T.C.

ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNER AUTONOMY IN AN EFL TURKISH CONTEXT

MASTER'S THESIS

Şebnem KÜÇÜK GENTRY

Deparment of English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching Program

March, 2022

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Department of English Language Teaching

English Language Teaching Program

**Thesis Advisor: Dr. Hülya YUMRU**

March, 2022

ONAY FORMU

DECLARATION

I hereby declare with respect that the study "Learners' Perspectıves On Learner Autonomy In An Efl Turkısh Context", which I submitted as a Master thesis, is written without any assistance in violation of scientific ethics and traditions in all the processes from the Project phase to the conclusion of the thesis and that the works I have benefited are from those shown in the Bibliography. (.../.../20...)

Şebnem KÜÇÜK GENTRY
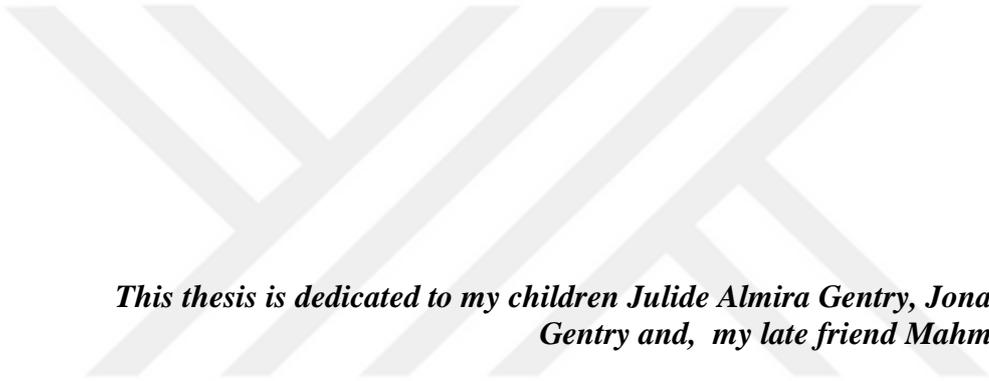
This thesis is dedicated to my children Julide Almira Gentry, Jonathan Derin Gentry and, my late friend Mahmut Turhan.

FOREWORD

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Hülya Yumru for guiding me throughout this study by offering her valuable knowledge and inspirational words. Her constructive counseling and guidance have helped me complete my thesis. In addition to my advisor, I would also like to extend my profuse thanks and gratitude to Dr. Osman Sabuncuoğlu for his assistance. I am honored to have been their student and I will always remember their wisdom.

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My children Julide Almira and Jonathan Derin deserve the most credit for being patient, understanding, and loving towards me throughout this journey.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every person who have helped me to complete this study successfully.

<u>**March, 2022**</u>   **Şebnem KÜÇÜK GENTRY**

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ABSTRACT

The recent innovations that have taken place over the last four decades, predominantly the significant growth of interest in the theory and practice of learner autonomy, have revolutionized language education. Subsequently, it has been the main focus of numerous research papers that have been carried out since 1980. However, a great number of researchers attempted to investigate the teachers' conception of learner autonomy. The current study tried to explore the students' beliefs on learner autonomy in English language classes. The researcher collected the data by studying 52 first-year students enrolled in the faculty of health and science and the faculty of engineering architecture at a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey, via utilizing a questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of participants had a positive attitude towards learner autonomy. However, the students' awareness must be better raised, and learner autonomy has to be promoted more efficiently for a smoother transition from teacher-centeredness to student-centeredness.

Key words: *learner autonomy, autonomous learners, learners' readiness and perspectives on autonomy*

TÜRKİYEDE YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENENLERİN ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİ ÜZERİNE BAKIŞ AÇILARI

ÖZET

Son kırk yılda gerçekleşen yenilikler, özellikle de öğrenen özerkliğinin gerek teorisi gerekse uygulaması üzerine olan ilginin önemli ölçüde artması dil eğitimini tümden değiştirmiştir. Bunu takiben bu konu 1980'den beri yürütülmüş ve yayımlanmış çok sayıda araştırmanın odak noktası haline gelmiştir. Ancak, bu alanda pek çok araştırmacı öğretmenlerin öğrenen özerkliği hakkındaki kavrayışlarını araştırmaya çalışmıştır. Mevcut araştırma ise İngilizce öğrenilen sınıflarda öğrenenlerin öğrenen özerkliği üzerine olan bakış açılarını incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Burada araştırmacı bir anket aracılığı ile İstanbul, Türkiye'deki bir vakıf üniversitesinin fen bilimleri fakültesi ve mimarlık ile mühendislik fakültesindeki 52 birinci sınıf öğrencisinden veri toplamıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları katılımcıların çoğunun öğrenen özerkliği hakkında olumlu bir tutumu olduğunu göstermiştir. Ancak, öğretmen merkezli bir eğitimden öğrenen merkezli bir eğitime daha yumuşak bir geçişin gerçekleşebilmesi için öğrenenlerinin farkındalığının daha iyi arttırılması ve öğrenen özerkliğinin daha etkin bir şekilde teşvik edilmesi gerekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Öğrenen özerkliği, özerk öğrenenler, öğrenenlerin öğrenmeye hazır olmaları ve bakış açıları*

1. INTRODUCTION

In this section of the study, the background of the study, the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, and the definition of key terms are respectively presented.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learner autonomy has been a significant part of EFL (English as a foreign language) learning among researchers after its breakthrough in Europe. Numerous researchers (e.g., Holec, 1981; Little 1991; Benson, 2001; Aoki & Smith, 1999, etc.) have further investigated and developed the notion of learner autonomy over the last thirty years. The research on learner autonomy recognizes the benefