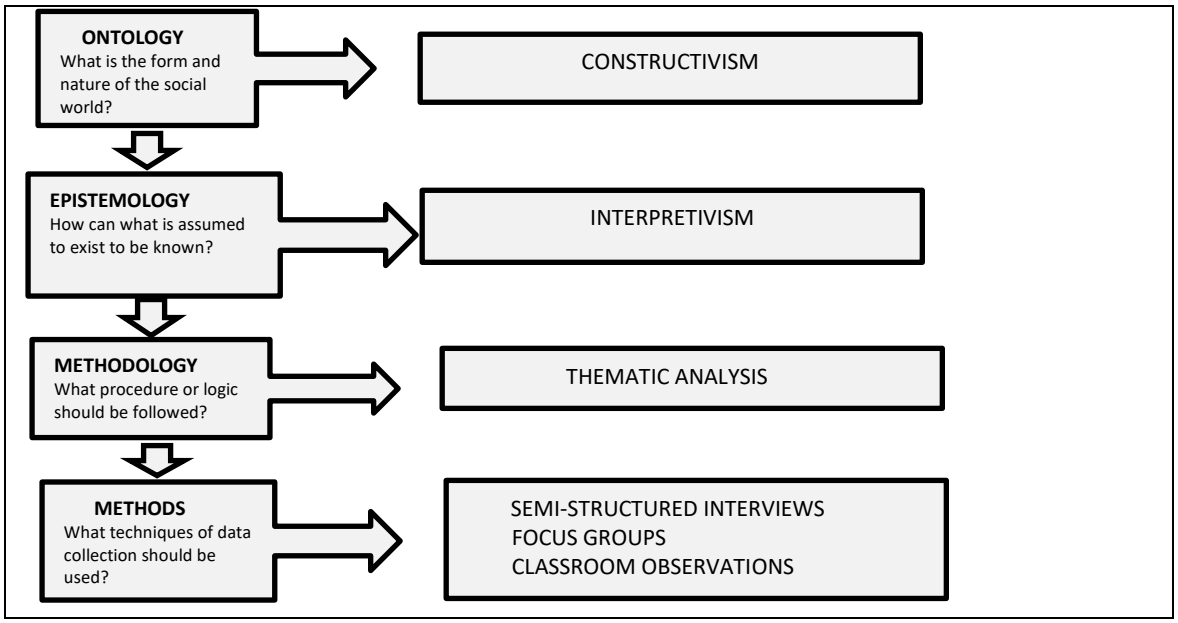
On the other hand, in quantitative research the relationship between theory and research is structured, deductive reasoning (theory-preceded observation) is applied and the research design is structured and closed (Corbetta, 2003). In qualitative research, the relationship between theory and research is open and interactive, with induction applied (theory emerges from observation), and an unstructured and open research design (Corbetta, 2003) with small samples, useful

for thick cultural descriptions (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). In addition, Corbetta (2003) stated that the nature of data in qualitative research is rich and deep and presented from a narrative perspective (extracts from interviews and texts), with specificity in the scope of results. Meanwhile, to address quantitative research objectives, data is obtained from a large sample that provides a census view (Mason, 2006), and the nature of data is hard and standardised, set out in tables and correlations, and applying generalisability in the results (Corbetta, 2003). In conclusion, a number of key elements are outlined to distinguish the qualitative research approach for this research study. Qualitative research provides a deeper understanding of the social world, using interactive data collection methods from a small-scale sample, and allowing new issues and concepts to be explored.

3.4 Theoretical Perspective

Given these outlined differences, a qualitative approach will be used to address the objectives of this research study. In this part, I will describe more comprehensive factors influencing the choice of a qualitative research paradigm for this study. I will therefore first mention briefly my theoretical perspective as my epistemological and ontological assumptions will help to explain and justify my decisions in the research design process and inform my chosen research methodology and methods. Buckley and Waring (2013) argued that the researcher's decision in selecting a research paradigm is influenced by their decisions on these four main components, as they are related to each other. The perceptions and practices of Turkish EFL teachers and students in public and private schools will be examined by following a research string from a constructivist/interpretivist stance (see Figure 1). My choice and justification for selecting this approach will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Figure. 1 Ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods of this thesis



Adapted from Buckley and Waring (2013).

3.4.1 Research Ontology

As a system of belief, ontology reflects a researcher's interpretation about his/her understanding of the world and what constitutes a fact (Buckley and Waring, 2013). In the process of exploring knowledge and realities, my ontological position for this research study is grounded on constructivism, which perceives social phenomena and the nature of knowledge as multiple rather than absolute or ultimate as their meanings are described as subjective, reflecting different ways of interpreting knowledge and reality (Buckley and Waring, 2013). This means that taking a constructivist stance makes me aware of the existence of other beliefs and perceptions that need to be understood and explored. I therefore expect to find multiple realities that are constructed by participants' experiences and interactions rather than a singular objective reality with fixed meanings.

3.4.2 Research Epistemology

Turning to my epistemological position, which reflects my chosen method of acquiring knowledge, I adopt an interpretive stance, explaining all social knowledge as subjective and socially constructed and consistent with the nature of the research and its objectives (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011). An interpretivist stance is defined by Holstein and Gubrium (2011:342) as follows:

> The idea of interpretive practice turns us to both the hows and the whats of social reality; its empirical purview relates both how people methodologically construct their experiences and their worlds and the contextual configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape reality-constituting activity.

As social reality is seen as constructed, Holstein and Gubrium (2011) stated that its interpretation can also be undertaken through the constructive process. At this point, studies should not be seen as isolated from the issues being investigated. As an interpretive researcher, I aim to understand the meanings of social situations from the point of view of those who live such situations. Adopting a positivist epistemological stance might therefore be inappropriate for this study as this research will aim to explain and interpret individual social contexts as unique (Buckley and Waring, 2013). For this reason, I appreciate the differences between human experiences and interactions while trying to explore and understand participants' perceptions, interpretations and behaviours. Thus, by adopting an interpretive stance, I entered the social world of Turkish EFL teachers and learners and collected in-depth information regarding learner autonomy. From the data I collected, I made interpretations to serve the overall purpose of this research, which was intended to explore these concepts in the Turkish context.

3.4.3 Research Methodology

In addition to relating to my ontological and epistemological assumptions, my choice of research methodology reflects descriptions of the application of specific

procedures that identify and analyse information to understand research problems. The present study adopts a qualitative research methodology. Lichtman (2013) stated that qualitative research employs inductive thinking as it does not aim to test any hypothesis and moves from concrete to abstract, such that "researchers begin with data and use the data to gain an understanding of phenomena and interaction" (p.19). In the current research, I did not aim only to find and describe what was revealed or to prove or disprove any claim regarding the importance or insignificance of the adaptation of learner autonomy in Turkish EFL classrooms. On the contrary, this research was intended to explore new knowledge through using inductive thinking developed from outcomes based on the social interaction between teachers and learners or learners and learners. My research objectives would be expected to gain through a bottom-up approach, as part of which I developed any general conclusions or theories after conducting data collection from small samples through conducting interviews, focus groups and classroom observations. In doing this, I constructed the findings via a constructivist/interpretive approach.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

3.5.1 Interviews

In this research, teachers' perceptions were explored through interviews. The interviews were piloted with two high school level EFL teachers before being conducted. Using the feedback received from these teachers, I decided to add and eliminate some questions to the interview schedule and reword some of the other questions (see Appendix A for the interview questions). After the necessary modifications were completed, the interviews were conducted. The interviews were carried out in Turkish. They were semi-structured for the purpose of exploring Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy and their willingness to apply it, and how it is encouraged in teacher practices. Although the participants teach English, I conducted the study in Turkish to minimise the tension that might result from any difficulties in communicating in English. Also, I believed

that the participants would be able to express their ideas better in their native language. I chose semi-structured interviews because I need to ask probing, pre-determined, open-ended questions, and want to explore the independent thoughts of each participant (Adams, 2015). This approach will help me to modify the structure of the interview – for example, adding further questions, while remaining focused during the interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Each interview took approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The interviews were carried out in a quiet room or a classroom allocated by the teacher being interviewed. The interview questions were semi-structured. These questions aimed to yield data regarding the nature of the study, which is designed to explore teachers' perspectives on learner autonomy, their expectations from the learners, their readiness and attitudes towards developing these themes, and their perceived practice in terms of the application of learner autonomy. The interviews were audio-recorded for the purpose of a detailed analysis afterwards. In addition, the recordings enabled me to analyse the interviews without losing detail that might be missed during the interview. Despite the benefits of audio-recording, it had potential to cause some tension in some of the participants because they might not have participated in such a study before. I therefore told them that they could switch off the recording machine when they felt uneasy or ask to speak off the record if desired. In addition, the interviews were individual rather than group interviews, for the purpose of helping teachers to explore their personal thinking in depth without being influenced or criticised by their colleagues.

3.5.2 Classroom Observations

In another stage of this research, the classroom observations were carried out to explore the extent to which Turkish EFL classrooms support learner autonomy and learner-centred education. The teachers and students were observed for the purpose of exploring whether learner autonomy was practised in the classroom

setting and, if it was, the extent to which it was practised by the teachers and learners, and how. If it was not, I considered the approaches and methods used instead of learner autonomy. Structured observations were carried out as I decided in advance what to look for in the observations. For this purpose, my observation pro forma (see Appendix B for observation pro forma) was mostly based on Alexander's comparative pedagogy framework (Alexander, 2001), which included the following basic questions: 1) what are the students expected to learn?; 2) How do they learn?; 3) What resources are used?; 4) What interaction does the teacher use to present, organise and evaluate the learning tasks? This was intended to develop an autonomous learning environment for students. I observed four EFL classrooms (two in a private school and two in a public school) to collect data, and each classroom was observed and audio-recorded (for a 40-minute lesson). Each teacher introduced me to the students and explained that the recordings were for my academic study and that it was not going to influence their lesson in any way. My role as an observer was as a non-participant observer, and I took my seat at the back of the class quietly to prevent distractions.

3.5.3 Focus Groups

In the last stage of the data collection process, learners' perceptions were explored by carrying out focus groups. Three students from each teacher's classroom were asked to participate in the groups to discuss their beliefs, readiness and behaviours while English language learning in terms of learner autonomy. I contacted my teacher participants and requested that they find three volunteer students to participate in the focus groups. The focus groups were piloted, like the interviews, with three students before they were conducted. In doing this, I aimed to receive feedback from these students that would be helpful in the event of necessary modifications in the focus group questions. The focus groups were carried out in Turkish and were semi-structured (see Appendix C for the focus group questions) for the purpose of exploring Turkish EFL learners' beliefs on learner autonomy and their practices. In total, I spoke to 66 students and divided this number into ten focus groups. As the students are not native

speakers of English, the focus groups were conducted in Turkish to minimise any tension that might result from difficulties in communicating in English. The focus groups were conducted at the same time as the interviews.

3.6 Participant Selection

High school teachers were targeted as participants of this study. I therefore obtained data from Turkish EFL teachers who work at high school level in private and state schools. In this research, the participants were selected using snowball sampling, which was useful when qualitative researchers did not know who they would study and when they relied on some of their participants to identify others (Licthman, 2013). According to Atkinson and Flint (2001), snowball sampling is often preferred in qualitative research where interviews are used and where the study aim is primarily explorative, descriptive and qualitative. In addition, one of the benefits of snowball sampling is described by Atkinson and Flint (2001) as follows: “it can be considered as an alternative or complementary strategy for attaining more comprehensive data on a particular research question”. It thus enables researchers to find gaps in their knowledge through obtaining respondents from participants who are few in number from a variety of social contexts (p.2). With this in mind, I contacted some former colleagues who are English language teachers working in state and private schools. Initially, I briefly explained to them the aims and procedures of the research. The teachers were then asked whether they would volunteer to take part in this research. The following table (Table. 1) shows the demographic profile of the teachers:

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Participants from State Schools	Gender	Teaching Experience	Academic Qualification	Participants from Private Schools	Gender	Teaching Experience	Academic Qualification
SST1	Female	13 years	Ph.D. (ongoing)	PST1	Female	7 years	Masters
SST2	Female	15	Degree	PST2	Female	4	Degree
SST3	Female	17	Degree	PST3	Female	10	Masters
SST4	Female	20	Degree	PST4	Male	9	Degree
SST5	Male	13	Degree	PST5	Female	13	Degree
SST6	Female	25	Degree	PST6	Female	16	Degree
SST7	Female	22	Degree	PST7	Male	15	Degree
SST8	Female	10	Degree	PST8	Female	3	Degree
SST9	Male	6	Degree	PST9	Male	6	Degree
SST10	Female	24	Degree	PST10	Female	18	Degree

3.7 Data Analysis

After collecting the data through teacher interviews, classroom observations and student focus groups, the data was analysed in several stages.

3.7.1 Analysis of the Interviews, Classroom Observations and Focus Groups

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and reviewed several times to gain a full understanding of the interviewees' perceptions pertaining to the research questions. For the purpose of thematic coding, I then read and reread the interview transcripts, first employing colour-coding (using coloured highlighting pens) to identify similarities and differences in the data. The codes were developed during the analysis considering the theoretical frameworks that I found. This process enabled me to detect patterns and themes so that generalisations could be made across the data. The data was then described and interpreted. In order to obtain respondent validation (Cohen et al., 2011) and to explore the subjective views of participants without distortions brought by the researcher, the transcripts and analysis of the interviews were shown to the participants. Having obtained their agreement, themes from the interviews were categorised.

I organised timetables for observations to allow me space for watching the recordings and compiling records. After each classroom observation, I listened to the audio recordings and read the observation pro forma for reflection and evaluation. Considering the themes and categories stated in Alexander's comparative pedagogy framework (Alexander, 2001), I analysed the recordings and the observation pro forma. The field-notes, outcomes and recordings helped me to detect the lesson episodes, also enabling me to elicit data regarding teacher and learner roles, the voices of learners in the classroom setting, the nature of tasks and activities, and whether the lesson was carried out with elements that support learner autonomy.

As is the case with the process of analysing the interviews, each focus group was audio-recorded. As with the interviews, I transcribed the focus groups in Turkish so as not to lose meaning and reviewed them several times to gain a full understanding of the learners' perceptions related to the research questions. After transcribing the audio recordings, I did the reading, first employing colour-coding (using coloured highlighting pens) so that I was able to do thematic coding. I then identified similarities and differences in the data, as I did in the data analysis of the interviews. In the final step of the analysis of the focus groups, I developed themes to describe and interpret the categories emerging from the group discussions, then I translated the themes from Turkish to English. In addition, I translated any quotes for use in the thesis from Turkish to English with great accuracy as some of the Turkish words were not easily translated.

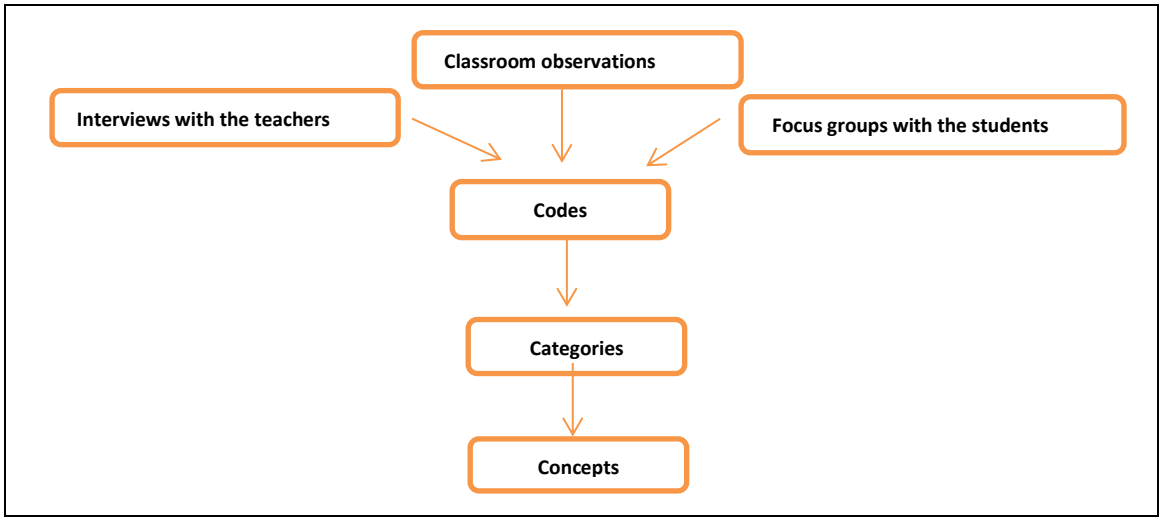
3.7.2 Analysis of the Complete Data: Triangulation

As Mackey and Gass (2005:368) stated, using triangulation, which involves multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data, helps to explore the data with all prospects. They also added that using triangulation in qualitative research helps to make findings more credible and transferable (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Thus, in this research, a triangulation approach was followed in an analysis of the data,

which was collected from interviews with teachers, classroom observations and focus groups with students.

Several steps, such as identifying, analysing and clustering themes, were followed to undertake triangulation during organisation and presentation of data collected from the interviews, classroom observations and focus groups. Thus, the three Cs of data analysis: codes, categories, concepts (see Figure. 2) were used in the process of data analysis to transform the raw data into meaningful concepts or themes (Litchman, 2013:251). According to Litchman (2013), the qualitative data analysis process is organised in six steps: (1) initial coding – going from responses to summary ideas of responses, (2) revisiting initial coding, (3) developing an initial list of categories, (4) modifying an initial list based on additional reading, (5) revisiting categories and sub-categories, (6) moving from categories to concepts.

Figure 2 Three Cs of Data Analysis: Codes, Categories, Concepts



Source: Litchman (2013).

After the audio-recorded interviews, classroom observations and focus groups were completed, as a first step I transformed them into a written format in Turkish. Transcribing the interviews and focus groups helped me to review the material collected several times to gain a full understanding of the participants' perceptions pertaining to the research questions. The importance of reading

transcripts several times is highlighted by Smith and Osborne (2008) for a researcher who wants to identify key concepts and themes from interviews. Transcribing the data familiarises the researcher with the themes, thus helping the researcher to find or reveal new perspectives about the study (Smith and Osborne, 2008). For the purpose of understanding Turkish EFL teachers' and students' perspectives on learner autonomy, their willingness to apply it and their practices in implementing learner autonomy, the transcripts were read as thoroughly as possible. Also, for the purpose of thematic coding, I read and reread the transcripts, employing colour-coding (using coloured highlighting pens). As the themes were not revealed explicitly, the key elements of the interviews were written down on the left-hand side. Through these steps, I intended to identify emerging themes related to my research questions. The codes were developed during the analysis in the context of the theoretical frameworks that I found. This process enabled me to detect patterns and themes so that generalisations could be made across the data. The data was then described and interpreted.

In order to achieve consistency of data collection and analysis, especially in quantitative research with a positivist perspective, validity and reliability are generally counted as essential elements that need to be considered by researchers. However, in qualitative research, in which data collection, analysis and interpretation are intended to be collected mostly with a qualitative research paradigm (with non-numerical data), the meaning and use of validity, reliability and generalisability might need to be reconsidered (Golafshani, 2003). Those concepts generally accepted as part of proper research and used for evaluation of credibility and quality of research might not be generally applicable for all kinds of research as the purpose of a qualitative study is generating understanding (Stenbacka, 2001) and interpreting without being objective (Lichtman, 2013; Stenbacka, 2001). Although this research is an interpretive study with the researcher's interpretations and the researcher's subjective role or biases, this does not mean that qualitative research avoids producing valid and reliable data and analysis (ibid). Once the data analysis was completed, concepts were outlined to reveal differences and similarities between public and private schools in terms of applying learner autonomy and differences between learners' and teachers'

views and their practices. In summary, the collected raw data was first transformed into transcripts and then subjected to content analysis to examine codes. Categories and concepts were then established based on the codes and their similar characteristics. In the final step, the established concepts were interpreted by taking quotations from transcripts and translating them to English.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In this study, I provided the volunteer teacher and student participants with information about the study, including aims, possible benefits and risks, in Turkish, after receiving University of Glasgow ethical approval. The plain language statements in Turkish and English (see Appendix D) outline the rights of the participants and includes information on how and for what purposes the data is used. The participants are clearly informed of their roles in the study and are provided with the researchers' and supervisors' contact details. I tried to use non-technical, jargon-free and clearly comprehensible language. As well as plain language statements, the participants were also provided with consent forms (see Appendix E) that prove that they participated in the research as volunteers and understood the process involved. As the learners were under 18 years old, I provided information sheets and consent forms for the local educational authority, headteachers and parents of the students. The researcher then contacted the local education authority and headteachers of the schools to ask permission (see Appendix F). After access was granted, the researcher informs the EFL teachers in the selected schools to ask them to find voluntary participants. In the final step, the researcher also contacted parents to ask permission for their children's participation in the focus groups (see Appendix G). Before observing the classrooms, the teachers introduced the researcher to the class and reminded them of my research with a brief explanation, outlining my role in the lesson. During the observations, no major disruptions were noticed, as, in my role as a non-participant observer, I sat at the back of the classroom to be less distracting and took notes during the observations. In addition, to put the wellbeing of the participants ahead of the research goals, confidentiality was ensured, and

pseudonyms were used when reporting the findings to the readers. This precaution was explained to the participants at the beginning of the study when asking for informed consent.

CHAPTER 4 – Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is organised into three parts. In the first part, I present the data from interviews with 20 teachers (10 teachers from state schools and 10 teachers from private schools). In the second part, the data from four classroom observations (two from a state school and two from a private school) is set out to enable triangulation of teachers' beliefs and practices. It is useful to note that I did not observe every teacher, and I thus triangulated only four teachers' comments about learner autonomy with their observed practices. However, I believe that observing four teachers is still useful to provide some details about the similarities and differences between private and state schools regarding the practice of learner autonomy and to explore potential gaps between stated beliefs and practices. In the last part, I present the data from 10 focus groups (five in state schools and five in private schools) and try to triangulate what students and teachers state and practice in relation to learner autonomy.

PART 1 – INTERVIEWS

In this part of the study, I explore Turkish English teachers' perspectives on learner autonomy and their stated practices of it. Teachers' understandings revealed their views on the practicability of these concepts in Turkish EFL classroom contexts. 20 EFL teachers (10 teachers from private schools and 10 teachers from state schools) were asked to discuss their beliefs about learner autonomy and how it relates to their teaching. They were also asked to share what challenges they face when they want to promote an autonomous learning environment and what their recommendations are in overcoming the obstacles that they face. I marked teachers from state schools as follows: SST1: S1 (State School Teacher1), and SST2 (State School Teacher2), to SST10 (State School Teacher10) in order to quote the

interviewers conveniently, and interviews with private school teachers were marked as PST1 (Private School Teacher1) and PST2 (Private School Teacher2), to PST10 (Private School Teacher10). Interview transcripts revealed several key findings related to teachers' understandings, practices and experiences of learner autonomy in their classrooms. The teachers in this study held a wide range of beliefs about learner autonomy and many of their understandings reflect their replies when the participants were asked what they think about the term and how they practise it. I then present data revealing four teachers' (two from a private school and two from a state school) practices in relation to learner autonomy by putting this in the context of their beliefs about it.

4.2 Revealing Teachers' Understandings of Learner Autonomy

As mentioned in chapter 2, teachers' perspectives and practices regarding learner autonomy are likely to differ in each educational context because of teachers' different backgrounds. Furthermore, learner autonomy might have a different equivalent in a Turkish context when compared with other contexts (see chapter 2). Thus, to explore teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy, they were asked to share their understandings of the term. Interview transcripts generated several key findings related to teachers' understandings, practices and experiences of this concept in their classrooms. In relation to how they shared their understandings, two points are important to consider: teachers not only described learner autonomy as a term but also provided perspectives that related to the extent to which they value learner autonomy. Their responses also revealed common perspectives and lack of agreement. In the following sections, teachers' descriptions of learner autonomy, their assessment of it, their willingness to apply it in practice, the challenges that they face and their suggestions to overcome those obstacles are presented. The results of this research showed that teachers' definitions of learner autonomy cover various aspects of autonomous learning, as the participants revealed different perspectives, alongside shared ones. Furthermore, it is useful to note that teachers' understandings of learner autonomy can be positioned from more than one perspective.

4.2.1 Taking Responsibility

Students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning was the most common definition shared by teachers in private and state schools when they describe learner autonomy. According to teachers' responses, responsibility, which includes students' self-reliance and taking control of their learning in and beyond the classroom, is mentioned by most teachers. According to the teachers' statements, they associated learner autonomy with students' own activities, not only relying on teachers' instructions, and observed learning through discovery as a sign of autonomy. The quotes below illustrate some of the state school teachers' views on learner autonomy in terms of students' ability to learn on their own beyond the classroom:

> It is related to something that when a student wants to learn something, she/he does not wait for teachers' instructions all the time. (SST10)

> …deciding to do extra practices on their own to improve their English. (SST5)

> I believe in learner autonomy. Students do a lot of extra work after the school if they think that they need to practice…this should be with their own decisions, not always with our push. (SST7)

Teachers from private schools agreed with the idea of students' independent studies and self-reliance representing the qualities of an autonomous learner. One added that learner autonomy is related to learning to discover and, for her, as part of learner autonomy students try to discover first so that they do not always need to wait for teachers' instructions. She gave an example of this as follows:

> we give students tasks to prepare for the portfolios…on their own and with their friends…we tell them at first you try to figure out, then discuss with your group members, if you are still having trouble come and ask me…so we encourage them to do some independent studies and rely on themselves…getting them to find out their answers by encouraging them to use other resources. (PST8)

Similarly, two teachers made the following comments:

> I mean students are the ones who exactly know their strengths and weaknesses and they are the ones who can be sure that they actually learn or not…so they do not need our instructions all the time…for me in learner autonomy students have the ability to learn with and without our instructions. (PST3)

> Learning things on their own, not only relying on us…it is all about showing effort…for example reading an English book just because they want to read, not because it is a task that is given by us…or joining online English Language clubs to practise their skills…they choose to do things that whatever they think is useful for them. (PST6)

Teachers in private schools arguably noted a connection between learner autonomy and students' ability to learn independently through putting in effort, learning through discovery and communicating with peers and teachers. In addition, learner autonomy, as some of the participants believed, can be developed when students take on their own responsibilities. It also refers to learning in situations where learners need to make personal decisions in relation to, for example, knowing how to learn, setting learning goals, selecting appropriate strategies and materials and knowing their strengths and weaknesses. Students' awareness about their own language learning is noted by the participants as follows:

> …in learner autonomy students have skills to plan their own learning process with our guidance. (PST9)

> In autonomous learning students know their strengths and weaknesses better than anyone... but of course, they still need to be directed with our help. (PST4)

More precisely, for teachers (mostly in private schools), learner autonomy is relevant to techniques and strategies that students use to become owners of their learning. The data indicated that most teachers in state and private schools believe in the importance of students taking responsibility for their learning. However, according to teachers' interpretations, teachers arguably related to

learner autonomy as a concept that can mostly be practised beyond the classroom as they define it with particular reference to students' responsibilities in their out-of-classroom activities.

4.2.2 Motivation and Self-confidence

In relation to student effort, motivation for learner autonomy is arguably another common pre-condition for the participants in this research when they reveal their understandings. Some of the participants viewed students' motivation and their willingness to learn as related to learner autonomy, as demonstrated in these statements:

> In my opinion, learner autonomy is all about students and their motivation…I think if a student is motivated to learn because they want to learn not just to have good grades… .(SST4)

> …an education system in which students are active and intrinsically motivated…I believe that this model is based on the students' curiosity for the language, their willingness to learn and of course their efforts to achieve their goals. (PST10)

One private school teacher (PST5) viewed student motivation as an important element influencing learner autonomy. The participant also emphasised both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, referring to students' learning intentions not only for passing exams but also in relation to learning for interest. Students' willingness to learn was also noted by one private school teacher (PST10), who asserted that learner autonomy was related to learners' interest in language and setting their own goals to achieve. Similarly, as another private school teacher (PST4) stated, learner autonomy is related to students' motivation because students need to be willing to take more responsibility for their learning. This is shown to be related to their motivation as follows:

> …students' motivation is more important than our push because in autonomous learning, if students have the motivation to learn, it means that they will be willing to engage with the things for their learning. (PST4)

Further, one participant associated learner autonomy with students' self-confidence.

> …in autonomous learning, students are motivated to use the English language, even [when] they do mistakes…when they do this, I believe, this will help them for their self-confidence too, I still hear a lot such a thing: 'I can understand but I cannot speak'. As you can see, it is still a very common thing between students, unfortunately, they don't have the confidence to speak…they say they are scared not to use the correct grammar… (SST7)

According to one state school teacher (SST7), in autonomous learning students have confidence in using the target language as they are motivated to learn it and do not let themselves feel discouraged when they make mistakes.

4.2.3 Collaboration

As indicated in the data, collaborative learning and teaching on learner autonomy represented another ingredient for the participants when sharing their opinions. The following quotes represent teachers' statements regarding the connection between learner autonomy and collaboration:

> In learner autonomy, students learn with their own effort, but they also ask questions to their teachers or classmates if they feel that they do not understand. (PST3)

> when students study together and do knowledge exchange with each other, sometimes they learn better when they work together, we try to give them tasks that they do alone but also, they need to do with their friends. (PST7)

> students and teachers work together to achieve. (SST8)

> getting them involved in peer or group discussions. (SST9)

According to these teachers' views, as part of learner autonomy students are involved in learning activities where they learn individually and interact with other people, which involves teachers and peers. According to these teachers, providing opportunities for the learner to complete the tasks while working together helps to

promote learner autonomy. It can therefore be concluded from the findings that these teachers see learning through interaction with others as an important factor to develop learner autonomy.

Overall, teachers associated learner autonomy with students taking responsibility for their learning, being aware of the learning process, being motivated and self-confident and working collaboratively with peers and teachers. However, some of the teachers' interpretations are contradicted by current situations in Turkish EFL classrooms, especially in state schools, where teacher-centred education is widely used.

4.2.4 Valuing

In addition to the aspects of learner autonomy categorised above, most participants preferred to give value to learner autonomy when describing it. In terms of reflecting the ways in which teachers value learner autonomy, two common themes emerged from the responses. These findings include the importance of learner autonomy for students' learning and challenges for teachers in applying it. When teachers were talking about how they value learner autonomy in language education, they unanimously accepted its usefulness for their students in their language learning processes. For instance, one private school teacher (PST10) shared that it is important for effective language learning, adding that her students' learning "becomes more permanent" with practising learner autonomy. Similarly, one state school teacher (SST6) asserted that learner autonomy "is useful", and will "…help students to learn through practising and experiencing the information that they learn". Furthermore, there is a common agreement between some teachers both from private and state schools that, through application of learner autonomy, students take more responsibility for their learning. One of the private school teachers (PST7) described it as "important" because she thinks that learner autonomy helps "to advance students' learning skills…taking responsibility is essential for learning".

On the other hand, nearly all of the teachers' views on learner autonomy (interestingly, most from state schools) are associated with challenges for several reasons stemming from issues such as learners' lack of independent learning skills, the curriculum, regulations applied in schools, and teachers' lack of basic strategies to encourage autonomous learning in their classrooms. According to these participants, learner autonomy is seen as a challenge to apply in their classrooms because they are hindered by these difficulties. Some of the challenges that teachers face in the promotion of learner autonomy are discussed in the following section and will be discussed in more detail in section 4.5.

4.3 Teachers' Readiness for Learner Autonomy

As one of the purposes of this study is to identify the perceptions of learner autonomy held by Turkish EFL teachers, the participants were also asked to share their willingness to apply the concept in their classrooms in the light of new educational policies encouraged by the MoNE (2016). The present study declared that most of the participants have positive attitudes towards learner autonomy, stating that they are willing to apply it. More precisely, to understand the similarities and differences in teachers' readiness to apply learner autonomy, the following section is divided into two categories: state schools and private schools.

4.3.1 State School Teachers' Willingness to Develop Learner Autonomy

The data indicated that most of the teachers in state schools placed positive values on learner autonomy. The data from interviews also indicated that teachers' willingness to apply learner autonomy can relate to its benefits for their students, as two of the participants expressed their enthusiasm to apply learner autonomy in the following statements:

> I do support it. I believe that the best way to learn is learning by practising. I also think that their self-confidence will increase if they become more autonomous. (SST9)

> …quite a lot. I want to take students to the centre and want to teach in the direction of their needs. (PST3)

They believe that promoting learner autonomy will improve their students' language learning experiences. One state school teacher (SST4) asserted that learner autonomy will help with positive interactions between students, also stating that autonomous students "can overcome the difficulties that they face". Similarly, another state school teacher (SST7) said that developing learner autonomy in her classrooms would help her students to become better learners, stating that her students' self-confidence would increased. She also revealed autonomous students' roles as follows: "students should take their own decisions as behavioural or emotional, should act independently and should develop their identities". Moreover, according to one of the state school teachers (SST6), a connection exists between teachers' and students' readiness for learner autonomy: "they are ready as much as we prepare them. The more the teachers are ready, the more the students are ready". On the other hand, some of the teachers reveal their willingness to apply learner autonomy because of its benefits for the student learning process, helping them to be ready to learn. The majority of the participants revealed their readiness to develop learner autonomy in their classrooms. However, again, they stated that they face issues such as not being able to make independent choices, students' lack of awareness and inadequacy of available resources. For example, one state school teacher (SST9), stated his willingness to apply learner autonomy, but also mentioned challenges, saying that, "I am trying to apply them. However, I don't believe that my students are aware of it…perhaps they will accommodate themselves in time". In addition, other participants highlighted existing conditions and facilities as barriers to developing learner autonomy in their classrooms despite being enthusiastic to apply it. One state school teacher (SST4) explained her support for the development of learner autonomy with this statement: "I think that LA is important in their learning process and their further lives. In the current conditions…I try my best to apply

[it]". Although the teacher (SST4) demonstrated enthusiasm to apply learner autonomy, she felt that her students were not ready, "…because of the current conditions, curriculum and exams". As well as noting students' awareness levels, some teachers claimed that they do not have enough autonomy to decide whether to use learner autonomy in their classrooms. They argue that teachers' willingness to apply learner autonomy is related to their own autonomy. One state school teacher (SST10) stated that, "to enable the development of LA, teachers also need autonomy…". Another state school teacher (SST6) echoed this, saying that, "Since I cannot decide to apply it individually, sometimes I feel trapped in the system…rather than students' readiness, the external factors are bones to pick". According to the participants' responses, most of the teachers have positive attitudes towards learner autonomy. However, they also stated challenges that have a negative impact on their enthusiasm to practise it.

4.3.2 Private School Teachers' Willingness to Develop Learner Autonomy

In private schools, all the teachers stated their willingness to apply learner autonomy. For example, one private school teacher (PST3) stated her willingness to develop learner autonomy by highlighting her intention to give priority to her students' needs in the classroom, stating that her students are ready for this: "…they are already used to these methods". Another private school teacher (PST5), on the other hand, linked her willingness to apply autonomous learning methods with opportunities supplied by her institution. The teacher (PST5) revealed that, "since I am teaching in a private school, I am willing to apply and have opportunity to practice". Similarly, another private school teacher (PST6) highlighted the impact of this support as follows:

> Personally, I am encouraged to apply autonomous learning in and beyond the classroom…if the school management and teachers are not autonomous, I don't think that it is possible for the students to be autonomous learners either…

On the other hand, some of the teachers mentioned students' readiness for the concept and claimed that not every student is ready for it, as is also mentioned for state schools. One private school teacher (PST7) felt that student readiness plays a significant role in achieving autonomous learning: "…sometimes it does not matter what we do or apply, some students are ready, some are not…". Another private school teacher (PST9) also pointed out that students' decisions regarding whether to participate in autonomous learning activities are important: "in terms of students' engagement, we might face difficulties…it depends on students to students". One private school teacher (PST8) highlighted her willingness as follows: "…I am trying to help them to take more responsibility". However, she also added that student readiness levels for being autonomous learners are low. Similarly, another private school teacher (PST4) asserted that his students are not ready: "I don't think they are quite ready enough".

In summary, most of the teachers from both private and state schools stated that they are willing to practise learner autonomy in their classrooms. Although learner autonomy is seen by MoNE (2012) as an important component to be developed to enhance Turkish students' English proficiency levels, the results also show that the feasibility of learner autonomy under the conditions in which the participants teach represent a challenge. For example, in state schools, some teachers associated their willingness to apply learner autonomy with conditions such as student readiness and facilities. On the other hand, the data indicated that, in private schools, teachers said that they are already applying learner autonomy as they have opportunities to do so. However, some also see students' willingness as a barrier to promoting an autonomous learning environment. Teachers in private schools are arguably more willing to apply learner autonomy as they have sometimes been provided with more facilities and support from their schools than teachers in state schools. During my visits to the schools, I observed that, in private schools, students were provided with an English learning and teaching environment in which they are encouraged to be autonomous in their own learning in and beyond the classroom. In addition, as we will see, the data from focus groups indicated that the most students who stated themselves to be autonomous

learners, or noted their willingness to be involved in decisions about their learning, are from private schools.

4.4 Revealing Teachers' Encouragement for Practising Learner Autonomy

To understand learner autonomy in the Turkish context, the teacher participants in this study were asked to share their English teaching practices to promote learner autonomy in Turkish high schools. Participants stated that practices portrayed different pictures as they viewed learner autonomy from different perspectives. Notably, in the interviews, nearly all of the teachers from state schools stated that they use traditional teaching methods in their classrooms whereby they first lecture and students listen, then they do exercises together based on the coursebook or worksheets related to the topic of the lesson. Their traditional classroom practice choices might be related to the Turkish context and restrictions that they mentioned during the interviews. In addition, they mentioned their attempts to put forward learner autonomy when they were asked to share their encouragement to practise it and their students' involvement in the decision-making behind teaching and learning processes. Analysis of interview transcripts revealed several key findings related to state and private school teachers' choice of practices of learner autonomy in and beyond the classroom. These findings include:

1) Encouraging and/or guiding learners to use various technology-based resources.
2) Promoting learner autonomy through the communicative approach.
3) Considering students' needs and motivations.
4) Encouraging learners to do/attend projects.

4.4.1 Encouraging Learners to use Various Technology-Based Resources

A common preferred practice is that Turkish EFL teachers' statements encourage and guide students to use various resources. The majority of the teachers stated that they use authentic or technology-based resources in their classrooms to help their students to be more autonomous and encourage learners to use different resources beyond the classroom. For example, according to their statements, they recommended English books, films, YouTube videos, websites and mobile apps such as Duolingo (a language learning app). All the teachers in private schools stated that they are using various authentic resources other than coursebooks in the classrooms and guiding their students to use these resources beyond the classroom. The following quotes are from private school teachers, explaining how they encourage the practice of autonomous learning:

> Every term we suggest some English books according to the level and they need to choose one of these books and read them as an out-of-class activity. Once they complete the book, we ask them to summarise it…then they share their opinions and discussion about the book with their friends. (PST3)

> We organise cinema event activities: students watch an English movie with their teachers and students from other 9th grade classes. After the movie, we do discussion activities that relate to the movie. Then we ask them to include grammatical rules or vocabularies that they learn from the movie. (PST10)

The data indicated that private school teachers are, through their practice, encouraging learner autonomy in and beyond the classroom by using authentic and technology-based resources. For example, they use English fiction books, films or websites designed by teachers and students. Similarly, teachers in state schools stated that they are trying to use some authentic materials during their lessons. According to their statements, using a Smartboard to let students watch short videos or listen to a song and fill the lyrics in on a paper handed out by the teacher, or recommending websites and phone apps, are among the practices used to promote learner autonomy, as two of the teachers stated:

> Sometimes, I let students watch very short videos that relate to the topic to get their attention, then I ask one or two students their opinions about the video…so I try to engage them for the lesson. (SST4)

> I ask them to choose an English song and we listen to it all together and then hand out a paper on which some of the words of the lyrics are missing, they try to find those missing words…so they can notice the pronunciations…I see some of them checking the meaning of unknown words without asking me, I guess they want to know the meaning of the song. (SST8)

Teachers from private and state schools arguably acknowledged the potential of technology-based resources and stated that they ask students to access different resources. They also highlighted a need for proper guidance to use these resources. Another interesting finding that the data indicated involves using authentic and technology-based materials as part of the syllabus in private schools, while in state schools this is done on teacher initiative. In addition, when I visited the state and private schools, in the state schools, teachers did not appear to prefer to use authentic or technology-based materials, although they were able to use Smartboards with internet connection. One reason for this might relate to teachers' lack of provision, meaning that they mostly do not prefer to use technology-based resources. In the private schools, meanwhile, teachers preferred authentic or technology-based materials in and beyond the classroom – for example, using English online videos and coursebooks prepared by native speakers.

4.4.2 Using the Communicative Approach

According to the teachers' statements, using a communicative approach is another common practice that teachers utilise to implement learner autonomy. For those who stated that they shared communicative methods to create an autonomous learning environment, students' ability to speak and express themselves by writing and/or speaking was considered to be helping students to be more autonomous. Several examples were given by teachers, including encouraging students to take

part in discussion and group work activities. The data indicated that all the private school teachers used peer or group discussions in their practice as a requirement for their curriculums and students undertake activities and discussions to complete tasks such as book discussions, film events and presentations. Similarly, some of the teachers in state schools stated that they use a communicative approach for their students:

> Sometimes, we do discussion activities. For example, before the reading text, there are questions on the coursebook that relate to the topic…a couple of minutes we discuss and then start to read the text… (SST4)

> We prepare presentations. Either I give them a topic or sometimes they choose one, then they do research to prepare their presentations. I encourage them to present in front of their classmates… After they complete the presentations, students also have the opportunity to ask questions or discuss the topic together. (SST10)

In state schools, some of the teachers also mentioned that students sometimes do presentations and then ask each other questions related to the topics that they present upon. In private schools, teachers appeared to do discussion activities as a requirement for their curriculum while, in state schools, teachers use presentations and discussions with their own choice of practice as only a few mention using communicative approaches in their practice. It might be related to the nature of classrooms in state schools that discussion activities are not common because of the overcrowded classrooms, as highlighted by one of the state school teachers (SST1).

4.4.3 Student Needs and Motivations

The data indicated that some of the teachers include their students' needs and motivations by trying to engage them, referring to topics in which they are interested and letting them choose the materials and topics for the lessons. The following quotes present teachers' attempts to incorporate their students' needs and motivations:

> …I think we can take a glance at web pages, movies and videos that students are interested in. It is very important to give daily examples…if you do this, students will think that our teacher is on the same wavelength as us…I think it is more important than reading regulations and following the curriculum for teaching…I mean if you want to establish communication with your students. (SST5)
>
> Trying to create a motivating environment for my students…to encourage them for participation…I try to speak about their interests, daily life situations. (SST4)
>
> In the presentations, I allow them to choose the topic that they want to present, so they will be more enthusiastic. (SST7)
>
> For the choice of books and movies, we ask students to give us names, then we (teachers and students) take a vote to decide. (PST4)

4.4.4 Encouraging Learners to do Tasks and Projects

Interestingly, the data revealed that, in private schools, all the teachers said that they use portfolios and tasks in their practice – for example, preparing a website with students.

> Our students prepare a website…it is for foreigners who want to visit our city, we put the landmarks and introduce them in English, students prepare everything in it…they also do some interviews in English with local people and put them in the website. (PST4)

Another private school teacher stated that they try to use various tasks such as problem-solving, information listing, comparing and project-based activity in their teaching as an educational policy of their school. He added that,

> it allows our students to do a lot of activities before and after the task both on their own and with their classmates…yes, they mostly struggle to start in the beginning, especially the ones who transferred to our school from state schools…we help and guide them to complete the tasks and results are sometimes incredible. (PST7)

Additionally, in all the private schools, some of the teachers stated that they attend Model United Nations (MUN) projects held by the UN, in which students can learn about international relations, teaching participants speaking, debating and writing skills in English. On the other hand, teachers in state schools did not mention any projects or portfolios involved in their practices despite the new curriculum highlighting the importance of portfolios in autonomous learning (see chapter 2).

4.5 Curriculum and Assessment for Learner Autonomy

As highlighted in chapter 2, autonomous language learning environments involve the inclusion of students in the process of determining lesson objectives, making use of recent language teaching methods and techniques, which are beneficial for the improvement of students' metacognitive skills, utilising a variety of resources according to different student learning styles, and developing the necessary skills to assess their learning.

4.5.1 Curriculum

As learner autonomy is presented in Turkish education through the new curriculum, which has an undeniable impact on teachers' practices and hence on students' learning, teachers were asked to share their perspectives of the current curriculum and their students' involvement in the decision-making process behind creation of lesson content. This aimed to reveal Turkish EFL teachers' opinions on the role of the curriculum in developing learner autonomy. The responses were varied – for example, all the participants from state schools claimed that the curriculum is overloaded and there is not enough space to apply autonomous learning activities and include students' interests in lessons. Themes that emerged from the interviews related to why teachers felt that the curriculum is not flexible

enough to apply learner autonomy as follows: changes are only in theory, teachers' lack of autonomy in preparing the curriculum and an overloaded curriculum resulting in time constraints. Teachers' responses demonstrating these themes are illustrated in the following quotes:

> I think our biggest problem is that the contents are too much to cover and it is extended over time, rather than the curriculum. We need to fix this issue. (PST10)
>
> Unfortunately, we cannot give students enough voice because of the intensive curriculum, I think this prevents us from doing more discussions with students, and of course, this issue leads to a decrease in students' motivation and interests for the lesson. (SST10)
>
> …because the innovations for the curriculum are just on paper…we cannot apply them in these conditions. (SST9)

The state school teachers also revealed that they do not take into account students' opinions relating to the content of the curriculum, and they shared their reasons for excluding students from the role of setting goals in the curriculum. For example, one state school teacher (SST1) thinks that the practicability of letting students be involved in the process of decision-making for the curriculum is an impossible task: "they are not ready and we need to cover topics for the exams". As well as pointing to the practicability of students' involvement in selecting learning strategies, another state school teacher (SST9) stated that everything in the curriculum is prepared by the MoNE and, "…because of this, we don't have a chance to try different things" . Similarly, two of the state school teachers (SST2 and SST8) complained about the fixed curriculum and stated that even their opinions were not taken into account in preparation of the curriculum. According to SST8, this is an issue that has an adverse effect on both teachers' and students' motivations: "…unfortunately, we don't take students' opinions, even they are not taking our opinions…all these things decrease students' and teachers' motivation".

On the other hand, the curriculum is dealt with slightly differently in private schools when compared with state schools. Most of the participants from private schools stated that the curriculum that they use is partially flexible. Noting the

flexibility of the curriculum, one private school teacher (PST1) commented on an annual action plan that is prepared through a meeting with the attendance of all the English teachers in their school: “In this school, we prepare our own curriculum. We have an annual action plan…”. She also compared their school’s and state schools’ curriculums as follows:

> Don’t misunderstand me but in the state schools, things are only in theory, that’s why in here we call it an action plan. Our curriculum can be changeable according to this action plan. As high school teachers, we have meetings before the term starts, and we discuss things…we say that okay this year we are expecting from our students this and this… We are realistic… In the curriculum, we don’t add the things that we cannot put into action…

Similarly, another teacher noted flexibility as follows:

> It is mostly flexible but also needs to follow MoNE because of exams… For example, we leave blank the last three weeks of the curriculum, in case we cannot complete the plan, so we can compensate the unfinished things. (PST2)

Interestingly, the data indicated that, although teachers in private schools think that they have a flexible curriculum, they stated that the curriculum is not flexible enough to involve students’ opinions.

> All our education system is based on assessment and exams, that’s why I feel it’s compulsory to follow the curriculum. I wish I spent less time following the fixed curriculum and prepared a new curriculum that involves students’ interests. (PST4)

During the interviews with teachers in private schools, the interviewees associated learner autonomy with students’ abilities to take responsibility and initiative in their learning, expressing willingness to apply learner autonomy by giving it positive value. Nevertheless, all of the participants indicated that they do not take on board students’ opinions while preparing the curriculum, although they can be flexible when compared with the curriculum in state schools.

4.5.2 Assessment

Students' ability to assess their progress and have a voice to choose how to evaluate their learning process also plays a significant role in developing learner autonomy. Participants are thus also asked to reveal their choice of assessment types and whether their students are given options to evaluate what has been learned. According to teachers' responses, exams are the most common assessment tool in both private and state schools, representing a necessity in the educational system. In state schools, students' English skills are also assessed in the form of practice exams, quizzes, classroom performance grades (given by teachers according to students' attitudes, engagements and performances during the term). The data revealed that, in state schools, teachers do not use a portfolio as an assessment tool although it is highly recommended by the Ministry of Education for the promotion of learner autonomy (MoNE, 2012). Moreover, the participants mention various assessment types that they use but do not note who assesses these tools. In other words, they do not mention any peer or self-assessment on the part of students. Regarding the promotion of learner autonomy, self-assessment in particular is considered in the literature as an important factor (see chapter 2, section 2.6.3). In addition, the teachers revealed various answers regarding students' involvement in choosing assessment tools and/or dates for exams. All the participants from state schools stated that students are not involved in choosing exam dates as the dates are arranged in advance. One of the participants highlighted this issue as follows:

> No, we don't give students options for assessment, because classrooms are too crowded…the curriculum is too intensive and we cannot be flexible…also, students have anxiety to pass the university exam, so we use the existing assessment methods which prepare them for university exams. (SST3).

In private schools, teachers stated that, as well as exams, they use portfolios, projects, quizzes and classroom performance grades to assess their students. The participants revealed that they sometimes recognise students' suggestions as they can be more flexible than state schools in terms of deciding exam dates or the content of assessment tools:

> We provide them with some options for example in projects… (PST7)
>
> Generally, we ask their opinions for the exam dates and we decide the dates together. (PST4)
>
> Maybe not in the assessment types but we recognise their opinions in the date arrangements for the quizzes. (PST5)

The data notably indicated that most of the teachers in state schools felt forced into neglecting productive methods (e.g. communicative language teaching) of instruction for their students as well as assessment of productive learning because of exams and an overloaded curriculum and classrooms. It therefore appeared to me that the teachers' statements indicated a washback effect in which students only learn English to pass exams, meaning that teachers might need to adapt their teaching practices, lesson content and materials according to students' achievements in exams, as noted by teachers in state schools during the interviews. In addition, as indicated in the data from one of the classroom observations in a state school (SST1's class), teachers' classroom instructions can be centred on grammar rather than communicative and productive approaches as the students have to pass university exams. Questions are thus presented as multiple choice and cover grammar rules, vocabulary and translation.

4.6 Challenges in Developing Learner Autonomy

The challenges identified in this study can be contextualised within the setting of Turkish high schools, and factors involved need to be divided into sub-categories to reflect the backgrounds of teachers and students as well as school features and educational policies. In addition, these factors can be associated with each other and connections sometimes exist between student learning and teachers' practices in a Turkish EFL context.

Teachers highlighted the student factor as the most common challenge in the development of learner autonomy. Specifically, they asserted that learner autonomy is difficult to apply because of student characteristics related to students' habits, perspectives and behaviours. First, most of the teachers stated

that previous student habits handicap teachers in applying learner autonomy. For example, two of the state school teachers (SST7 and SST1) associated students' previous learning experiences with a challenge to developing learner autonomy as follows:

> …their previous experiences have an impact on their current learning experiences… If a student doesn't have the problem-solving ability it takes time to teach them this skill…when I asked them to do activities to help them to think and use their own initiative, they just ignore it… Most of the time I face things like 'I cannot do it!', or 'this is a very difficult activity, do we really need to do it?' (SST7)
>
> Students have already become accustomed to certain things before…like learning in a teacher-centred education system…breaking their habits is quite difficult. (SST1)

Similarly, according to one teacher in a state school (SST10), the habits gained by the students throughout their educational experiences represent '*the most important challenge'* for teachers. She also mentioned the difficulty in students moving away from habits and becoming heavily dependent on teachers' instructions. Another teacher (PST10) complained about her students' lack of independent learning skills: "some of the students insist on not studying unless they are told to do so, in such cases, it might be difficult and exhausting to apply". Notably, the Turkish education system is mostly based on rote-learning and memorisation, hindering students in thinking critically and taking initiative in their own leaning (Kizilcelik, 2015). Consequently, students might not know how to work independently or learn through discovery as they become used to depending on their teacher. As well as discussing students' learning habits, some of the teachers agreed that students are still not ready for autonomous learning, giving the reason for this view as students' lack of motivation or unwillingness to engage in activities in and beyond the classroom. 10 of the teachers stated that their students were not willing to engage in activities because of a lack of interest in learning English. For example, two of the teachers from private schools stated that students are not enthusiastic about learning English unless lessons are presented through games or with activities that include technology:

> Students have adjustment problems…they are unwilling to study and demand games all the time, they are unwilling to participate in the activities after the videos. (PST2)
>
> Some of them only prefer watching movies and videos…they think that this way is enough to learn English. (PST9)

In addition, some of the teachers noted that their students were only motivated to obtain high scores in exams, and if a structure or topic was not related to their exams, they did not put in any effort to learn it. As one private school teacher (PST5) stated, "…I believe they only learn things for passing exams". This challenge can also be related to the educational system in Turkey, in which students are required to pass exams to attend university. According to these teachers' statements, they associated students' motivation to learn English with passing exams. As previously noted in section 4.5, some of the teachers referred to the negative effects of washback – students' engagement to learn a foreign language is mostly driven by passing exams.

According to the data, the second most commonly highlighted challenges are related to institutional factors including the limitations of coursebooks and materials, an overloaded curriculum and overcrowded classrooms. In relation to the coursebooks, some of the teachers from state schools revealed their discontent about the current condition of the coursebooks. However, in private schools, none of the teachers saw coursebooks as a challenge to developing learner autonomy. Compared to state schools, the coursebooks in private schools come from foreign publishers in places such as Cambridge and Oxford, and parents need to pay a considerable amount of money for them.

Another factor that teachers in state and private schools reveal as a challenge facing the education system is the overloaded curriculum. They argue that promoting learner autonomy in their classrooms requires a more flexible curriculum that lets teachers involve their students' needs and interests. The majority of the participants in state schools also revealed challenges related to

schools' physical conditions and regulations applied in schools when they value learner autonomy. These challenges include the idea that classroom size, lack of facilities in schools and pressure from school management represents a basis for difficulties. For example, according to one state school teacher (SST1), there is a link between classroom size (the interviews and classroom observations revealed that, in state schools, the number of students per class was between 35 and 39) and disruptive behaviours. She highlighted that, because of big classroom sizes, it is difficult for her to try methods related to autonomous learning: "Classrooms are too crowded…we can sometimes lose control of the classroom management…there is a lot of noise and disturbance". As well as discussing the features of ELT classrooms, the lack of facilities in schools was also brought forward.

The final common challenges acknowledged by teachers were related to issues that emerged from teachers' readiness for and training in learner autonomy. According to some of the teachers, the practice of learner autonomy is precluded by individual factors such as unwillingness to apply learner autonomy and external factors such as lack of in-service training. Teacher readiness was pointed out by teachers as a factor preventing the development of learner autonomy. One state school teacher (SST3) acknowledged that, "I believe that some teachers do not believe that LA is actually helpful…they don't trust the outcomes of the concept". Similarly, another state school teacher (SST2) highlighted lack of readiness among some teachers to implement learner autonomy in their classrooms. Moreover, one state school teacher (SST5) identified the link between teachers' willingness to enhance autonomous learning with teachers' previous training:

> …rather than students, teachers have obstacles based on their previous training and experiences…at the end of the day, most of the teachers weren't raised in the autonomy-based educational system…they don't train their students either.

On the other hand, a lack of professional development training relevant to applying learner autonomy is addressed by some of the state school teachers as another challenge. For example, one state school teacher (SST7) acknowledged that, "application of methods like learner autonomy sometimes can be wasting of

time and energy due to being inexperienced for it. I don't think we are sufficient enough too; we didn't have the proper training for it". Other teachers also acknowledged lack of training as a challenge and one state school teacher (SST8) noted that, "…only a few teachers have the proper knowledge to apply learner autonomy". Some of the teachers in state schools also mentioned professional development training for teachers and said that, in these programmes, learner autonomy is touched upon briefly through reading from slides without any practical work. This challenge was only mentioned by teachers who teach in state schools and could be related to inefficiency of pre-and in-service training programmes provided by the government.

PART 2 – Classroom Observations

In this section, I first present the context of EFL in private and state schools by describing these schools' situated and infrastructural features so as to understand the EFL classroom environment. I then reveal data that examines how two state and two private school teachers' views about learner autonomy are translated into their classroom practices. Based on records and field-notes from my observation sheets, I use four selected elements to describe participants' teaching practices and how these relate to their views on learner autonomy, based on Alexander's (2001) framework for comparative pedagogy. The four elements are as follows: 1) what are the students expected to learn?; 2) How do they learn?; 3) What resources are used?; 4) What interaction does the teacher engage in to present, organise and evaluate learning tasks? They are intended to develop an autonomous learning environment for students.

4.7 State School Teachers' Teaching Practices in Learner Autonomy

In the state schools examined, the classrooms represented traditional learning settings and the number of students in the classrooms was between 35 and 39. Their level of English was indicated as intermediate by the teachers. Every

classroom I visited had a Smartboard next to the teacher's desk, enabling teachers to use it to follow coursebook activities. The physical arrangement of every classroom was traditional, with bulky and heavy wooden desks set out in four rows. Every row, had four or five desks located and shared by pairs. During lessons, the students remained seated, only standing up to answer a question, so the teacher was the only person moving about in the classroom. With the exception of the coursebook,, there were no English corners in the classroom where English materials such as posters, magazines and books were displayed for student use. In addition, there was no English laboratory in the school. However, there was a library (converted from an empty classroom), where English books were displayed. The majority of the books were coursebooks and students were not allowed to enter the library without permission as the door is locked by the teachers.

4.7.1 State School Teacher 1 (SST1)

The data from my state school classroom observations indicated that the instruction styles of State School Teacher 1 (SST1) and State School Teacher 2 (SST2) were different in some respects, such as teacher instruction style, the role of the teacher, material use and student participation. SST1 preferred to use a traditional approach in which text-based grammar question worksheets (containing exercises such as fill in the blanks and true and false activties related to simple past tense) were the only materials used. Her main focus was on English structure, grammatical points and vocabulary. Student behaviour was strictly controlled by SST1 and their needs and interests did not appear to be considered as they were not offered choices relating to lesson content and method. In contrast to her practice in the interview, she defined learner autonomy as: "students who have goals and make necessary arrangements for their learning…it is like being able to study without warning…". Moreover, in the interview, the teacher revealed her opinions on the incompetency of the coursebook, saying that, "there are no topics in it to encourage students to do dialogues, instead there is a lot of stuff that is unnecessary that is not related to real situations". Interestingly, she believed that changes in the current curriculum were only so-called changes. She placed the

blame for the inapplicability of learner autonomy on external factors. The participant might be able to make an independent choice to practise learner autonomy but might not be willing to do so for reasons such as preventing possible issues related to “disruptive behaviours” and “noise”.

The environment in SST1’s classroom was arguably teacher-centred because SST1’s role was one of controller. She was the only resource to decide the content of the lesson, the way it was delivered, the materials for the lesson and the method of evaluating the tasks. The teacher remained at the front of the classroom and did most of the talking by appointing students to answer questions, explaining grammar rules and translating words from English to Turkish if students requested this. In addition, during the lesson, her instructional language was Turkish, meaning that students were not encouraged to use the target language, except when reading questions and answers aloud. SST1 also used the following expressions constantly when warning her students: “We don’t talk with each other!”, “Don’t speak at the same time!”, “Heads up!”.

As there was no communicative activity and the teacher skipped discussion activities, the interaction between teacher and students was very limited and there were few interactions between students. The data indicated that SST1 was doing the assessment for her students when they answered questions incorrectly, correcting their grammar mistakes or giving them a grade for their homework completion. Finally, according to the data, the only out-of-class activity involved completing a grammar structure worksheet that was handed out by the teacher as homework.

4.7.2 State School Teacher 2 (SST2)

The data indicated that SST2’s class was comparatively more autonomous and supportive than SST1’s class. SST2 tried to encourage her students in language use. During the interview, she defined learner autonomy as: “…the ability of the

students to express themselves in English with confidence…". She also stated her willingness to apply it: "I am so enthusiastic to apply [it] because I believe [in] learning through experiencing and practising". The data showed that SST2 used both Turkish and English as classroom instruction languages. In SST2's class, students did not know which activity they were going to do before their teacher told them. First, she explained the instructions in English and, in the event of student confusion in understanding her instructions, she translated them from English to Turkish. As the students were not informed of the activity beforehand, it took time for SST2 to explain how to do the writing activity.

In relation to the coursebook, SST2 made a similar statement to SST1, stating her dissatisfaction with the coursebook as follows: "students feel bored when we do the activities in the book…the content of the book isn't interesting for them". In the interview, she also said that they cannot change the coursebook and curriculum, but added that, "…so I ask myself…okay, what can you do for these children?... I try to find tasks for them that are a little bit more interesting than the coursebook exercises…rather than focusing on grammar only, I try to encourage them to use the language". In her lesson, she preferred to use a writing activity in which students create a story (by using simple past tense) about a character that they have made up and using adjectives that they have learned in a previous lesson. During the activity, students were encouraged to use their dictionaries for vocabulary for their stories rather than directly reporting the meaning of the words. Assessment of sentence structure was done by the teacher and students and, when she saw a mistake, she asked, "are you sure about this sentence?" If the student still could not find the mistake, she asked the class, "who wants to help your friend?" In doing this, SST2 was arguably trying to let her students find out their mistakes by themselves first, then ask for help from other students. According to the data, interaction took place between students and teachers as they were working as in pairs. As a final step, at the end of the lesson, the teacher asked her students to continue her stories as homework and add a new character and complete a section of their coursebook. Interaction took place between SST2 and her students and she attempted to encourage them to

participate and use their communication skills. However, her lesson was mostly teacher-centred and she decided the content of the lesson, activities and materials.

4.8 Private School Teachers' Teaching Practices Regarding Learner Autonomy

According to my classroom observations in private schools and my interviews with teachers, teachers worked in more learner autonomy-supportive classroom environments than those in state schools. There are various possible reasons for this, such as better physical facilities and resources, a more flexible curriculum, not depending on the government providing in-service training and support from the school management. First, the data revealed that, in private schools, teachers were given more freedom in the content of their lessons despite the curriculum that they had to follow. In the interview, Private School Teacher 2 (PST2) mentioned that they were given a flexible syllabus to design activities and lesson content according to classroom level. Regarding the psychical environment, in private schools, the number of students in the classrooms is between 15 and 18. As in state schools, the classrooms are designed traditionally, with a Smartboard next to the teacher's desk facing the students' seats, which are set out in three rows. However, in private schools, every student has their own lightweight seats and tables that they do not share with other students, potentially easing any rearrangements or movements in the classroom for group work activities. In relation to EFL materials, some English posters have been prepared by teachers for announcements such as conferences or prepared by students as part of tasks and activities. Unlike in state schools, students have English labs where they can use technology-based language learning materials such as computers, tablets and a conference hall with a projector and screen for watching films. In the labs, there are a variety of English books for different student levels and interests. The English lab is open for every student and they can use it whenever they need it – for example, in their long lunch breaks or at weekends. Moreover, there is also an English club in which students from other classes can gather and work together in English activities that they choose with the guidance of their teachers. In private schools, the language used between teachers and students is only English. As a

policy, English teachers in private schools use English all the time to communicate with their students, including break times.

4.8.1 Private School Teacher 1 (PST1)

In her interview, Private School Teacher 1 (PST1) described learner autonomy as students having the ability to take responsibility for their learning with their teacher's help and guidance. According to PST1, autonomous learners, '*mostly rely on themselves rather than being dependent on others'*. She added that, "autonomous learners are [those] who go beyond our classroom activities". In the interview, she also mentioned her students' readiness for learner autonomy: "I think our students are ready for autonomous learning". In PST1's class, before the lesson, she told me that she was going to do a listening and discussion activity based on the coursebook. However, the lesson was directed by the students' questions, as they asked questions about their MUN project as soon as PST1 had started her lesson. Some of the students shared their concerns about their preparation and the process involved in the MUN, and it appeared that they had discussed it in their previous lesson. When PST1 was listening to her students, she responded to their questions using these sentences: *'actually, you have a great point*' when she wanted to praise or, "I know at first it sounds a bit difficult" when showing empathy with her students. Thus, in PST1's class, students might feel that their perspectives were valued. During the lesson, students did not need to ask permission to speak. In some cases, there was a dual conversation between two of the students in front of the class, with PST1 and other students listening. Students' English proficiency levels were arguably also high when compared with state school students. They were able to discuss a topic with their teacher in English. In the interview, PST1 mentioned that, in their school, students travel abroad for holidays and study English at the same time (to countries such as the UK, Malta and the USA) for their winter or summer breaks. Having the opportunity to go abroad to practise their English is clearly a big advantage for students in developing high English proficiency levels when I compare state school students' usage levels of English. PST1 listened to her students and replied to them by giving

examples on the board. During her instructions, students took notes. PST1 then opened a video on YouTube that related to the topic that they were discussing. She gave over the lesson to her students' questions for the MUN, even though she was planning to do another activity. At the end of the lesson, PST1 asked her students to watch a TED talk on YouTube that related to the MUN topic and to take notes about what they thought was important for their next lesson.

4.8.2 Private School Teacher 2 (PST2)

I observed another class in the same school taught by PST2. According to her statement, "learner autonomy requires students to make decisions for their learning…" She argued that her autonomous students, "learn from their own mistakes…[and] do not hesitate to ask for help when they struggle in order to make sure that they learn". Before the lesson, PST2 told me that her class's English proficiency level was lower than other 9th-grade classes in their school, and she said that they were therefore not going to attend the MUN, but her students were responsible for a project involving designing and preparing a website. In the interview, the teachers mentioned the website project being conducted by 9th-grade students (including four different classrooms) and that they were preparing a website for foreigners who want to visit Turkey and their city. The website includes presenting on landmarks and doing interviews with foreigners who live in Turkey. The content of the lessons in private schools was arguably shaped by a curriculum that provides opportunities in terms of facilities for language use and materials based on technology. In the interview, PST2 said that, "in this school, we have a flexible curriculum and facilities that help us to apply learner autonomy". PST2 started her lesson by showing pictures related to climate change in Antarctica. She then asked her students what they expected to listen to. Some of the students revealed their guesses about global warming and then the teacher asked her students about words they know relating to global warming. Some of the students asked permission to speak and shared their ideas, with the teacher listening to her students throughout, writing some related words on the board. By doing a pre-listening activity, PST2 was arguably trying to prepare and motivate

her students for the listening text and also possibly trying to activate their knowledge and what they already knew about the topic. After a small discussion, she told her students to look up the words on the board and check the meanings of the ones they did not know. She then asked her students whether they were ready to listen. They listened to the text once and then the teacher asked her students to listen to it again and complete the blank exercises related to the text in their coursebook. PST2 then opened a short video on YouTube relating to global warming and climate change. After the video, she asked her students what they think about the video and global warming. Again, the students asked permission to share their opinions. In some cases, while the students were speaking, they became stuck trying to remember a word or correct grammar. PST2 tried to help her students with correcting their grammar. The data indicated that the students appeared a little anxious when trying to speak but the teacher praised her students' attempts by smiling and using phrases such as "well done" or "I totally agree". She also ignored her students' grammar mistakes unless they stopped and asked for help.

Part 3 – Focus Groups

In this part of the study, I investigate Turkish EFL students' perspectives and practices relating to learner autonomy through conducting 10 focus groups. 66 EFL students were asked to reveal their beliefs about learner autonomy and how it relates to their learning. I conducted five focus groups in state schools with 33 students. I conducted another five focus groups in private schools with 33 students and marked students from state schools as, for example, SFG1: S1 (State Focus Group 1 – Student 1), SFG2: S14 (State Focus Group 2 – Student 14) and SFG5: S33 (State Focus Group 5 – Student 33), in order to quote the interviewers conveniently. The focus groups from private schools were marked as, for example, PFG1: S1 (Private Focus Group1 – Student 1), PFG2: S:10 (Private Focus Group2 –

Student 10 and PFG5: S28 (Private Focus Group 5 – Student 28). The focus groups from state and private schools showed similar findings regarding student explanations, willingness and practices in relation to learner autonomy but, at the same time, provided some different findings regarding their beliefs and practices.

4.9 Learner Interpretation of Learner Autonomy

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, the students received an explanatory information sheet describing what learner autonomy means before the data collection process. They were also reminded about the term at the beginning of the focus group. The first question asked to the students was for them to share their interpretations of learner autonomy. The results of this research indicated that students have shared definitions of learner autonomy with teachers, covering various aspects of autonomous learning. Despite this consistency, two new categories had to be added, as some of the students preferred to value the term when they were asked to share their opinions about learner autonomy (as in the teachers' replies). On the other hand, some preferred not to share their opinions. Notably, some of the categories might overlap with one another as they involve interrelated elements.

4.9.1 Taking Responsibility

According to some of the students' statements, learner autonomy relates to sharing ownership of their learning with their teachers. For example, one of the students stated that he sees learner autonomy as "not waiting [for] teacher's instructions all the time…we need to do some stuff too" (PFG5, S29). On the other hand, some of the students highlighted the importance of being asked for their opinions in their learning. For example, one of the students stated that learner autonomy is related to students' ability to make decisions about learning: "When students ask to learn something, their (students') opinions should be asked too…" (PFG3, S20). Similarly, another student in a state school focus group centred upon

the necessity of students' involvement in decision-making for their learning when he asked to interpret learner autonomy as follows: "Everyone should learn with their own efforts and [be] willing… They (teachers) should ask our opinions for…even in the tiny stuff… I need to improve my speaking skills but all we do is grammar" (SFG2, S14). He also mentioned teacher and student numbers, noting that, "…we are 980 students in here and teachers' number is only 70", before pointing to students not being involved in decision-making about learning despite representing the majority: "..but do they let us decide anything? No! ...It's just unfair....". These students' statements could be translated to demonstrate their awareness of some of their responsibilities. They arguably do not want to be excluded from decisions related to their learning.

4.9.2 Motivation

The data revealed that some of the students indicated that learner autonomy is a term related to intrinsic motivation and self-confidence. According to Ryan and Deci (2009), motivation is considered a key factor in engagement, progress and achievement of targets for learners. Students' metacognitive skills are also related to their motivation as they need motivation to choose their goals for learning and to undertake preparation and act to achieve these goals (Ryan and Deci, 2009).

The following quotes are from students who said that learner autonomy relates to their motivation:

> …when a student makes herself/himself believe to achieve. (SFG3: S19)
>
> …it is something that when I tell myself, 'Come on, you can do it!' (PFG5: S31)

Self-confidence was another issue that was shared by some of the students when they defined the term learner autonomy. According to these students, learner autonomy is a term that will help in their learning and makes them more confident

when they use English. Learner autonomy is shown to relate to being able to ask questions: *'without being scared that my teacher and my friends might think that I am stupid when I speak'* (PFG4: S25). Similarly, another student in a state school stated his motivation to be an active learner, but noted that he also needed support from his teacher:

> I want to be more active, but our teacher is scolding us a lot whenever we speak without permission, she always says that do not speak with your friend! Turn your head to your desk! Hey, lift your head! If I put my head on my desk for a while…I mean we are not in a military camp or something…I feel that there is no point to speak or ask a question at all. (SFG1: S2)

According to these students, being motivated and participating actively in classroom tasks such as asking questions will help them to achieve when learning English. Students are also arguably aware that they might have responsibility for their motivation. However, they also need their teachers' assistance to be motivated.

4.9.3 Value

The data revealed that most students preferred to give value to learner autonomy when they were asked to describe it as some of the teachers did during the interviews. For example, in many focus groups, some of the students described learner autonomy as an "important thing" or "necessary in foreign language learning". Some stated that learner autonomy was " a thing that every school should have". Learner autonomy is a new educational policy in recent EFL education in Turkey, so describing autonomous learning can be difficult. The students involved might prefer to value it and might think that learner autonomy is something useful for them because I had explained the term before the focus groups started. Moreover, they might prefer to give answers such as " yes, it sounds something important for us " (STFG3: S18) rather than describing it, as many might also have limited experience of it. On the other hand, some of the participants preferred to value learner autonomy as not essential for their learning when they were asked to describe it. These students expressed that they "are not

willing to be involved in decision-making for their learning goals" or "do not want to take responsibility for their learning". The following quotes from students' descriptions are given to demonstrate their perceptions:

> I disapprove of giving too many responsibilities to the students… Students should be independent but not too much or not exaggerate. (PFG5: S29)

> I would prefer to learn it from a professional. (SFG5: S33)

> I think it is a wrong thing because teachers are educated to teach us so their techniques would be better. (SFG4: S24)

According to these students' statements, they arguably associate autonomous learning with the following variables: only undertaking independent studies, having limitless freedom and learning without their teacher's assistance.

4.9.4 Prefer not to Describe

On the other hand, some of the students prefer not to share their understanding of the term, stating that they, "do not know how to interpret it' and that they 'do not have any idea about this thing". They also stated that they, "do not know exactly what the term means". The data indicated that the term might still not be clear for participants despite reminders issued about the term at the beginning of the focus groups. One of the reasons for this might be that learner autonomy is a new concept in recent EFL education in Turkey, so describing autonomous learning could be difficult for them to understand, particularly as they might not have heard it from teachers or others, or practise it themselves. Other explanations might be that they initially hesitate to share their opinions because of feeling shy to speak or waiting for their friends to reply first, particularly for the first question asked to the students in the focus groups.

Overall, an interesting finding from the research was that most of the students who prefer to value learner autonomy or not to share their opinions came from state school focus groups, possibly because state schools have a less autonomous learning environment where students might not have the opportunity to hear about learner autonomy or practise it. The concept might therefore be more abstract for them when compared with students in private schools.

4.10 Students' Motivations for Learning English

This part of the findings aims to investigate students' motivations for learning English and what makes an impact on students' engagement for their autonomous learning. As mentioned in chapter 2, motivation is considered as one of the most important factors for learners to progress autonomously and to be in a position to learn (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Dornyei and Ushioda, 2013; Benson, 2001; Murase, 2015). I also therefore asked students to talk about their motivations to learn English to explore connections between their motivations and their views on autonomous learning. The results are set out in the following section.

4.10.1 Demotivation

In the focus groups, some of the respondents stated that they had no motivation to learn English. These students said that they did not see the point of learning English or attending activities. When they were asked to share their motivations for learning English, one of the participants stated that he was influenced by family members: "…my father forces me to learn it…he is good at English…sorry but I don't like learning English" SFG2: S11. Similarly, SFG1: S8 said that, "it doesn't interest me at all", noting that he was forced to learn English because of exams. Another student from a different state school said that he intended to work in his father's shop after high school graduation and "…will not need English anymore". Another student referred to his frustrations related to English lessons: "we only listen to the teacher's instructions, write them down and then we do exercises related to grammar. The English lessons are too boring". According to

these statements, students sometimes do not associate learning English with long-term purpose or see any usefulness for their further studies and jobs. Two of the students from private schools also said that they were not motivated to learn English. PFG4: S25 stated that she did not know why she was learning English: “we are learning it in vain” PFG3: S19. Another participant from a private school stated that, if he did not have to, he would not learn English or other subjects: “…I hate school anyway” PFG1: S6.

The data indicates that some of the students lack any motivation (extrinsic or intrinsic) to engage in activities related to learning English. According to these students’ responses, it could be concluded that they feel that they do not have control of their own learning choices because of forces and obligations based on their socio-cultural environment, including their family members. It might also be unlikely for students to engage when the learning process is not stimulating for them. The data also revealed that the majority of students lacking any kind of motivation are from state schools. These students might not be motivated to learn English because the EFL learning process in a state school context might not be interesting or pleasurable for them. For example, my classroom observations revealed that students in private schools were presented with greater variety of activities and materials in and beyond the classroom.

4.10.2 Different Motivations

The data reveals that most of the students in the focus groups (both in private and state schools) have extrinsic motivations when they share their reasoning behind learning English. Ryan and Deci (2009) located external motivation one step to the right of amotivation and connected it with external or internal pressure, which includes punishment and rewards.

One of the respondents stated that he was learning English because it is in the curriculum and he shared his motivation to learn it by saying that he wanted, “not

to have low marks… I think they are teaching us just to pass exams and to be successful in the job interviews rather than to communicate with people" SFG2: S14. A student from a private school shared a similar response when asked to share her reasons for learning English: "…because we are asked in the exams, that's why I am learning it". She also reported feeling anxiety because of her negative experiences when she was trying to meet her parents' expectations: "… when I get low marks my family isn't happy at all, they said they are paying a lot of money for my school… Well, I am doing my best but the level is sometimes too hard for me because I came from a state school" PFG5: S30.

Across many focus groups, students reported that their motivations to learn English were related to their career plans, which was a prominent theme. Some of the students see having a good level of English as a step to gaining a job that is well paid or, according to one of the students, "in order to earn a lot of money in the future" PFG2: S13. Students also wanted to work abroad or in international companies. One student from a state school made the following statement:

> My dream is working at one of the international companies. For this reason, I am thinking that my English level should be good, so I need to take good marks from my English lessons…I want to have a job that I like. (SFG4: S26)

Similarly, another student from a private school shared a similar motivation related to his career and noted his reason for learning English as follows:

> It will be important for my future career…to have a better job…when we have a job interview, we are going to be asked only one question which is 'whether we know English or not?' (PFG3: S19)

Another prominent sub-theme (related to extrinsic motivation) shared by the students from state and private schools is that they learn English to communicate and/or to socialise. According to these students' statements, English is a language that is used worldwide, and it is necessary to learn it. As noted by one of the respondents who participated in a state school focus group:

> It is a worldwide and common language…most of the countries around the world speak English so why not? ... If we know English, we won't have trouble to communicate. I want to understand people. (SFG4: S25)

Other students also said that they learned English to communicate – another respondent from a private school stated that learning a foreign language was very important for her to communicate with people from other countries. She shared her interest to learn English, addressing the dominance of usage of English: "…English is used around the world… If you want to see different opinions and to meet different people …to improve yourself…" PFG2: S11. She added that "…you need a common language to communicate with them". As mentioned in chapter 2, English is not used as an official language but as a foreign language in Turkey. However, it is still widely used by Turkish people to connect themselves to the world. The data also implied as a sub-theme that some of the students want to learn English to watch films, follow TV series or play games online.

> …everything is in English…it is an important and useful language…I think English takes up considerable space in our lives…for example, I prefer to listen to foreign music, like Rihanna, Zayn, Coldplay… I want to understand what their songs mean in Turkish. (SFG2: S9)
>
> I like watching English videos on YouTube. (PFG2: S13)
>
> I am reading manga and they are in English, so I want to understand them. (PFG1: S1)
>
> Playing games and they have videos in English, and I want to understand what they are talking about. When I play counter (an online game) people speak English with each other, and I want to speak like them. (SFG1: S4)

In the interviews, some of the teachers from private schools noted that they sometimes let students watch films and then have discussions after that or do tasks related to the films. They also used authentic materials such as comic books and did reading activities. Similarly, in state schools, teachers try to choose topics in which students are interested and do vocabulary activities. In state schools, the teachers interviewed also stated that they try to use some reading texts relating to students' interests. However, they also said that these materials are mostly not authentic. On the other hand, some of the students in private schools said that

they intended to go abroad to attend an MUN project or summer school and therefore wanted to learn English more. An interesting finding is that none of the students from state schools mentioned attending projects or conferences abroad or even travelling abroad. This could be because travelling abroad in Turkey might be difficult for a state school student.

The data implies that the majority of participants use English as a tool to gain better jobs and communicate with people from other countries, stating that they wanted to learn English to travel, meet with foreign people and learn about other cultures – in other words, to connect themselves to the world. These students also arguably have a sense of autonomy regarding their motivation to learn as their intrinsic motivations guide their behaviours, as asserted by Deci and Ryan (2013). They might therefore have to put effort into learning English to achieve their aims in relation to furthering their career, travelling and communicating with other people around the world.

The data also showed that some of the students in the state and private school focus groups were entirely and/or mostly motivated intrinsically. According to these students' statements, their involvement in learning English is related to their self-motivation. As been stated by Ryan and Deci (2013), individuals who have self-motivation to learn also have intrinsic motivation, which can be an influential determining factor for students' learning behaviours. The data indicates that students' intrinsic motivations influence their engagement in learning English, and these students want to learn English because they like the language. For example, one student from a state school shared her interest in learning English as follows: "First of all, learning English is my childhood dream" SFG2: S8. She added other reasons: "I want to visit other counties and explore different nations…different religions". Similarly, another student whose motivation to learn English was driven intrinsically shared a similar statement, noting that, "I like the language…for me it is very enjoyable to learn it" PFG1: S7. Some of the students in private schools also shared their intrinsic motivations:

> I like English so much and I want to develop my English skills…want to learn different accents. (PFG5: S32)
>
> English is a compulsory lesson…but at the same time, I like to learn it…I think learning a foreign language shows you as a cultured person… (SFG4: S27)

The data implies that these students' motivations are based on their interest in learning English. Their self-interest might also be driven by their desire to improve themselves, as they indicated that they want to learn English not only because they have favourable feelings against the language but also because they can use English for their development, helping them to, for example, find a job or learn about other cultures. In summary, the focus groups found that students share different and similar types of motivation and their responses suggest that extrinsic and intrinsic factors play a role when students put effort into learning in or out of the classroom setting. In addition, the data indicated that some of the students had multiple reasons to learn English, revealing that most of the students' motivations were driven by extrinsic regulations.

4.11 Student Practice in Learning English in and beyond the Classroom

In the interviews with teachers, an important theme was raised in that most of the teachers (especially from state schools) stated that they do not think that their students are ready to choose these concepts. Interestingly, in the focus groups, the majority of students (again mostly from state schools) made similar statements to their teachers. To understand their readiness, I asked them whether they were willing to be involved in decision-making for choosing content, material and activities, or for their assessment. According to the data, most of the students preferred to pass responsibility to their teacher for designing lesson content and choosing materials and tasks in the classroom. The following are some of the students' statements indicating that they do not see themselves as autonomous:

I think I am not an autonomous student. (SFG2: S13)

I don't know how to be an autonomous student. (SFG1: S5)

I cannot choose content and material. (SFG3: S18)

I prefer my teacher to choose things for me. (PFG4: S26)

…our teacher knows the best for us. (SFG2: S14)

…I cannot tell that I can choose these things, but maybe I want to choose for the future. (PFG5: S231)

Moreover, a few students said that they see themselves as either autonomous or semi-autonomous learners as they mentioned their own learning choices. Here are their statements:

…I always ask myself what can I do more for my learning…it is up to me to study or not. But if I do not study hard, I will lose. (PFG2: S7)

I might have it (autonomy)... the last couple of years I am putting some targets for myself and crawling towards these targets. (PFG1: S1)

…[I] feel myself semi-autonomous. (SFG5: S32)

…I see myself…because every student has their own ways to study…I have mine too. (PFG3: S20)

Although these students stated that they were autonomous learners, they did not mention being involved in decisions about content, tasks and assessment for their learning in the classroom. They appeared to associate their autonomy mostly with their targets and goals for the English language. In the focus groups, students were also asked to share their learning activities beyond the classroom. This was aimed to identify possible signs of Turkish EFL learners' autonomous language learning behaviours. Thus, the results can guide Turkish EFL teachers who want to promote learner autonomy. The following table presents students' learning practices beyond the classroom.

Table 2 Learners' Out-of-classroom Activities for English Language Learning

Categories	Sub-categories	Illustrative Responses
1) Using technology-enhanced resources	**Using mobile applications, online games and social media**	- "I follow famous people's social media addresses". - "We have a WhatsApp group, and we post things in English, like jokes, grammar rules or vocabularies". - "I use Tureng (a Turkish – English dictionary application) and look at the meanings from my phone". - "One of my friends suggested me to use Duolingo, I downloaded it and since then I like using it, I also start to learn Arabic, in our next class there is an Arabian student and I sometimes try to speak with her in Arabic". - "I play online games and we speak there in English".
	Watching English videos on YouTube, English TV programmes and films	- "Generally, I learn English by watching series and movies. It is a very useful way and much better than to open a grammar book and memorising the rules". - "When I am at home, I watch movies, YouTube videos and listen to music… I learn from them a lot". - "I watch series with English subtitles and then I write down the vocabularies that I learn".
	Listening to English songs	- "I listen to English songs and try to translate them from English to Turkish".
2) Studying grammar and vocabulary	**Reading grammar books or coursebooks**	- "If I feel that I don't understand the topic very well, I do some grammar exercises at home to learn it better". - "I do a lot of revisions for grammar rules after school".
	Noting down new words	- "I have colourful post-it notes everywhere in my room, I write down new words on the front and write the meaning of it at the back". - "I use a small notebook for new words, whenever I see an interesting word, write it down on my notebook and try to memorise it".
3) Reading English resources	**Magazines, comics and books**	- "I like reading mangas and comics". - "Trying to read English books".
4) Social interactions with foreigners	**Talking to foreigners in English** **Writing emails and sending WhatsApp messages**	- "I chat online with native speakers". - "In the summer holidays, I try to chat with tourists". - "I contact my friends abroad with WhatsApp". - "When we went abroad with our school, I met with many people and we are sending regular email to each other".

According to the data, using technology-enhanced resources is the most common activity in which students (both in private and state schools) engage when they want to learn English outside school times. In the focus groups, many students mentioned activities such as using phone apps for language learning, playing online games in English, using social media, listening to English songs and watching videos on YouTube. Interestingly, the data revealed that students who prefer to watch English TV programmes, videos or films dubbed in English dub and with subtitles are mostly from private schools. This might be because private school students have a better English proficiency level than state school students, enabling them to understand the level of English when they watch these resources. In addition, students in private schools are likely to be from wealthier backgrounds and so might also have access to better IT resources or memberships for streaming service

providers through which they can watch English TV programmes and films to practise their English. The second most common activity used by students to practise their English is studying grammar and vocabulary without being required to do so by their teacher. Students in both state and private schools stated that they do self-linguistic study in grammar and vocabulary that involves doing revision, using grammar books and memorising new words. The third and fourth most common practices for learning English are reading English resources (such as books, magazines and comics) and using social interactions with foreigners (such as speaking with foreigners face to face or online and having email exchanges). Another interesting finding was that the data indicated that reading English resources and having social interactions with foreigners were mostly practised by private school students. This might be because private school students can access these kinds of resources more than students at state schools. Overall, the data implied that the majority of students do not feel that they are ready to be involved in decision-making for choosing content, materials and activities in class. Nonetheless, students' out-of-classroom activities might be considered as signs of autonomous learning practices as they are relevant to the efforts of learners.

CHAPTER 5 – Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study is based on the understandings and practices of Turkish EFL teachers and students in relation to learner autonomy as a new educational policy in the Turkish context. The study intended to develop an in-depth understanding of learner autonomy at high school level in both private and state schools. I thus aimed to answer four key research questions with specific purposes in understanding how the participants interpret learner autonomy and how their interpretations influence their practices and behaviours. In this chapter, the major findings of the research are discussed and the research questions addressed. In the next section, the conclusions of the study are presented. The final section puts forward pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Research Question 1: How is learner autonomy defined and interpreted by Turkish EFL teachers?

According to the data, most of the participating teachers in state and private schools expressed some views about learner autonomy, although the data indicated that many of the participants' views were not clear and consistent. This result is similar to the findings of Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), who asserted that teachers failed to clearly explain the meaning of learner autonomy to them. Nonetheless, the findings of the current research are in line with several other types of research (Benson, 2011; Oxford, 2011; Murase, 2015; Little, 2003; Ushioda, 2013; Chan, 2011; Khalil and Ali, 2018), in which the participants interpreted learner autonomy in several ways. Thus, the data obtained from the interviews with teachers revealed that Turkish EFL teachers in both private and state schools associated learner autonomy with different perspectives, including learner control, metacognition, collaboration and value. As the data was gathered from different participants from a variety of backgrounds and school types, various interpretations were expected. In addition, learner autonomy consists of multiple

levels (Nuan, 1997), potentially leading to different understandings and interpretations (Marsh et al., 2001).

Teachers' most common definitions of learner autonomy are as follows: students' ability to take responsibility for their own learning, self-reliance, especially beyond the classroom, and doing independent learning work in the form of out-of-classroom tasks and metacognition. It is clear that these teachers believed in the link between learner autonomy and students having the ability to take ownership of their learning, and a similar finding has emerged from other research (Joshi, 2011; Balcikanli, 2010). On the other hand, in the Turkish education system, in relation to interactions between students and teachers, teachers have the main authority and mostly occupy a controller role, directing the lesson and deciding on methods, lesson content and materials (Yumuk, 2002). Interestingly, teachers associated learner autonomy with activities undertaken by students mostly beyond the class, and teachers appear to want their students to take ownership of their learning, mostly for learning activities that the students do beyond the classroom. In addition, the results show that some of the participants understand learner autonomy as students' ability to identify their own learning strategies. Students' ability to identify their needs and make an effort to achieve their goals is another description that the participants used for learner autonomy. Murase (2015) describes this connection by emphasising students' capacities to take control of their learning through knowledge about their own learning needs, preferences, strengths and weaknesses. The teachers also preferred to relate learner autonomy to student motivation and willingness to learn. According to such teachers, autonomous students are those who are, "willing to engage in activities and do not need a push", "are motivated to learn and know how to learn better", "have the confidence to communicate with me and with other students" and "do not give up easily when they do mistakes". Some of the teachers arguably associate motivated language learners with autonomous learners who show willingness and determination to learn and have confidence in doing so. Oxford (2011) construes this concept as students' capacity to take control of their learning through knowledge about their affective states such as anxiety, self-esteem and other emotions, as well as how to control these affective factors.

Another common understanding mentioned by teachers regarding learner autonomy is of learning with collaboration, which means students interacting with teachers and peers when they learn. One teacher stated this of learner autonomy: "students learn with interactions during the class…with us and with their classmates". A socio-cultural perspective sees learner autonomy as a socially shaped variable that is developed when learners negotiate and communicate with their teachers and other learners (Smith and Ushioda, 2009; Benson, 2011; Oxford, 2003). This finding is also in line with the literature, as argued in chapter 2 – a collaborative environment is beneficial for developing learner autonomy (Blidi, 2017; Murray, 2014; Lamb, 2017). As suggested by these authors, learner autonomy in language learning can be promoted through interaction and communication with others, rather than learning in isolation.

Interestingly, the teachers also attributed value to learner autonomy when they were asked to describe it. They valued it in two ways – first as useful to apply, using these expressions: "it is important for students" and "essential to apply". The teachers (especially those in state schools) also valued learner autonomy as challenging and difficult to apply in the current circumstances. Similarly, attributing value to learner autonomy was reported in other research results where participants placed value and held attitudes (either favourable or distant) towards it (Chan, 2003; Shahsavari, 2014). In the current research, the data revealed that the teachers held mostly positive views of learner autonomy, stating that they were willing to apply it in their classrooms. According to Sinclair (2009) and Benson (2013), teachers' willingness to apply learner autonomy is important because teachers share as many roles as students in the process of its development. On the other hand, the teachers stated that they faced some constraints when they wanted to develop learner autonomy, which is in line with several kinds of research abroad (Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012; An, 2019; Alibakshi, 2015) and in the Turkish context (Kara, Dundar and Ayaz, 2017; Karababa et. al, 2010; Cakici, 2017). The challenges faced by Turkish EFL teachers are explained more in the following section.

5.3 Research Question 2: How is learner autonomy encouraged in the practice of Turkish EFL Teachers? What are the challenges for teachers in the promotion of learner autonomy?

In this section, I will first focus on the 20 EFL teachers' self-reported practice and four EFL teachers' observed practice to support learner autonomy, before presenting the challenges that the teachers face while promoting learner autonomy. The current study revealed that the teachers engage in several practices to create an autonomous learning environment for their students. This finding was based on 20 teachers' stated practices and behaviours, expressed during the interviews, and the observed practices of four teachers (two teachers from a state school and two teachers from a private school). In addition, the current study reveals some alignments and mismatches between teachers' interpretations of learner autonomy and their practices relating to it. Although most of the participants were able to state various viewpoints about learner autonomy that fit the descriptions of other researchers in the literature and were also broadly in favour of it, the majority of the teachers in state schools reported that they do not usually practice it because of the challenges that they face. Moreover, two of the teachers' observed practices in state schools indicated that creating an autonomous learning environment is not an easy task. Thus, one of the possible reasons why teachers in state schools do not reflect their definitions in their practices relates to their school environment. This indicates that teachers might behave differently if they were teaching in different conditions with, for example, small classroom sizes and better resources. The school environment therefore helps to create opportunities for teachers to apply autonomous learning practices for their students.

In addition, the data showed that most of the teachers preferred to define learner autonomy as students' abilities to take control of their learning. However, most of the teachers in state schools did not reflect this in their self-reported practice when they were asked to share these practices. My classroom observations in state schools supported this assumption, as the data indicated that teachers were the

only ones with control during the teaching process. The teachers in the state schools were mostly in charge of everything. However, a difference was also apparent between the practices of the two teachers – there were some indications that SST2 was trying to develop more positive interactions with her students and attempting to encourage her students to participate through letting them use their own words and work in pairs. The teacher was therefore trying to apply communicative language teaching despite the overcrowded classroom.

As emphasised in the literature, students' abilities to take responsibility for their learning are also related to their involvement in decisions about the curriculum, lesson content, teaching materials and assessment types (Benson, 2011; Everhard and Murphy, 2015). On the other hand, although the majority of the teachers thought that it was necessary to allow students to be involved in decision-making processes, some indicated that they preferred not to provide choices for learners when they were asked whether they let students become involved in the choice of materials, activities and assessment types. The analysis suggested that most of the participants in state schools did not mention students' involvement although they defined learner autonomy as students' ability to take responsibility for their learning. The contradiction between teachers' definitions and practices relating to learner autonomy has also been identified by many researchers in the literature (Duong, 2014; Juan and Yajie, 2018; Amirian and Noughabi, 2017). Further, the data indicated that, although the majority of the teachers have a positive attitude towards learner autonomy, and they think that the practice of it is important for their students, they still do not feel ready to give responsibility to their learners regarding the content and assessment of their learning. This result is linear with Balcikanli's work (2010), in which teachers are not willing to share responsibilities with their students regarding students' involvement in the decision-making process about learning content, materials and assessment. A similar result was found in another study conducted by Dogan and Mirici (2017), who revealed that, although Turkish EFL teachers have highly positive views of learner autonomy, they do not feel that their students are ready to take responsibility and do not feel positive

about the practicability of learner autonomy. The possible reasons for this might be related to variables such as structural issues in the curriculum and standardised assessments, and teachers might feel that they are not given enough room to practise learner autonomy in state schools compared with private schools.

On the other hand, in relation to students' involvement in decisions in the classroom, in private schools, some autonomy was noticed in practice during the classroom observations and identified in the interviews with teachers. Possible reasons for giving students options to become involved in decisions about their learning could include the context of private schools, where flexibility and facilities are provided for teachers. For instance, in the interviews, the majority of the teachers in private schools and some of the teachers in state schools associated learner autonomy with collaborative and communicative learning. The data indicated that engaging in communicative practices was sometimes skipped by teachers in state schools because of classroom management issues. For example, in some of the interviews, the teachers stated that, when they try to practise communicative approaches, noise levels become high because of the nature of the activity. Complaints were sometimes received from the school management about this, as the noise level situation can cause discontent among the school administration and with some other teachers. The noise level situation and its impact on teacher practice is emphasised by Merc and Subasi (2015). Although communicative language teaching is considered an important element of autonomous learning (Little, 2007; Benson, 2011), the conditions and potential of the classrooms should be considered beforehand (Wright, 2005). The data indicated that teachers in state schools see classroom management and big classroom size as an issue or excuse preventing promotion of learner autonomy.

Another finding revealed is that, in private schools, teachers use technology and encourage students to do project work or task-based activities. Several researchers revealed that they used multimedia technology-based materials and teaching

approaches (Benson, 2011; Raya and Fernandez, 2002; Liu et. al., 2020; Condrat, 2014). Similarly, task-based instruction (Benson, 2011; Lee, 2016; Kozlova, 2018) and attending projects (Diaz-Ramirez, 2014; Van Loi, 2017) are highlighted as important elements for developing learner autonomy. In state school, teachers did not mention task-based teaching practices that involve projects or portfolios, although these were highly emphasised in the curriculum (MoNE, 2016). The possible reason for this might again stem from contextual differences between private and state schools. For example, teachers in private schools might have better resources in their classrooms to help them.

To understand learner autonomy in the Turkish context, the teachers were also asked to share the constraints that they face in the development of learner autonomy. The challenges identified in this study from teachers' responses can generally be categorised as related to teachers, learners and institutional factors, similar to those categories described in recent studies (Kizildag, 2009; Borg and Busaidi, 2012). In the current study, teachers in state and private schools identified students' habits (e.g. previous learning habits or not being ready for autonomous learning) and students' lack of motivation for learning English (e.g. being reluctant to engage in activities or being motivated to learn only to get a good grade) as the most common problem that prevents implementation of learner autonomy in their classrooms.

The second most common constraint shared by the teachers (especially teachers in state schools) was related to institutional factors. For instance, according to teachers in state schools, the coursebook (e.g. inefficiency of the coursebook), the curriculum (e.g. an overloaded curriculum), the physical conditions of their schools (e.g. overcrowded classrooms, lack of facilities for students to practise their English) and lack of support are among the challenges that they face when they want to promote learner autonomy. The majority of teachers who teach in private schools are content with the institutional and instructional conditions of their

schools as they have a more flexible curriculum, use authentic materials in their classrooms, work in less crowded classrooms and have access to English labs where students can practise their English on their own and with their peers. The last obstacle that was identified by the teachers (especially those from state schools) was related to the teacher factor and involved teachers' readiness to develop learner autonomy and their lack of training for it. As highlighted by Gokmenoglu et al. (2016), there have been encouraging improvements in the number and variety of professional development activities in Turkey. However, the effectiveness of these mandatory training programmes has been questioned by teachers and researchers. For example, these training programmes for EFL language teachers have limitations in their impact on teachers' practices (Uysal, 2012; Gokmenoglu and Clark, 2015).

Based on teachers' views, creating an autonomous learning environment is more applicable in private schools than in state schools. The results implied that the practicability of learner autonomy in the Turkish context also depends on school type differences. As it several researchers have identified, private schools can use some advantages to promote learner autonomy – for example, they have more resources to implement different instructional methods, such as technology-based learning (Aydin et al., 2017). In addition, differences between school types were highlighted by Dag (2015). In private schools, administrators have more managerial liberty and fewer restraints from the government than their counterparts at state schools. Teachers in private schools therefore have more support in creating an autonomous learning environment.

5.4 Research Question 3: How is learner autonomy defined and interpreted by Turkish EFL students?

In the current study, Turkish EFL students defined learner autonomy differently to their teachers. When broadly conceptualising learner autonomy, the findings of this study are reinforced by previous findings in the literature (Benson, 2011; Little, 2008; Chan, 2011; Lamb, 2013; Cricoki et al., 2019; Ryan and Deci, 2009). For instance, some of the students associated learner autonomy with sharing responsibility for their learning with their teachers and becoming involved in decisions about their learning through being asked their opinions. According to Little (2008), promoting an autonomous learning environment is a process that lets students take responsibility for their own learning and provides them with opportunities to become involved in making choices about and reflecting upon their learning.

The students in this study also linked learner autonomy with being motivated to learn: “making yourself believe to achieve”, “try hard to learn” and “being motivated to learn English”, associating learner autonomy with motivation in a similar way to other researchers (Reinders, 2010; Sakai et al., 2010; Ryan and Deci, 2007). Some students also define learner autonomy as doing tasks and engaging in learning English because they choose to do so (Ryan and Deci, 2009). As there is a connection between students’ motivations to learn and their autonomous learning behaviours (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2011; Ryan and Deci, 2009), all the participants were also asked to share their motivations for learning English. This research found that students’ motivations are in line with Ryan and Deci’s work (2007). The majority of students in the focus groups stated that they want to learn English and undertake tasks related to English in and beyond the classroom. They referred to their motivation using expressions such as, “having a good grade”, “having a good career”, “communicating with the world”, “learning [about] other cultures through English”, “following English social media tools and accounts” and indicating that they just “like learning English”. On the other hand, a few participants stated that they did not have any motivation to learn English.

Ryan and Deci (2007) explained that learners who are driven by autonomous motivation are self-directed learners and internalise their activities because they learn for interest, enjoyment and satisfaction. Meanwhile, learners with controlled motivation might experience little to no autonomy as they feel pressure and seek approval to behave in certain ways (Ryan and Deci, 2007). As highlighted by Spratt et al. (2002), student motivation is one of the key elements impacting student readiness for autonomous learning, meaning that teachers might need to ensure that their students are motivated before training them to be autonomous learners. This training can be put into practice by providing students with learning environments in which they have a sense of control over their learning and feel more intrinsically motivated (Jang, Reeve and Deci, 2010).

Another interesting result obtained from the current research showed that most of the students in both private and state schools valued learner autonomy as important and generally described it positively. This result is linear with other research findings in the global literature (Rinantanti, 2015; Panyanak, 2016; Tayjasanant and Suraratdecha, 2016) and in the Turkish context (Cakici, 2017; Buyukahiska, 2017; Yildirim, 2008). On the other hand, the data also showed that, although some of the students have positive attitudes towards learner autonomy, they are not ready to make decisions about lesson content, materials and assessment and want to pass this responsibility to their teachers. A few students also expressed negative or neutral attitudes towards learner autonomy, stating that it is not important for their learning. They also stated that they preferred to pass all their responsibilities to the teachers, believing that their teachers choose the best teaching methods, materials and assessment types for them. Another interesting finding was that a few students were not willing to describe learner autonomy at all when they were asked to do so, or just used expressions such as, “I have no idea”. Possible reasons for this might include that learner autonomy is a new policy in the Turkish context so the term might still not be clear for students, or they might not be familiar with learner autonomy as their teachers might not use it explicitly. In addition, as Balcikanli (2010) has stated, the educational

system in Turkey is considered to be teacher-centred, meaning that students might be used to learning with traditional teaching methods in which teachers have most of the control in the classroom.

5.5 Research Question 4: How do Turkish EFL students practise English beyond the classroom?

In the literature, learners' abilities for setting objectives, identifying content, selecting methods and evaluating their own learning are highlighted as signs of being an autonomous learner (Cotterall, 2000; Benson, 2011). The results obtained from the focus groups with students revealed that most students do not see themselves as autonomous despite mostly having favourable attitudes towards learner autonomy. Interestingly, teachers (mostly in state schools) shared a similar assumption that students are not ready to be autonomous. Moreover, student participants were also asked to share activities that they do beyond the classroom when they learn English. This aimed to identify the autonomous learning behaviours of Turkish EFL learners as, in the literature, students' out-of-classroom learning activities are considered as a sign of autonomous learning behaviours (Benson, 2013; Dam, 2011; Little, 2017). The data revealed that students engaged in several learning activities beyond the classroom, which can be described as autonomous learning behaviour.

During the focus groups, most of the students said that they prefer to use technology-enhanced resources when they want to improve their English. These include mobile applications, online games, social media, watching videos on YouTube and listening to English songs – the most common resources that students use to practise their English. According to Lan et. al (2018), because of advances in technology and adaptation of advanced technologies in education, learners have started to learn through different approaches, in which their individual differences and autonomy are cultivated (p.859). The student participants stated during the focus groups that they use multimedia technology such as social media and phone applications to practise their English using their own initiative. The positive effects

of technology on learner autonomy have been highlighted in recent studies (Liu et al., 2020; Reinders, 2018). As well as using social media, according to the data, some students (mostly from private schools) also watch English TV programmes or films with English subtitles and dubbed in English. The possible reasons for why this practice is common among students in private schools might relate to students' access to streaming service providers at home or their access to better IT resources at home.

In addition, stated by Dag (2015), students in private schools also often have higher socio-economic standards, which might have an impact on students' autonomous behaviours. This can be interpreted as indicating that students in private schools sometimes have a privileged home background (e.g. support from parents) or school environment, and their life experiences might thus affect their practice and encourage them to learn autonomously, as with teachers' choices of practice.

The second most common activities practised by students from state and private schools are studying grammar and vocabulary. They stated that, when they want to learn grammar rules, they do revision at home through practising grammar exercises from their coursebooks (mostly students from state schools) or different resources other than their coursebooks (mostly students from private schools), and memorise grammatical rules. They also mentioned learning new words and memorising vocabulary through using small notes, writing words in a notebook and using vocabulary games (on mobile applications) as common practices. These are linked to their desire for success in the subject. On the other hand, reading English resources, including magazines, books and comics, and engaging in social interaction with foreigners (such as chatting or having correspondence with native speakers) represents another common practice undertaken by students. However, the data indicated that these last two practices are commonly used by students in private schools, potentially indicating an issue of accessibility to resources. These findings arguably confirm Benson's views (2011) that autonomous language learning is also affected by the availability of resources used by learners beyond the

classroom. It can be understood from the data that students in private schools can access different resources to those in state schools. Overall, the data indicated that students engage in some activities beyond the classroom, which can be interpreted as signs of autonomous learning. According to Spratt et al. (2002), instead of changing student behaviours, teachers need to be aware of the practices in which their students are already engaging beyond the classroom and build on these activities to promote learner autonomy. In the Turkish context, students are already practising some sort of autonomy, but they might need to be guided by their teachers to be more competent in planning, organising and evaluating their learning. In other words, teachers might need to be ready to engage with technology-based resources such as YouTube and discuss what their students have already been doing autonomously.

5.6 Conclusions

The current study was conducted to explore Turkish EFL teachers' and students' perspectives on learner autonomy and their practices relating to it. Overall, although Turkish EFL teachers interpreted learner autonomy from various viewpoints, many still do not have a clear or comprehensive understanding of the term. Meanwhile, the study found evidence that Turkish EFL teachers in both state and private schools interpreted learner autonomy in several ways. How teachers view the term learner autonomy is also open to different interpretations as what learner autonomy means to foreign language teachers might show differences in each cultural and educational context (Oxford, 2005). As understandings of learner autonomy are, to a large extent, context-dependent, the strategies implemented for its promotion are likely to vary in different educational settings (Nakata 2011). Language teachers' roles in the development of learner autonomy in their classrooms might therefore be related to how they perceive students' roles and their capacity for involvement in actions associated with learner autonomy, such as determining objectives, defining the pace of learning, selecting methods and techniques, choosing learning materials and evaluating what has been learned (Benson, 2011; Little, 2008). In addition, the data revealed that teachers have

mostly positive values towards learner autonomy and think that it is an important element for students in learning English. However, they also stated that it might be challenging to apply, especially in state schools. The analysis suggested that, in private schools, teachers are able to create a more autonomous learning environment for their students when compared to state schools. This could be because they can take advantage of using authentic and technology-based materials, less crowded classrooms, implementing a more flexible curriculum and using different types of assessment tools.

The data also indicated that, while some of the students share their interpretations of learner autonomy, as their teachers do, the rest of the students unfortunately do not have a clear understanding of learner autonomy. Again, although most of the students share positive attitudes towards learner autonomy, some are sceptical about it or do not feel that it is necessary for their language learning. Moreover, the current research found that students in private and state schools engaged in autonomous learning activities beyond the classroom despite differences in activities between those groups. This can be interpreted as a sign of autonomous learning behaviours. However, students' socio-economic features might also have an impact on these behaviours, such as access to better IT resources, authentic resources or contact with native speakers.

5.7 Implications of the Study

In this section, I will present several pedagogical implications drawn from the current study. The results indicated the following implications:

1) Turkish EFL students and teachers in private and state schools should be informed and trained in autonomous learning practices.

2) Students in state schools should be provided with more authentic materials and technology-based learning practices outside English lessons that allow them to study individually or with their peers when they need to practise their English at school. Regarding the evaluation of learning, alternative assessment types should

be offered for students in state schools. These aims can be achieved through considering teachers' and students' concerns about the current conditions and challenges (e.g. fixed curriculum and exams, lack of resources and lack of motivation to learn) that they face in foreign language education and providing the necessary support for them.

3) Turkish education policy might create some contradictions for teachers in state schools that they cannot easily resolve when they want to promote learner autonomy. For example, in the new curriculum, teachers are asked to promote learner independence and choice. However, they are also required to follow a fixed curriculum and exams. Thus, teachers in state schools should be provided with a more flexible curriculum that helps them to promote learner autonomy and diminishes time constraints. Also, the new curriculum was intended promote collaboration and group work activities. However, the data indicated that teachers do not feel comfortable in applying this type of activity because of overcrowded classrooms and lack of support from the school administration. Thus, the current curriculum in state schools should be adapted according to the conditions of the state schools where classrooms are overcrowded.

4) Traditional teaching methods and classroom management appear to dominate in state schools, meaning that teachers might need training to create an autonomous learning environment that is compatible with the existing physical conditions of state schools. As the data relating to the self-reported and observed practices of teachers in state schools has revealed, some of the teachers have been trying to develop learner autonomy in their classrooms despite the challenges and have achieved successful results. However, other teachers might have different expectations and might not gain the intended success for their attempts to apply learner autonomy. This issue might be overcome through adapting ideals of learner autonomy to the on-the-ground realities of the Turkish educational context.

5.8 Suggestions for Further Research

This study has set out important aspects of the situation of learner autonomy in the Turkish context. However, there is potential for several other studies to be

undertaken within this topic. One of the limitations of the present study is that it uncovers only a small number of teachers' and students' understandings and experiences. More studies can therefore be conducted using a larger sample size of participants at national level and extending the scope of the study by adding participants at different levels (primary and tertiary levels), and including parents, school principals and policy-makers. In addition, in the present study, the data was only collected through a focus group with students, interviews with teachers and classroom observations. More studies should therefore be conducted using other data collection instruments such as document analysis, including questionnaires, and material evaluation with a case study approach using both qualitative and quantitative data collection processes.

REFERENCES:

Adams, C. W. (2015) Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In K. E, Newcomer, H. P, Hatry and J. S, Wholey (eds), Handbook *of Practical Evaluation,* (pp.492-505). Jossey-Bass.

Alexander, R.J. (2001) Border crossings: Towards a comparative pedagogy. *Comparative Education*, *37*(4), pp.507-523.

Ali, M.E.R.Ç. (2015) The effect of a learner autonomy training on the study habits of the first-year ELT students. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *10*(4), pp.378-387.

Alibakhshi, G. (2015) Challenges in promoting EFL learners' autonomy: Iranian EFL teachers' perspectives. *Issues in Language Teaching*, *4*(1), pp.98-79.

Altinyelken, H.K. (2018) A Converging Pedagogy in the Global South? Insights from Uganda and Turkey. *Global Education Policy and International Development: New Agendas, Issues and Policies*, p.209.

Amirian, S.M.R. and Noughabi, M.A. (2017) An investigation into Iranian EFL teachers' perception of learner autonomy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *8*(4), pp.807-816.

An, H.T. (2019) Learner autonomy: Practices used and challenges encountered by EFL teachers in fostering learner autonomy at tertiary level. *VNU Journal of Foreign Studies*, *35*(4).

Aoki, N. and R. Smith (1999) *Learner autonomy in cultural context: the case of Japan. In D. Crabbe and S. Cotterall (eds), Learner Autonomy in Language Learning: Defining the Field and Effecting Change,* 19-27.

Apaydin, M. (2008) Making a case for the case method in Turkey. *The Journal of Management Development*, *27*(7), p.678.

Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2001) Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies. *Social research update*, *33*(1), pp.1-4.

Aydin, S. (2014) Foreign language learners' interactions with their teachers on Facebook. *System*, *42*, pp.155-163.

Aydın, U., Tunç-Pekkan, Z., Taylan, R.D., Birgili, B. and Özcan, M. (2017) Equity in middle school students' fractional knowledge: does school type matter in Turkey?.

Aydınlı, J. and Ortaçtepe, D. (2018) Selected research in applied linguistics and English language teaching in Turkey: 2010-2016. *Language Teaching*, *51*(2), pp.210-245.

Aygün, Z.K. and Imamoğlu, E.O. (2002) Value domains of Turkish adults and university students. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *142*(3), pp.333-351.

Balcikanli, C. (2008) Fostering learner autonomy in EFL classrooms. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, *16*(1), 277-284.

Balcikanli, C. (2010) Learner Autonomy in Language Learning: Student Teachers' Beliefs. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *35*(1), 90-103.

Bayyurt, Y. (2013) Current perspectives on sociolinguistics and English language education. *The Journal of Language Learning and Teaching*, *3*(1), pp.69-78.

Benson, P. (1997) The philosophy and politics of learner autonomy. In *Autonomy and independence in language learning* (pp. 18-34). Longman.

Benson, P. (2001) Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning. *Malaysia: Longman.*

Benson, P. (2007) Autonomy in language teaching and learning. *Language teaching*, *40*(1), p.21.

Benson, P. (2009) Making sense of autonomy in language learning. In Maintaining Control: Autonomy and Language Learning. Hong Kong University Press.

Benson, P. (2010) Teacher education and teacher autonomy: Creating spaces for experimentation in secondary school English language teaching. *Language Teaching Research*, *14*(3), 259-275.

Benson, P. (2011) What's new in autonomy. *The Language Teacher*, *35*(4), pp.15-18.

Benson, P. (2012) Autonomy in language learning, learning and life. *Synergies France*, (9), pp.29-39.

Benson, P. (2013) *Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning*. Routledge.

Benson, P. (2016) Language learner autonomy: Exploring teachers' perspectives on theory and practice. *Language learner autonomy: Teachers' beliefs and practices in Asian contexts*, pp.114-133.

Benson, P. and Huang, J. (2008) Autonomy in the transition from foreign language learning to foreign language teaching. *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada*, *24*(SPE), pp.421-439.

Benson, P., & Voller, P. (1997) *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Longman.

Benson, P. and Voller, P. (2014) *Autonomy and independence in language learning*. Routledge.

Betts, G., Kapushion, B. and Carey, R.J. (2016) The autonomous learner model: Supporting the development of problem finders, creative problem solvers, and producers of knowledge to successfully navigate the 21st Century. In *Giftedness and Talent in the 21st Century* (pp. 199-220). Brill Sense.

Blidi, S. (2017) *Collaborative learner autonomy*. Singapore: Springer.

Boggu, A.T. and Sundarsingh, J. (2019) An experiential learning approach to fostering learner autonomy among Omani students. *Journal of language teaching and research*, *10*(1), pp.204-214.

Brislin, R. (1993) *Understanding culture's influence on behavior*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Borg, S. (2006) The distinctive characteristics of foreign language teachers. *Language teaching research*, *10*(1), pp.3-31.

Borg, S. and Al-Busaidi, S. (2012) *Learner autonomy: English language teachers' beliefs and practices*. *ELT journal*, *12*(7), pp.1-45.

Buckley, C.A. and Waring, M.J. (2013) Using diagrams to support the research process: Examples from grounded theory. *Qualitative Research*, *13*(2), pp.148-172.

Buyukahiska, D. (2017) English language testing and evaluation course through the lens of EFL student teachers. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (19), pp.581-596.

Buyukyavuz, O. (2014) The differences in the conceptualizations of autonomy by English language instructors regarding some variables. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *9*(23), 1334-1352.

Cagiltay, K. and Bichelmeyer, B. (2000) Differences in Learning Styles in Different Cultures: A Qualitative Study.

Cakici, D. (2017) An Investigation of Learner Autonomy in Turkish EFL Context. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *6*(2), pp.89-99.

Camilleri G., A. (2007) Pedagogy for autonomy, teachers' attitudes and institutional change: A case study. In M. Jimenez Raya & L. Sercu (eds.), Challenges in teacher development: Learner autonomy and intercultural competence. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 81-102.

Çayır, K. (2015) Citizenship, nationality and minorities in Turkey's textbooks: from politics of non-recognition to 'difference multiculturalism'. *Comparative Education*, *51*(4), pp.519-536.

Cetin, S., Ellidokuzoglu, H. and Dogan, S. (2014) Teacher-student relationships across teaching careers of Turkish EFL teachers. *Educational Research and Reviews*, *9*(20), pp.1037-1045.

Chan, V. (2001) Readiness for learner autonomy: What do our learners tell us?. *Teaching in higher education*, *6*(4), pp.505-518.

Chan, V. (2003) Autonomous Language Learning: the teachers' perspectives. Teaching In Higher Education, 8(1). 33-54.

Chan, W.H. (2011) Learner Autonomy and the Out-of-Class English Learning of Proficient Students in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Learning*, *17*(11).

Chirkov, V.I. (2009) A cross-cultural analysis of autonomy in education: A self-determination theory perspective. *Theory and Research in Education*, *7*(2), pp.253-262.

Christman, J.P. (2015) Autonomy and liberalism: A troubled marriage?. In *The Cambridge Companion to Liberalism* (pp. 141-162). Cambridge University Press.

Christman, J. (2015) Autonomy in Moral and Political Philosophy. , *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2015 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/autonomy-moral/>.

Condrat, V. (2014) The use of technology to promote learner autonomy. *Creativitatea lingvala: de la semn la text, Iași, Editura PIM*.

Corbetta, P. (2003) *Social research: Theory, methods and techniques*. Sage.

Cotterall, S. (1998) Roles in autonomous language learning. *Australian Review of applied linguistics*, *21*(2), pp.61-78.

Cotterall, S. (1999) Key variables in language learning: What do learners believe about them? System 27, pp. 493-513.

Cotterall, S. (2000) Promoting learner autonomy through the curriculum: Principles for designing language courses. *ELT journal*, *54*(2), pp.109-117.

Cirocki, A. (2016) Developing Learner Autonomy through Tasks: Theory, Research. *Practice*.

Cirocki, A., Anam, S. and Retnaningdyah, P. (2019) Readiness for autonomy in English language learning: The case of Indonesian high school students. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, *7*(2), pp.1-18.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K (2013) Action research. In *Research methods in education* (pp. 368-385). Routledge.

Dam, L. (2011) Developing learner autonomy with school kids: Principles, practices, results. *in Gardner, D (ed.) Fostering autonomy in Language Learning*.

Dag, I. (2015) An Overview and Comparison of Turkish Public Schools and Private Schools. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, *3*(6), 191-196.

Dam, L. (1990) Learner Autonomy in Practice. In Gathercole, I (ed.) *Autonomy in Language Learning*. Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Regent's College, London.

Dam, L. (2003) Developing learner autonomy: The teacher's responsibility. *Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom: Teacher, learner, curriculum and assessment*, pp.126-150.

Dam, L., (2011) Developing learner autonomy with school kids: Principles, practices, results. *Edited by David Gardner*.

Dang, T.T. (2012) Learner autonomy: A synthesis of theory and practice. *The Internet Journal of Language, Culture and Society*, *35*(1), pp.52-67.

Dearden, R.F. (1975) Autonomy as an educational ideal I. In *Philosophers discuss education* (pp. 3-18). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Dearden, R. (1975) 'Autonomy and Education', in R. Dearden, P. Hirst and R. Peters (eds) *Education and the Development of Reason,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp.333-345.

Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2008) Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, *49*(3), p.182.

Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. (2013) The importance of autonomy for development and well-being. *Self-regulation and autonomy: Social and developmental dimensions of human conduct*, pp.19-46.

Demirpolat, B.C. (2015) July. Türkiye'nin yabancı dil öğretimiyle imtihanı: Sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri. Seta.

Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2008) Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research.

Díaz Ramírez, M.I. (2014) Developing learner autonomy through project work in an ESP class. *How*, *21*(2), pp.54-73.

Dickinson, L. (1994) Learner autonomy: What, why, and how. *Autonomy in language learning*, pp.1-12.

Dincer, A., Yesilyurt, S., & Takkac, M. (2012) The Effects of Autonomy-Supportive Climates on EFL Learner's Engagement, Achievement and Competence in English Speaking Classrooms. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *46*, 3890-3894.

Dişlen, G. (2011) Exploration of How Students Perceive Autonomous Learning in an EFLContext. *Edited by David Gardner*.

Doğan, G. and Mirici, İ.H. (2017) EFL instructors' perception and practices on learner autonomy in some Turkish universities. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *13*(1), pp.166-193.

Dogancay-Aktuna, S. (2005) Intercultural communication in English language teacher education. *ELT journal*, *59*(2), pp.99-107.

Doğançay-Aktuna, S. and Kiziltepe, Z. (2005) English in Turkey. *World Englishes*, *24*(2), pp.253-265.

Dörnyei, Z. and Ushioda, E. (2011) Teaching and researching motivation. Harlow, England.

Duong, T.M. (2014) EFL teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy and their classroom practices: A case study. *IJ Edu-cation and Management Engineering*, *2*, pp.9-17.

EF EPI. (2014) EF English Proficiency Index. *Education First*. Retrieved from. https://media.ef.com/__/~/media/centralefcom/epi/v4/downloads/full-reports/ef-epi-2014-english.pdf . 20.11.2016.

Egel, I. P. (2009). Learner autonomy in the language classroom: From teacher dependency to learner independency. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *1*(1), 2023-2026.

EUROSTAT. (2014) Eurostat Statistics. Retrieved from http: // epp. eurostat. ec. europa. eu/ statistics_ explained/ index. php/ Foreign_ language_ learning_ statistics. 06.12.2016.

Everhard, C. and Murphy, L. eds. (2015) *Assessment and autonomy in language learning*. Springer.

Fan, P. (2007) *Educational Policy Borrowing's Past, Present, Future: A Literature Review* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford).

Fenner, A.B. and Newby, D. (2000) *Approaches to materials design in European textbooks: Implementing principles of authenticity, learner autonomy, cultural awareness*. Council of Europe.

Finch, A. E. (2000) A formative evaluation of a task-based EFL programme for Korean university students. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Manchester University, U.K.

Freire, P. (2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Gardner, D. and Miller, L. (2011) Managing self-access language learning: Principles and practice. *System*, *39*(1), pp.78-89.

Girgin, K.Z. and Stevens, D.D. (2005) Bridging in-class participation with innovative instruction: use and implications in a Turkish university classroom. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, *42*(1), pp.93-106.

Gokmenoglu, T. and Clark, C.M. (2015) Teachers' evaluation of professional development in support of national reforms. *Issues in Educational Research*, *25*(4), p.442.

Gökmenoğlu, T., Clark, C. M. & Kiraz, E. (2016). Professional development needs of Turkish teachers in an era of national reforms. Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 41(1), 113-125.

Golafshani, N. (2003) Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The qualitative report*, *8*(4), pp.597-607.

Gür, B.S., Celik, Z. and Özoğlu, M. (2012) Policy options for Turkey: A critique of the interpretation and utilization of PISA results in Turkey. *Journal of Education Policy*, *27*(1), pp.1-21.

Gremmo, M.J. and Riley, P. (1995) Autonomy, self-direction and self access in language teaching and learning: The history of an idea. *System*, *23*(2), pp.151-164.

Guven, Z. (2014) Project-based learning: A constructive way toward learner autonomy. Journal of Language Education and Teaching, 5(3), 64-67.

Hamilton, J. (1990) Shifting responsibility to the learner. In Gathercole, I (ed.) *Autonomy in Language Learning*. Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Regent's College, London.

Han, T., Takkaç-Tulgar, A. and Aybirdi, N. (2019) Factors causing demotivation in EFL learning process and the strategies used by Turkish EFL learners to overcome their demotivation. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *10*(2), pp.56-65.

Hedge, T. (2000). Teaching and learning in the language classroom. Oxford University Press.

Hofstede, G. (2011) Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede model in context. *Online readings in psychology and culture*, *2*(1), pp.2307-0919.

Hofstede, G. (2016) Culture's Consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations. *Collegiate Aviation Review*, *34*(2), p.108.

Hofstede, G.H., Hofstede, G.J. and Minkov, M. (2005) *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind* (Vol. 2). New York: Mcgraw-hill.

Holec, H. (1979) *Autonomy and foreign language learning, Oxford: Pergamon.*

Holec, H. (1988) *Autonomy and self-directed learning: present fields of application,* Council of Europe, Strasburg.

Holstein, J.A. and Gubrium, J.F. (2011) *Varieties of narrative analysis*. Sage Publications.

Horai, K. and Wright, E. (2011) Raising awareness: Learning advising as an in-class activity. *Reading*.

Huang, J.P. and Benson, P. (2013) Autonomy agency and identity in foreign and second language education. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *36*(1), p.7.

Illés, É. (2012) Learner autonomy revisited. *ELT journal*, *66*(4), pp.505-513.

İnceçay, G. and İnceçay, V. (2009) Turkish university students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classroom. *Procedia-social and behavioral sciences*, *1*(1), pp.618-622.

Inceçay, G., 2012. Turkey's foreign language policy at primary level: Challenges in practice. *ELT research journal*, *1*(1), pp.53-62.

Inozu, J. (2011) Developing learner autonomy in the language class in Turkey: voices from the classroom. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *12*(4), 523-531.

Jang, H., Reeve, J., & Deci, E. L. (2010) Engaging students in learning activities: It is not autonomy support or structure but autonomy support and structure. *American Psychological Association, 102*(3), 588-600.

Jimenez Raya, M. and Sercu, L. (2007) *Challenges in Teacher Development: Learner Autonomy and Intercultural Competence. Foreign Language Teaching in Europe. Volume 10*. Frankfurt, Germany.

Jones, J.F. (1995) Self-access and culture: Retreating from autonomy. *ELT journal*, *49*(3), pp.228-234.

Joshi, K.R. (2011) Learner perceptions and teacher beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning. *Journal of NELTA*, *16*(1-2), pp.12-29.

Juan, L. and Yajie, C. (2018) EFL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Concerning Learner Autonomy: A Narrative Inquiry. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *6*(6), pp.196-201.

Kanniyakonil, S. (2007) *The Fundamentals of Bioethics: Legal Perspectives and Ethical Aproches* (No. 291). Scaria Kanniyakonil.

Kara, E., Ayaz, A.D. and Dündar, T. (2017) Challenges in EFL speaking classes in Turkish context. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, *3*(2), pp.66-74.

Kartal, G. and Balcikanli, C. (2019) Tracking the culture of learning and readiness for learner autonomy in a Turkish context. *TEFLIN Journal*, *30*(1), pp.22-46.

Kara, E., Ayaz, A.D. and Dündar, T. (2017) Challenges in EFL speaking classes in Turkish context. *European Journal of Language and Literature*, *3*(2), pp.66-74.

Karababa, Z.C., Eker, D.N. and Arik, R.S. (2010) Descriptive study of learner's level of autonomy: voices from the Turkish language classes. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *9*, pp.1692-1698.

Khalil, S.M. and Ali, A.D. (2018) Exploring EFL Teachers and Students Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Egyptian Technical Schools. *International Journal of English Language Education*, *6*(2), pp.1-25.

Kirkgöz, Y. (2009) Globalization and English language policy in Turkey. *Educational policy*, *23*(5), pp.663-684.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2017) English education policy in Turkey. In *English language education policy in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 235-256). Springer, Cham.

Kirkgöz, Y., Çelik, S. and Arikan, A. (2016) Laying the theoretical and practical foundations for a new elementary English curriculum in Turkey: A procedural analysis. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, *24*(3), pp.1199-1212.

Kırtık, B. (2017) Are Turkish University Students Autonomous or Not?. *Journal of Foreign Language Education and Technology*, *2*(1), pp.1-23.

Kizilçelik, S. (2015) An Evaluation of the Turkish Education System outside the Conflict between Old and New. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *59*, pp.149-163.

Kizildag, A. (2009) Teaching English in Turkey: Dialogues with teachers about the challenges in public primary schools. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, *1*(3), pp.188-201.

Koru, S. and Akesson, J. (2011) Türkiye'nin İngilizce açığı. *Ankara: Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı*.

Kozlova, I. (2018) Task-based language learning and learner autonomy in 3D virtual worlds. In *Integrating multi-user virtual environments in modern classrooms* (pp. 50-73). IGI Global.

Kuchah, K. and Smith, R. (2011) Pedagogy of autonomy for difficult circumstances: From practice to principles. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *5*(2), pp.119-140.

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2009) *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. sage.

Lamb, T. (2008) Learner autonomy and teacher autonomy: Synthesizing an agenda. *Learner and teacher autonomy: Concepts, realities, and responses*, pp.269-284.

Lamb, T. (2017) Knowledge about language and learner autonomy. Springer.

Lan, Y.J., Hsiao, I.Y. and Shih, M.F. (2018) Effective learning design of game-based 3D virtual language learning environments for special education students. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, *21*(3).

Lee, L. (2016) Autonomous learning through task-based instruction in fully online language courses. *Language Learning & Technology*, *20*(2), pp.81-97.

Lichtman, M. (2013) *Qualitative research for the social sciences*. SAGE publications.

Little, D. (1991) Learner autonomy 1: definitions, issues and problems. Dublin: Authentik.

Little, D. (2000) We're all in it together: Exploring the interdependence of teacher and learner autonomy. Paper presented at Autonomy 2000, University of Helsinki Language Centre.

Little, D. (2001) Learner autonomy and the challenge of tandem language learning via the Internet. *ICT and language learning: A European perspective*, pp.29-38.

Little, D. (2002) The European Language Portfolio: structure, origins, implementation and challenges. *Language Teaching*, *35*(03), 182-189.

Little, D. (2003) Learner autonomy and second/foreign language learning. *Subject Center for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, Guide to good practice*.

Little, D. (2007) Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations revisited.
International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, *1*(1), 14-29.

Little, D. (2009) Language learner autonomy and the European language portfolio: Two L2 English examples. *Language teaching*, *42*(2), p.222.

Little, D. (2010) Learner autonomy, inner speech and the European Language Portfolio. *Advances in research on language acquisition and teaching: Selected papers*, pp.27-38.

Little, D. (2011) Learner autonomy, self-assessment and language tests: Towards a new assessment culture. *Independent language learning: Building on experience, seeking new perspectives*, pp.25-39.

Little, D. (2017) Three versions of learner autonomy and their implications for English-medium degree programmes. In *Essential competencies for English-medium university teaching* (pp. 145-157). Springer, Cham.

Little, D. and Dam, L. (1998) Learner autonomy: What and why?. *LANGUAGE TEACHER-KYOTO-JALT-*, *22*, pp.7-8.

Littlewood, W. (1999) Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied linguistics*, *20*(1), pp.71-94.

Littlewood, W. (2001) Students' attitudes to classroom English learning: a cross-cultural study. Language Teaching Research 5.1: 3-28.

Liu, X., Liu, Y. and Tu, J.F. (2020) Multimedia Technology and Learner Autonomy: An Experimental Study for Asymmetric Effects. *Symmetry*, *12*(3), p.462.

Mackenzie, N. and Knipe, S. (2006) Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in educational research*, *16*(2), pp.193-205.

Mackey, A. and Gass, S. (2005) Common data collection measures. *Second language research: methodology and design. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum*, pp.43-99.

Marsh, C., Richards, K. and Smith, P. (2001) Autonomous learners and the learning society: Systematic perspectives on the practice of teaching in higher education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *33*(3-4), pp.381-395.

Marshall, M.N. (1996) Sampling for qualitative research. *Family practice*, *13*(6), pp.522-526.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (2016) Designing qualitative research. Loss Angeles.

Martín-Gutiérrez, J., Fabiani, P., Benesova, W., Meneses, M.D. and Mora, C.E. (2015) Augmented reality to promote collaborative and autonomous learning in higher education. *Computers in human behavior*, *51*, pp.752-761.

Mason, J. (2006) Six strategies for mixing methods and linking data in social science research.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013) Applied social research methods series: Vol. 41. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*, *3*.

Mede, E., İnceçay, G. and Incecay, V. (2013) Fostering learner autonomy through extensive reading: The case of oral book reports. *ELT Research Journal*, *2*(1), pp.16-25.

Merç, A. and Subaşı, G. (2015) Classroom management problems and coping strategies of Turkish student EFL teachers. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, *6*(1), pp.39-71.

MoNE. (2006) *English language curriculum for secondary education*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Baskanlığı. Retrieved from 09.07.2015

MoNE. (2012) *English language curriculum for secondary education*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Baskanlığı. Retrieved from http://www.meb.gov.tr 06.12.2015

MoNE. (2013) *English language curriculum for secondary education*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Baskanlığı. Retrieved from http://mufredat.meb.gov.tr/ProgramDetay.aspx?PID=342 06.12.2015

MoNE. (2014) *English language curriculum for secondary education*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Baskanlığı. Retrieved from http://www.meb.gov.tr 06.12.2015

MoNE. (2016) *English language curriculum for secondary education*. Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Baskanlığı. Retrieved from http://www.meb.gov.tr 03.01.2017

Murase, F. (2015) Measuring Language Learner Autonomy: Problems and Possibilities. In *Assessment and Autonomy in Language Learning* (pp. 35-63). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Murphy, L. (2011) Why am I doing this? Maintaining motivation in distance language learning. *Identity, motivation and autonomy in language learning*, *54*, pp.107-124.

Murray, G. (2014) The social dimensions of learner autonomy and self-regulated learning.

Nakata, Y. (2011) Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy: A study of Japanese EFL high school teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(5), pp.900-910.

Nauta, L.W. (1984) Historical roots of the concept of autonomy in Western philosophy. *Praxis international*, *4*(4), pp.363-377.

Neupane, M. (2010) Learner autonomy: concept and considerations. *Journal of NELTA*, *15*(1-2), pp.114-120.

Nunan, D. (2000). Autonomy in language learning. Plenary presentation given at the ASOCOPI
2000 conference, Cartengena, Columbia.

OECD. (2015) "Turkey", in OECD, *Education Policy Outlook 2015: Making Reforms Happen*, OECD Publishing.

Oral, Y. (2010) English Language in the Context of Foreign Language Education Policies in Turkey: 'A Critical Study'. *E-Journal of Alternative Education*. Issue 1, 60-69.

Oxford R.L. (2003) Toward a More Systematic Model of L2 Learner Autonomy. In: Palfreyman D., Smith R.C. (eds) Learner Autonomy across Cultures. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Oxford, R.L. (2011) Strategies for learning a second or foreign language. *Language Teaching*, *44*(2), p.167.

Oxford, R.L. (2015) Expanded perspectives on autonomous learners. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *9*(1), pp.58-71.

Oxford Dictionaries. (2015) OED Online. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/autonomy?q=autonomy. 11.09.2016

Ozdemir, S., Bulbul, M., & Acar, M. (2010) Challenges Associated with Administrative and Professional Accountability in the Turkish Educational System. *State and administration in a changing world*, 271-282.

Ozen, E.F., Alpaslan, İ.B., Çağlı, A., Özdoğan, İ., Sancak, M., Dizman, A.O., Sökmen, A. and Vale, D. (2013) Turkey national needs assessment of state school English language teaching. *British Council & TEPAV, ArkaikArt Media Design, Ankara, Turkey*.

Palfreyman, D. (2003) Introduction: Culture and learner autonomy. In *Learner autonomy across cultures* (pp. 1-19). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Panyanak, M.S. (2016) Graduate Students' Attitudes Towards Autonomous English Language Learning. (Doctoral dissertation, Thammasat University).

Patton, M.Q. (2015) Qualitative research and methods: Integrating theory and practice. *Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications*.

Pennycook, A. (1997) Cultural alternatives and autonomy' in P. Benson and P. Voller (eds.): Autonomy and Independence in Language Learning.

Pierson, H.D. (1996) Learner culture and learner autonomy in the Hong Kong Chinese context. *Taking control: Autonomy in language learning*, pp.49-58.

Plomp, T. (2013) Educational design research: An introduction. *Educational design research*, pp.11-50.

Ramadhiyah, S., & Lengkanawati, N. S. (2019) Exploring EFL learner autonomy in the 2013 Curriculum implementation. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *9*(1), 231–240.

Raya, M.J. and Fernández, J.M.P. (2002) Learner autonomy and new technologies. *Educational Media International*, *39*(1), pp.61-68.

Reeve, J., & Jang, H. (2006) What teachers say and do to support students' autonomy during a learning activity. *Journal of educational psychology*, *98*(1), 209.

Reinders, H. (2018) Technology and autonomy. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*, pp.1-5.

Reinders, H. (2010) Towards a classroom pedagogy for learner autonomy: A framework of independent language learning skills. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, *35*(5), p.40.

Richards, J.C. (2006) Materials development and research—making the connection. *Relc Journal*, *37*(1), pp.5-26.

Rinantanti, Y. (2015) Attitudes toward Autonomy in Learning English: a case study in Cenderawasih University Papua Indonesia. *The Asian EFL Journal Professional teaching article*, (86), pp.90-110.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2007) Active human nature: Self-determination theory and the promotion and maintenance of sport, exercise, and health. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in exercise and sport*, *1*, p.19.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2009) Promoting self-determined school engagement: Motivation, learning, and well-being.

Sahin, S. (2011) An aspect on the school culture in Turkey and the United States. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, *12*(4), 593-607.

Sakai, S., Takagi, A. and Chu, M.P. (2010) Promoting learner autonomy: Student perceptions of responsibilities in a language classroom in East Asia. *Educational Perspectives*, *43*, pp.12-27.

Samancıoğlu, M., Bağlıbel, M., Kalman, M. and Sincar, M. (2015) The relationship between technology leadership roles and profiles of school principals and technology integration in primary school classrooms. *Journal of Educational Sciences Research*, *5*(2), pp.77-96.

Scharle, A. and Szabo, A. (2007) *Learner autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility*. Cambridge.

Schmenk, B. (2005) Globalizing learner autonomy. *Tesol Quarterly*, *39*(1), pp.107-118.

Schweisfurth, M. (2011) Learner-centred education in developing country contexts: From solution to problem?. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *31*(5), pp.425-432.

Shahsavari, S. (2014) Efficiency, Feasibility and Desirability of Learner Autonomy Based on Teachers' and Learners' Point of Views. *Theory & Practice in Language Studies*, *4*(2).

Sinclair, B. (2009) The teacher as learner: Developing autonomy in an interactive learning environment. *Maintaining control: Autonomy and language learning*, pp.175-198.

Smith, R. (2003) Teacher education for teacher-learner autonomy. In *Symposium for Language Teacher Educators: Papers from Three IALS Symposia (CD-ROM). Edinburgh: IALS, University of Edinburgh*.

Smith, R. (2008) Learner autonomy. *ELT journal*, *62*(4), pp.395-397.

Smith R., Kuchah K., Lamb M. (2018) Learner Autonomy in Developing Countries. In: Chik A., Aoki N.,
Smith R. (eds) Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching. Palgrave Pivot, London.

Smith, J.A., & Osborn, M. (2008) Interpretative phenomenological analysis. In JA Smith (ed) *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Methods*. London: Sage. (2nd ed)

Solak, E. and Bayar, A. (2015) Current Challenges in English Language Learning in Turkish EFL Context. *Online Submission*, *2*(1), pp.106-115.

Spratt, M., Humphreys, G. and Chan, V. (2002) Autonomy and motivation: Which comes first?. *Language teaching research*, *6*(3), pp.245-266.

Stenbacka, C. (2001) Qualitative research requires quality concepts of its own. *Management decision*.

Tassinari, M.G. (2011) Evaluating learner autonomy: A dynamic model with descriptors. *Reading*.

Tatar, S. (2005) Why keep silent? The classroom participation experiences of non-native-English-speaking students. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, *5*(3-4), pp.284-293.

Tayjasanant, C. and Suraratdecha, S. (2016) Thai EFL teachers and learners' beliefs and readiness for autonomous learning. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature, 22*(3).

Thanasoulas, D. (2000) What is learner autonomy and how can it be fostered. *The internet TESL journal*, *6*(11), pp.37-48.

Tilfarlioglu, F. and ÖZTÜRK, A. (2006) An Analysis of ELT Teachers' Perceptions of Some Problems Concerning the Implementation of English Language Teaching Curricula in Elementary. *Dil ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, *3*(1), pp.202-217.

Tok, H. (2011) Classroom instructional responsibilities and learner autonomy: A case study in Turkey. *Energy Educ. Sci. Tech. Part B: Soc. Edu. Stud*, *3*, 211-220.

Tokoz-Goktepe, F. (2014) Speaking problems of 9th grade high school Turkish learners of L2 English and possible reasons for those problems: Exploring the teachers and students' perspectives. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *116*, pp.1875-1879.

Tuncer, G., Ertepinar, H., Tekkaya, C. and Sungur, S. (2005) Environmental attitudes of young people in Turkey: Effects of school type and gender. *Environmental Education Research*, *11*(2), pp.215-233.

Turan Öztürk, D., 2016. *The effect of collaborative activities on college-level EFL students' learner autonomy in the Turkish context* (Doctoral dissertation, Bilkent University).

Unal, S., Çeliköz, N. and Sari, I. (2017) EFL Proficiency in Language Learning and Learner Autonomy Perceptions of Turkish Learners. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *8*(11), pp.117-122.

Urün, M.F., Demir, C.E. and Akar, H. (2014) A study on ELT high school teachers' practices to foster learner autonomy. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *5*(4), p.825.

Ushioda, E. (2009) A person-in-context relational view of emergent motivation, self and identity. *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self*, *215*, p.228.

Ushioda, E. (2013) Motivation and ELT: Global issues and local concerns. In *International perspectives on motivation* (pp. 1-17). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Ushioda, E. (2013) Motivation and ELT: Looking ahead to the future. In *International perspectives on motivation* (pp. 233-239). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Ustünlüoğlu, E. (2009). Autonomy in language learning: Do student take responsibility for their learning. *Journal of Theory and practice in Education*,*5*(2), 148-169.

Uysal, H.H. (2012) Evaluation of an in-service training program for primary-school language teachers in Turkey. *Australian journal of teacher education*, *37*(7), p.n7.

Van Loi, N. (2017) Promoting learner autonomy: Lesson from using project work as a supplement in English skills courses.

Verger. A., Novelli, M., and Altinyelken, H.K. (2018) Global Education Policy and International Development: A Revisited Introduction. In Verger, A., Novelli, M. and Altinyelken, H.K. (eds). Global Education Policy and International Development: New Agendas, Issues and Policies (2nd edition). London: Bloomsbury, pp. 1-34.

Yagcioglu, O. (2015) New approaches on learner autonomy in language learning. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *199*, pp.428-435.

Yıldırım, Ö. (2008) Turkish EFL learners' readiness for learner autonomy. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *4*(1), 65-80.

Yildirim, R. (2013) The portfolio effect: enhancing Turkish ELT student-teachers' autonomy.
Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online), *38*(8), p.92.

Yilmaz, K., Oguz, A. and Altinkurt, Y. (2017) The Relationship between Leadership Behaviors and Learner Autonomy Support Behaviors of Teachers.

Yuksel, I., & Toker, Y. (2013) Examining the predictive power of autonomy and self–evaluation on high school students' language achievement. *International Journal of Learning and Change*, *7*(1-2).

Yumuk, A. (2002) Letting go of control to the learners: the role of the Internet in promoting a more autonomous view of learning in an academic translation course. Educational Research, 44(2), 141-156.

Yunus, M.M. and Arshad, N.D.M. (2015) ESL Teachers' Perceptions toward the Practices and Prospects of Autonomous Language Learning. *Asian Social Science*, *11*(2), p.41.

Waterhouse, P. (1990) Supported Self-Study across the Curriculum. In Gathercole, I (ed.) *Autonomy in Language Learning*. Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research, Regent's College, London.

Winch, C. (2006) *Education, autonomy and critical thinking*. Routledge.

World Bank. (2016). Turkey. Retrieved from http://data.worldbank.org/country/turkey. 07.12.2016

Wright, T. (2005) *Classroom Management in Language Education*. In Candlin, C. N. and Hall, D. R. (eds.) New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Zarei, A.A. and Gahremani, K. (2010) On the relationship between learner autonomy and reading comprehension. *Tell*, *3*(10), pp.81-99.

APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

The questions that will be asked to the Turkish EFL teachers will focus on the practice of learner autonomy and learner-centred methodology in their classrooms. Under this framework, they will be interviewed on their perceptions about learner autonomy and their strategies to promote it. Thus, they will be invited to answer some questions about their definitions of learner-autonomy, and types of practices that they use in their classrooms to make learners more autonomous. There will be two major questions for the interview.

- What do you understand by learner autonomy?
- How do you promote learner autonomy both in and out of class?

Then, the questions would ask the teachers to elaborate on what they exactly did to promote learner autonomy. Also, they will be asked about their experiences and feelings when they face challenges that impact on the promotion of these themes and at what extent this issue affect their teaching.

The key questions that will provide the structure for the interviews and allow me to compare the given answers between participants are mentioned above.

- How long have you been teaching?
- How would you describe your interactions with your students?
- In a brief how would you define learner autonomy?
- Please tell me what kind of strategies, techniques, or activities you use to encourage learner autonomy in and out of the classroom?
- What are the challenges that you face when you try to promote learner autonomy?

APPENDIX B: Observation Pro Forma

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Classroom Observation Sheet

Eda Kocar.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">This classroom observation aims to identify autonomy-supportive classroom environment in the Turkish context. It will focus on the learners' and teacher's interaction in the classroom and explore the practice of learner autonomy by investigating teaching method to the language classroom of the context (e.g. communicative language teaching or grammar-translation method). Besides, it will focus on learners' motivation (e.g. enthusiastic or tedious) and participation (e.g. active or passive participants) those which play a significant role to develop learner autonomy in foreign language classrooms. Finally, it will investigate optimal challenges that are provided by the teacher as they have an impact on learners' motivation and help them to feel autonomous and have the capability of being responsible for their learning. A voice recorder will be replaced at the back of the class to assist the researcher to go back to it and give his comments and feedback.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Date:
Teacher: (pseudonym)
Lesson:</td><td>Length of lesson:
Text and material:
Seating arrangement:</td><td>Number of Students:
Age of Group:
Level of students:</td></tr>
<tr><td>1) Warm-up activities
a- Was there any warm-up activity that interacts the learners and introduces them to the lesson?</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
</table>

b- If there was one, describe it. **c-** How long did it take? **d-** Were students given the opportunity to discuss their wants regarding the content of the lesson? **e-** If they were, how did teacher deal with students' responses and comments?	
2) The methodology used in the classroom **a-**Were multiple approaches and strategies discussed by teacher and students? **b-** What teaching methods were used in the classroom (e.g. learner-centred or teacher-centred, communicative language teaching or grammar-translation method? **c-** What materials were used (e.g. authentic or created materials)? **d-** Were the students given the opportunity to choose types of methods and materials? **e-** What types of activities were used (e.g. group discussion, pair work)?	

f- Were the students given the opportunity to choose activities?	
3) Teacher's relation with students during the lesson. **a-** What was the teacher's role during teaching session (e.g. controller, prompter, or supporter)? **b-**Did the teacher encourage students for active participation and for accepting more responsibility in their learning? **c-** What evidences are there to support these? **d-** How comfortable do students seem to share their ideas? Are they allowed to debate their ideas freely? **e-** What evidences are there to support these? **f-** Was the teacher willing to attempt to understand students' needs?	
4) Students' motivation and participation **a**- Are the learners engaged, interacting and active in class or passive and tedious?	

b- If they were active and enthusiastic what evidence was there to support this? **c-** If they were passive and tedious, were the students given chance to express their disinterest and dissatisfaction with a particular topic or method of teaching? **d-** Did the learners have the capability of being responsible for their learning? If so, what evidence are there to support this (e.g. being aware of weak their weak points and try to improve them, being able to find appropriate learning methods for themselves?	
5) Providing Optimal Challenges **a-**Were the students provided optimal challenges during the teaching session (e.g. give the students small topics for preparation or presentation)? **b-** Were the students given the opportunity to choose evaluation procedure (e.g.	

being an independent problem solver with scaffolding, re-evaluate the errors)? **c-** What were the challenges both teacher and learners were encountering? **d-** How did they accommodate those challenges? **e-** Were the students given positive and constructive feedback?	

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Questions

The questions that will be asked to the Turkish EFL learners will focus on their motivation to learn English and their perceptions and practices of learner autonomy in and beyond the classroom. Under this framework, they will be interviewed on their motivation, their understanding of learner autonomy and their strategies to practice these themes while learning English as a foreign language. Thus, there will be three major questions for the focus groups.

- What is your motivation to learn English?
- What do you understand by learner autonomy?
- How do you promote learner autonomy both in and out of class?

Then, the questions would ask the learners to elaborate on what they exactly did to promote learner autonomy. Also, they will be asked about their experiences and feelings when they face challenges that impact on the promotion of learner autonomy and at what extent this issue affects their learning. Finally, they will be asked about the strategies that they use to promote learner autonomy in and beyond the EFL classrooms.

The key questions that will provide the structure for the interviews and allow me to compare the given answers between participants are mentioned above.

- What motivated you to learn English at school and/or out of the classroom?
- What do you understand by learner autonomy?
- Do you think that learner autonomy is important for your English learning? Why?
- To what extent do you consider yourself as autonomous learners?
- Please tell me what kind of strategies, techniques or activities you use to learn English?

APPENDIX D: Plain Language Statements in English and Turkish

Plain Language Statement for Teachers

1. The study details

a- Title of the study

Exploring learner autonomy in Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

b- Researcher's details

Eda Kocar, University of Glasgow, College of Social Science, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, Room 682

Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

c- Supervisor's details

Prof. Michele Schweisfurth, University of Glasgow, Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, Georgina.Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

d- Degree being sought

Degree of Master of philosophy

2. Invitation to participate in the study

You have been invited to take part in a research study that I am undertaking. Before you choose, if you can kindly take part, it is important for you to know why

the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with the researcher if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this study. Thank you for taking time reading this.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

This research is an attempt to explore learner autonomy in English teaching classes in Turkish high school context. The research aims to gain teachers' and students' understanding of learner autonomy and how this relates to the practice of learner autonomy within and beyond the classroom. The research will also investigate the elements that may support or hinder the development of learner autonomy in the Turkish context.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a Turkish EFL teacher in a high school and can share your experience of learning and teaching in Turkish classrooms. Your perceptions of the way that you are teaching students English and supporting them to develop their autonomy will be very useful to identify strategies which help develop learner autonomy in Turkish EFL classrooms.

5. Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and it is your right to withdraw your consent and any data previously you supplied at any time during the study.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

The study will involve Turkish EFL teachers being interviewed to express their understanding of learner autonomy and their practices to develop it. Interviews that will take place after the classroom observation will up to 45 minutes. It will also involve focus groups with Turkish EFL learners to identify their perceptions of learner autonomy and their practices to develop it. The focus groups which each of them consist of 3 to 6 students will take place after the classroom observation and will take between 45 minutes and 1 hour. The interviews and the focus groups will be audio recorded with your consent for the purpose of interpreting responses (i.e. researcher use). There will be one classroom observation for each class before the

interviews and the focus groups. If you consent, an audio recorder will be placed at the back of the class in order for the researcher to record the teaching and learning that goes in the classroom and make notes afterwards. It will be made clear that the recordings are for use as a stimulus for the teacher to discuss particular language teaching moves in the class and will not focus on individual students.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about you during the study will be secured in a locked filing cabinet with access by the project researcher and MPhil supervisors only. Any information about you used in the research and presented will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. Your name will be anonymously protected and confidential. Finally, data will be retained as outlined by the University of Glasgow guidelines that all materials used are kept safely (e.g. audio recording in classroom observation and audio recordings in the semi-structured interviews) and will be stored on a secured computer, hard-drive, accessible only through the researcher and supervisor with a password, which will be changed often and then . Research data will be retained for 10 years after the end of the research to allow further analysis and review (if needed) and aid in case of the challenge of validity. After that period, paper records will be shredded and recycled and electronic records will be deleted. In the case of use of USB drives, these will be physically destroyed after the expiration of the retention period. Please be advised that in future presentations or publications, all names of participants will not be identified. Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of this study will be presented within a doctoral thesis and they may be published in academic journals and reports, conference proceedings or books. Data collected may be used by the involved researchers for possible future related studies. In any case, your identity will remain anonymous.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

There is no party organising and funding the research.

10. Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the University of Glasgow, College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

11. Contact for Further Information

Researcher;

a) Eda Kocar, The University of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH.

Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisors;

b) Prof. Michele Schweisfurth, The University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH

Email: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

c) Dr Georgina Wardle, The University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH

Email: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact:

Ethics Officer;

d) Dr Muir Houston, The University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow.

Email: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

Öğretmenler için açık dil beyanı

1. Çalışma ayrıntıları

a - Çalışmanın başlığı

Öğrenci özerkliğinin Türk bağlamında keşfedilmesi: Bu temanin, Türk EFL öğretmenleri ve öğrencileri tarafından lise düzeyinde nasıl algılanmakta ve uygulanmaktadır?

b - Araştırmacının detayları

Eda Koçar
University of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH, E-posta: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

c - Danışmanların detayları

Prof Michele Schweisfurth, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

d - Aranılan derece

Master Derecesi

2. Araştırmaya katılmak için davet

Yapılmasını üstlendiğim bir araştırma çalışmasına katılmaya davet ediliyorsunuz. Çalışmaya katılmaya karar vermeden önce, araştırmanın neden yürütülmekte ve neyin dahil edileceğini bilmek sizin için önemlidir. Lütfen aşağıdaki bilgileri okumak için zaman ayırın ve isterseniz başkaları ile tartışın. Belirsiz olan bir şey var mı ya da daha fazla bilgi mi istiyor musunuz? Bu çalışmaya katılmak isteyip istemediğinize karar vermek için lütfen acele etmeyin. Bu bilgilendirme formunu okurken zaman ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederim.

3. Araştırmanın amacı nedir?

Master tezinin bir parçası olarak bu araştırma projesi, lise seviyesindeki ingilizce yabancı dil (EFL) sınıflarında öğrenen özerkliğinin (öğrencinin uygun öğrenme hedeflerini belirleme ve kendi öğrenmesini üstlenme yeteneği) yerini araştırmaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenen özerkliği ve öğrenen merkezli eğitimin (öğrenen özerkliği ve bağımsız öğrenmenin geliştirilmesi için öğrencilere sorumluluk vererek ve öğrencilerin seslerini veya tercihlerini öğrenme deneyiminin merkezi olarak kabul etmek) Türkiye bağlamında uygunlanabirliğini öğrenmeyi umuyorum.

4. Neden seçildim?

Seçildiniz çünkü, siz özel / devlet lisesinde eğitim veren bir Türk EFL (ingilizce yabancı dil) öğretmenisiniz. Sınıfta ve sınıf dışında ingilizce öğretme deneyiminiz nedeniyle katılımınız benim çok değerlidir. Çünkü, sizin ingilizce öğretiminde öğrenen özerkliğinini geliştirmesine ilişkin algılamalarınız ve aktiviteleriniz, Türk EFL sınıflarında öğrenen özerkliğini geliştirmeye yardımcı olan stratejilerin belirlenmesinde çok yararlı olacaktır.

5. Katılım şartları nelerdir?

Bu çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllü olarak yapılmaktadır ve çalışma sırasında herhangi bir zamanda verdiğiniz her türlü bilgiyi ve onayınızı geri çekme hakkına sahipsiniz.

6. Katılmaya karar verirsem, çalışma nasıl gerçekleşecek?

Çalışma, Türk EFL öğretmenlerini içermektedir veonların öğrenen özerkliği ve öğrenme uygulamalarını geliştirme konusundaki düşünce ve aktivitelerini anlamyı amaçlamaktadır. Sınıf gözleminden sonra yapılacak röportajın 45 dakika sürmesi tahmin edılmektedir. Aynı zamanda bu çalışma, öğrencilerin öğrenen özerkliği

hakkındaki algılarını ve bunları geliştirmek için yaptıkları uygulamaları tanımlamak için, Türk EFL öğrencileri ile odak grupları içerecektir. Her biri 3-6 öğrenciden oluşan odak grupları sınıf gözleminden sonra yer alacak ve tahminen 45 dakika ile 1 saat arasında sürecektir. Röportajlar ve odak grupları, cevapları yorumlamak amacıyla (örn. araştırmacının kullanımı) sizin izninizle kaydedilecektir. Her sınıfta röportajlardan ve odak gruplarından önce bir sınıf gözlemi yapılacaktır. Siz izin verirseniz, araştırmacının sınıfta olan öğretim ve öğrenmeyi kaydetmeleri ve daha sonra not alabilmeleri için bir ses kaydedici sınıfın arkasına yerleştirilecektir. Kayıtların, öğretmen için sınıftaki belirli dil öğretim hareketlerini tartışmak için bir uyarıcı olarak kullanılması ve bireysel öğrencilere odaklanmayacağı açıkça belirtilecektir.

7. Tüm katılımcıların bilgileri gizli tutulacak mı?

Evet. Bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar hakkındaki tüm bilgiler gizli tutulacak, veriler anonim olacak ve güvenli bir şekilde saklanacaktır. Elde edilen tüm materyaller (örn., sınıftaki gözlemlerde ses kaydı ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde ses kayıtları) Glasgow Üniversitesi kuralları tarafından özetlendiği gibi yalnızca araştırmacı ve danışmanlar vasıtasıyla, sıklıkla ve daha sonra değiştirilecek bir şifre ile güvenli bir bilgisayarda saklanacaktır. Gerekirse daha ayrıntılı analiz ve inceleme yapılmasına ve geçerliliğin sorgulanmasına yardımcı olması ihtimaline karşı araştırma verileri, araştırma sona erdikten sonra 10 yıl boyunca muhafaza edilecektir. Bu dönemden sonra, kağıt kayıtları parçalanacak ve geri dönüştürülecek, elektronik kayıtlar ise silinecektir. USB sürücüleri saklama süresinin sona ermesinden sonra fiziksel olarak yok edilecektir. Gelecekteki sunumlarda veya yayınlarda, katılımcıların isimleri anonimleştirilecektir. Bunu gizliliği zorlayıcı ve meşru nedenler olmadıkça gizlilik gözetilecektir. Böyle bir durumda, katılımcıların gizliliğini sınırlayabilecek tüm kararları size bildireceğim.

8. Araştırma çalışmasının sonuçlarına ne olacak?

Bu çalışmanın bulguları bir doktora tezinde sunulacak ve akademik dergilerde veya raporlarda, konferans bildiri kitaplarında veya kitaplarda yayınlanabilecektir. Toplanan veriler ilgili araştırmacılar tarafından gelecekteki ilgili çalışmalar için kullanılabilir. Her durumda, kimlikler anonim kalacaktır.

9. Araştırmayı kimler gözden geçirdi?

Araştırma çalışması, Glasgow üniversitesi, sosyal bilimler yüksekokulu etik komitesi tarafından gözden geçirildi.

10. İletişim Bilgileri:

Araştırmacı:

Eda Koçar
The university of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH Glasgow, E-posta: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Danışmanlar:

Prof Michele Schweisfurth, Glasgow Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, St. Andrews Binası, 11 Eldon Caddesi, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

Araştırmaya katılımcı olarak haklarınızla ilgili daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duymanız halinde lütfen etik görevlisiyle iletişime geçin:

Etik Görevlisi:

Dr Muir Houston, University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow. E-posta: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

Plain Language Statement for Learners (Classroom Observations)

1. The study details

a- Title of the study

Exploring learner autonomy in Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

b - Researcher's details

Eda Kocar, University of Glasgow, College of Social Science, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, Room 682

Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

c- Supervisor's details

Prof. Michele Schweisfurth, University of Glasgow, Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, Georgina.Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

d- Degree being sought

Degree of Master of philosophy

2. Invitation to participate in the study

You are being invited to take part in a research study that I am undertaking. Before you choose, if you can kindly take part, it is important for you to know why

the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part in this study. Thank you for taking time reading this.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

This research is an attempt to explore learner autonomy (student's ability to set learning goals and take charge of his or her own learning) in English foreign language (EFL) classrooms at high school level. Also, I hope to learn how learner autonomy (aims to develop learner autonomy and independent by giving students responsibility, putting their interest first and acknowledging their voice and choice as central to the learning experience) fit in the Turkish context. The research aims to gain teachers' and students' understanding of learner autonomy and how it relates to the practice of learner autonomy within and beyond the classroom. The research will also investigate the elements that may support or hinder the development of learner autonomy in the Turkish context.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a Turkish EFL (English foreign language) student in a private/state high school. Your participation is therefore very valuable due to your experience learning English in and beyond the classroom. Your perceptions of the way that you are taught English and supported to develop your autonomy will be very useful in identifying strategies which help develop learner autonomy in Turkish EFL classrooms.

5. Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and it is your right to withdraw your consent and any data previously you supplied at any time during the study.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in classroom observations.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected about you during the study will be secured in a locked filing cabinet with access by the project researcher and MPhil supervisors only. Any information about you used in the research and presented will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. Your name will be anonymously protected and confidential. Finally, data will be retained as outlined by the University of Glasgow guidelines that all materials used are kept safely (e.g. audio recording in classroom observation and audio recordings in the semi-structured interviews) and will be stored on a secured computer, hard-drive, accessible only through the researcher and supervisor with a password, which will be changed often and then. Research data will be retained for 10 years after the end of the research to allow further analysis and review (if needed) and aid in case of the challenge of validity. After that period, paper records will be shredded and recycled and electronic records will be deleted. In the case of use of USB drives, these will be physically destroyed after the expiration of the retention period. Please be advised that in future presentations or publications, all names of participants will not be identified. Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your confidentiality.

8. What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of this study will be presented within a doctoral thesis and they may be published in academic journals and reports, conference proceedings or books. Data collected may be used by the involved researchers for possible future related studies. In any case, your identity will remain anonymous.

9. Who is organising and funding the research? (If relevant)

There is no party organising and funding the research.

10. Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed by the University of Glasgow, College of Social Sciences Ethics Committee.

11. Contact for Further Information

a) Eda Kocar, University of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH.
Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

b) Prof. Michele Schweisfurth, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH
Email: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

c) Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH
Email: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, please contact with ethics officer:

d) Dr Muir Houston, University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow.
Email: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

Öğrenciler için açık dil beyanı (Sınıf gözlemleri)

1. Çalışma ayrıntıları

a - Çalışmanın başlığı

Öğrenci özerkliği Türk bağlamında keşfedilmesi: Bu temanin Türk EFL öğretmenleri ve öğrencileri tarafından lise düzeyinde nasıl algılanmakta ve uygulanmaktadır?

b - Araştırmacının detayları

Eda Koçar
University of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH, E-posta: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

c - Danışmanların detayları

Prof Michele Schweisfurth, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

d - Aranılan derece

Master Derecesi

2. Araştırmaya katılmak için davet

Yapılmasını üstlendiğim bir araştırma çalışmasına katılmaya davet ediliyorsunuz. Çalışmaya katılmaya karar vermeden önce, araştırmanın neden yürütülmekte ve neyin dahil edileceğini bilmek sizin için önemlidir. Lütfen aşağıdaki bilgileri okumak için zaman ayırın ve isterseniz başkaları ile tartışın. Belirsiz olan bir şey

var mı ya da daha fazla bilgi mi istiyor musunuz? Bu çalışmaya katılmak isteyip istemediğinize karar vermek için lütfen acele etmeyin. Bu bilgilendirme formunu okurken zaman ayırdığınız için teşekkür ederim.

3. Araştırmanın amacı nedir?

Master tezinin bir parçası olarak bu araştırma projesi, lise seviyesindeki ingilizce yabancı dil (EFL) sınıflarında öğrenen özerkliğinin (öğrencinin uygun öğrenme hedeflerini belirleme ve kendi öğrenmesini üstlenme yeteneği) yerini araştırmaktadır. Ayrıca, öğrenen özerkliği ve öğrenen merkezli eğitimin (öğrenen özerkliği ve bağımsız öğrenmenin geliştirilmesi için öğrencilere sorumluluk vererek ve öğrencilerin seslerini veya tercihlerini öğrenme deneyiminin merkezi olarak kabul etmek) Türkiye bağlamında uygunlanabirliğini öğrenmeyi umuyorum.

4. Neden seçildim?

Seçildiniz çünkü, siz özel / devlet lisesinde öğrenim gören bir Türk EFL (ingilizce yabancı dil) öğrencisiniz. Sınıfta ve sınıf dışında ingilizce öğrenme deneyiminiz nedeniyle katılımınız benim çok değerlidir. Çünkü, sizin ingilizce öğretiminde öğrenen özerkliğinini geliştirmesine ilişkin algılamalarınız ve aktiviteleriniz, Türk EFL sınıflarında öğrenen özerkliğini geliştirmeye yardımcı olan stratejilerin belirlenmesinde çok yararlı olacaktır.

5. Katılım şartları nelerdir?

Bu çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllü olarak yapılmaktadır ve çalışma sırasında herhangi bir zamanda verdiğiniz her türlü bilgiyi ve onayınızı geri çekme hakkına sahipsiniz.

6. Katılmaya karar verirsem, çalışma nasıl gerçekleşecek?

Çalışmaya dahil olmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden sınıf gözlemine katılmanız istenecektir.

7. Tüm katılımcıların bilgileri gizli tutulacak mı?

Evet. Bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar hakkındaki tüm bilgiler gizli tutulacak, veriler anonim olacak ve güvenli bir şekilde saklanacaktır. Elde edilen tüm materyaller (örn., sınıftaki gözlemlerde ses kaydı ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde ses kayıtları) Glasgow Üniversitesi kuralları tarafından özetlendiği gibi yalnızca

araştırmacı ve danışmanlar vasıtasıyla, sıklıkla ve daha sonra değiştirilecek bir şifre ile güvenli bir bilgisayarda saklanacaktır. Gerekirse daha ayrıntılı analiz ve inceleme yapılmasına ve geçerliliğin sorgulanmasına yardımcı olması ihtimaline karşı araştırma verileri, araştırma sona erdikten sonra 10 yıl boyunca muhafaza edilecektir. Bu dönemden sonra, kağıt kayıtları parçalanacak ve geri dönüştürülecek, elektronik kayıtlar ise silinecektir. USB sürücüleri saklama süresinin sona ermesinden sonra fiziksel olarak yok edilecektir. Gelecekteki sunumlarda veya yayınlarda, katılımcıların isimleri anonimleştirilecektir. Bunu gizliliği zorlayıcı ve meşru nedenler olmadıkça gizlilik gözetilecektir. Böyle bir durumda, katılımcıların gizliliğini sınırlayabilecek tüm kararları size bildireceğim.

8. Araştırma çalışmasının sonuçlarına ne olacak?

Bu çalışmanın bulguları bir doktora tezinde sunulacak ve akademik dergilerde veya raporlarda, konferans bildiri kitaplarında veya kitaplarda yayınlanabilecektir. Toplanan veriler ilgili araştırmacılar tarafından gelecekteki ilgili çalışmalar için kullanılabilir. Her durumda, kimlikler anonim kalacaktır.

9. Araştırmayı kimler gözden geçirdi?

Araştırma çalışması, Glasgow üniversitesi, sosyal bilimler yüksekokulu etik komitesi tarafından gözden geçirildi.

10. İletişim Bilgileri:

Araştırmacı:
Eda Koçar
The university of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH Glasgow, E-posta: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Danışmanlar:
Prof Michele Schweisfurth, Glasgow Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi, St. Andrews Binası, 11 Eldon Caddesi, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. E-posta: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

Araştırmaya katılımcı olarak haklarınızla ilgili daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duymanız halinde lütfen etik görevlisiyle iletişime geçin:

Etik Görevlisi:

Dr Muir Houston, University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow. E-posta: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

APPENDIX E: Consent Forms

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

CONSENT FORM

University of Glasgow, College of Social Science Research Ethics Committee

Title of Project: Exploring learner autonomy in Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

Name of Researcher: Eda Kocar / Prof. Michele Schweisfurth (Supervisor) / Dr. Georgina Wardle (Supervisor)

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Plain Language Statement/Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that my contribution in this study is voluntary and I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without any consequences.
- I understand that my actual name will not be used in the transcriptions, as the transcript data will be coded using a pseudonym.
- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymized.
- I acknowledge that there will be no effect on my grades/employment arising from my participation or non-participation in this research since there is no evaluation.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- I consent to the audio recording of the interviews or observations.
- I understand that all the data in the computer files, the hard copy files and the audio recordings will be kept save until the successful completion of the degree.
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.
- I agree / do not agree (delete as applicable) to take part in the above study

Name of Participant: …… Signature: ……..

Date: ……

Name of Parent/Carer: …… Signature: ……..

Date: ……

Name of Researcher: Eda Kocar Signature: …….

Date: ……..

APPENDIX F: Plain Language Statements and Consent Forms for Local Education Authority and Headteachers

INFORMATION SHEET FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Name of Research Project*:* Exploring learner autonomy in the Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

Researcher' name: Eda Kocar

Supervisors' names: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth and Dr Georgina Wardle

This document explains why I am doing this research project and sets out what will be involved for the school.

What is the purpose of the study? As part of a MPhil thesis, this research project is investigating the place of learner autonomy in English foreign language (EFL) classrooms at high school level and discovering how learner autonomy (a student's ability to set appropriate learning goals and take charge of his or her own learning) fit in the Turkish context.

What sort of participants do I need? As a part of this research, I am looking for 20 EFL teachers and 60 students aged between 15 and 18 to take part in this study.

Who will give consent for a student to take part? I will get consent from the parent or carer and from any child 15 or over (see attached information sheet and consent form). It will be made clear that the study is entirely voluntary and even having given consent the parent/carer is free to withdraw their child at any time without giving a reason. I obviously need your consent, and similarly, you can withdraw from the project at any time.

What will be involved? I will take every care to reduce to a minimum disruption to the school routine. I will observe each teacher's classroom once in order to explore the classroom environment. If you/ teachers and students consent, an

audio recorder will be placed at the back of the class in order for the researcher to record the teaching and learning that goes in the classroom and make notes afterwards. It will be made clear that the recordings are for use as a stimulus for the teacher to discuss particular language teaching strategies in the class and will not focus on individual students. Interviews with teachers that will take place after the classroom observation will up to 45 minutes. It will also involve focus groups with Turkish EFL learners to identify their perceptions of learner autonomy and their practices to develop it. The focus groups, consisting of 3-6 students, will take place after the classroom observation and will last between 45 min. and 1 hour. Every effort will be made to ensure that the research sessions are as enjoyable and relaxed as possible for the children. The participants will be assured that there will be no effect on their grades/employment arising from their participation or non-participation in this research since there is no evaluation.

Will all the participants' information be kept confidential? Yes. All the information about participants in this study will be kept confidential and data will be anonymous and stored securely. Data will be retained as outlined by the University of Glasgow guidelines that all materials used are kept safely (e.g. audio recording in classroom observation and audio recordings in the semi-structured interviews) and will be stored on a secured computer, hard-drive, accessible only through the researcher and supervisor with a password, which will be changed often and then. Research data will be retained for 10 years after the end of the research to allow further analysis and review (if needed) and aid in case of the challenge of validity. After that period, paper records will be shredded and recycled and electronic records will be deleted. In the case of use of USB drives, these will be physically destroyed after the expiration of the retention period. Please be advised that in future presentations or publications, all names of participants will not be identified. Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit participants' confidentiality.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The findings of this study will be presented within a doctoral thesis and they may be published in academic journals and reports, conference proceedings or books. Data collected may be used

by the involved researchers for possible future related studies. In any case, your identity will remain anonymous.

Contact Details:

If you require any further information or have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Researcher;
The university of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH.
Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisors;
Prof. Michele Schweisfurth, The University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH
Email: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, The University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH
Email: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

Ethics Officer:
Dr Muir Houston, The University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow. Email: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

CONSENT FORM FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Name of Research Project: Exploring learner autonomy in the Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

Declaration of Consent

I have been informed about the aims and procedures involved in the research project described above.

I reserve the right to withdraw any participant at any stage in the proceedings and also to terminate the project altogether if I think it necessary.

I understand that the information gained will be anonymous and that participant's names and the school's name will be removed from any materials used in the research.

I consent to the audio recording of the focus groups or observations.

Name: ……

Signed: ……...

Date: ……

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HEAD TEACHER

Name of Research Project*:* Exploring learner autonomy in the Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

Researcher' name: Eda Kocar

Supervisors' names: Prof. Michele Schweisfurth and Dr Georgina Wardle

This document explains why I am doing this research project and sets out what will be involved for the school.

What is the purpose of the study? As part of a MPhil thesis, this research project is exploring the place of learner autonomy (student's ability to set appropriate learning goals and take charge of his or her own learning) in English foreign language (EFL) classrooms at high school level. Also, I hope to learn how learner autonomy (aims to develop learner autonomy and independent by giving students responsibility, putting their interest first and acknowledging their voice and choice as central to the learning experience) fit in the Turkish context.

What sort of participants do I need? As a part of this research, I am looking for 20 EFL teachers and 60 students aged between 15 and 18 to take part in this study.

Who will give consent for a student to take part? I will get consent from the parent or carer and from any child 15 or over (see attached information sheet and consent form). It will be made clear that the study is entirely voluntary and even having given consent the parent/carer is free to withdraw their child at any time without giving a reason. I obviously need your consent, and similarly, you can withdraw from the project at any time.

What will be involved? I will take every care to reduce to a minimum disruption to the school routine. I will observe each teacher's classroom once in order to explore the classroom environment. If you/ teachers and students consent, an audio recorder will be placed at the back of the class in order for the researcher to

record the teaching and learning that goes in the classroom and make notes afterwards. It will be made clear that the recordings are for use as a stimulus for the teacher to discuss particular language teaching strategies in the class and will not focus on individual students. Interviews with teachers that will take place after the classroom observation will up to 45 minutes. It will also involve focus groups with Turkish EFL learners to identify their perceptions of learner autonomy and their practices to develop it. The focus groups, consisting of 3-6 students, will take place after the classroom observation and will last between 45min and 1 hour. Every effort will be made to ensure that the research sessions are as enjoyable and relaxed as possible for the children. The participants will be assured that there will be no effect on their grades/employment arising from their participation or non-participation in this research since there is no evaluation.

Will all the participants' information be kept confidential? Yes. All the information about participants in this study will be kept confidential and data will be anonymous and stored securely. Data will be retained as outlined by the University of Glasgow guidelines that all materials used are kept safely (e.g. audio recording in classroom observation and audio recordings in the semi-structured interviews) and will be stored on a secured computer, hard-drive, accessible only through the researcher and supervisor with a password, which will be changed often and then. Research data will be retained for 10 years after the end of the research to allow further analysis and review (if needed) and aid in case of the challenge of validity. After that period, paper records will be shredded and recycled and electronic records will be deleted. In the case of use of USB drives, these will be physically destroyed after the expiration of the retention period. Please be advised that in future presentations or publications, all names of participants will not be identified. Confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit participants' confidentiality.

What will happen to the results of the research study? The findings of this study will be presented within a doctoral thesis and they may be published in academic journals and reports, conference proceedings or books. Data collected may be used by the involved researchers for possible future related studies. In any case, your identity will remain anonymous**.**

Contact Details: If you require any further information or have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Researcher:
The university of Glasgow, School of Education. St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow. G3 6NH.
Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisors:
Prof. Michele Schweisfurth, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH
Email: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle, University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH
Email: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

Ethics Officer:
Dr Muir Houston, University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow. Email: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

CONSENT FORM FOR HEAD TEACHER

Name of Research Project: Exploring learner autonomy and learner-centred education in the Turkish context: How are these themes perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

Declaration of Consent

I have been informed about the aims and procedures involved in the research project described above.

I reserve the right to withdraw any participant at any stage in the proceedings and also to terminate the project altogether if I think it necessary.

I understand that the information gained will be anonymous and that participant's names and the school's name will be removed from any materials used in the research.

I consent to the audio recording of the focus groups or observations.

Name: ……

Signed: ……..

School: ……..

Date: …….

APPENDIX G: Plain Language Statement and Consent Form for Parents/Careers

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS/CARERS (FOCUS GROUPS)

Name of Research Project*:* Exploring learner autonomy in the Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

What is the purpose of the study?

As part of a MPhil thesis, this research project is exploring the place of learner autonomy (student's ability to set appropriate learning goals and take charge of his or her own learning) in English foreign language (EFL) classrooms at high school level. Also, I hope to learn how learner autonomy (aims to develop learner autonomy and independent by giving students responsibility, putting their interest first and acknowledging their voice and choice as central to the learning experience) fit in the Turkish context.

What sort of participants do I need?

Your child was selected as a possible participant in this study because he/she is an EFL learner at a high school level.

What will be involved?

If you decide to allow your child to participate, he/she will participate in focus groups to identify EFL learners' perceptions/practices of learner autonomy. In focus groups; a group of students (3 to 6) are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards learner autonomy and learner-centred education. Regarding these concepts, students will be asked questions in an

interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members. During this process, I will either take notes or records the vital points that I get from the group. The focus groups will take place in an empty classroom or in a room and will last between 45 minutes and 1 hour. We will discuss interesting issues about students' language learning in the past and now. The focus groups will be audio recorded with your/your child consent for the purpose of making notes afterwards and interpreting responses (i.e. researcher use).

What are the possible benefits?

Your child and other participants will have a chance to freely describe how they learn English in and outside the classroom and reflect on their learning strategies, which they might not have had the chance to hear and discuss before. However, I cannot guarantee that your child personally will receive any benefits from this research. Sometimes, your child's participation in the research study will be of benefit to society by helping researchers to learn more about learner autonomy and learner-centred education in the Turkish context.

What are the possible risks?

The focus groups have only minor risks, such as questions that may make your child slightly uncomfortable. The research does not involve the question of any sensitive information. However, in the unlikely event of your child become uncomfortable during answering questions they will have the right to omit questions that they are not willing to answer. In addition, there will be no obligation for the participants to complete the focus group discussions and they are free to end their participation temporarily or permanently. I will carry out the focus groups in low-risk locations (in a classroom or a room in the school) within normal office hours which mean that participants will involve the research while they are in the school. Your child will not be in an isolated area since the focus groups will be conducted in one of the classrooms at their school. The participants will be assured that there will be no effect on their grades arising from their participation or non-participation in this research since there is no evaluation and judgement of

their skills. In case any ethical concerns arise, please do not hesitate to contact with the ethics officers (contact detail is below).

Will your child's taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Subject identities will be kept confidential by keeping names anonymously. All information collected about your child during the study will be secured in a locked filing cabinet with access by the project researcher and MPhil supervisors only. Data will be retained as outlined by the University of Glasgow guidelines that all materials used are kept safely and will be stored on a secured computer, hard-drive, accessible only through the researcher and supervisor with a password, which will be changed often and then. Research data will be retained for 10 years after the end of the research to allow further analysis and review (if needed) and aid in case of the challenge of validity. After that period, paper records will be shredded and recycled and electronic records will be deleted. In the case of use of USB drives, these will be physically destroyed after the expiration of the retention period. Please be advised that in future presentations or publications, all names of participants will not be identified. Your child's participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your or your child's relationship with me, his/her teacher or his/her friends. There will be no effect on your child's grades arising from his/her participation or non-participation in this research. If you decide to allow your child to participate, you and/or your child are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time. Please note that confidentiality will be respected unless there are compelling and legitimate reasons for this to be breached. If this was the case we would inform you of any decisions that might limit your child's confidentiality.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings of this study will be presented within a doctoral thesis and they may be published in academic journals and reports, conference proceedings or books. Data collected may be used by the involved researchers for possible future related studies. In any case, your child's identity will remain anonymous.

If you require any further information or have any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact:

Researcher' name and contact details:

Eda Kocar - The University of Glasgow, School of Education, St Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH. Email: e.kocar.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisors' names and contact details:

Prof. Michele Schweisfurth - the University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH Email: Michele.Schweisfurth@glasgow.ac.uk

Dr Georgina Wardle - the University of Glasgow, School of Education, St. Andrews Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH Email: Georgina. Wardle@glasgow.ac.uk

Ethics officer's name and contact details:

Dr Muir Houston - University of Glasgow, Ethics Officer, the College of Social Sciences. The University of Glasgow. Email: muir.Houston@glasgow.ac.uk

University of Glasgow | College of Social Sciences

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS/ CARERS (FOCUS GROUPS)

Name of Research Project: Exploring learner autonomy in the Turkish context: How is learner autonomy perceived and practised by Turkish EFL teachers and learners at high school level?

Declaration of Consent

Your signature indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, that you willingly agree to allow your child to participate, that you and/or your child may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation, that you will receive a copy of this form.

-I have been informed about the aims and procedures involved in the research project described above.

-I reserve the right to withdraw my child at any stage in the proceedings.

-I understand that the information gained will be anonymous.

-I consent to the audio recording of the focus groups.

-I give ……permission to take part in the research study.

Name: ……..

Signature: ……

Date: ……..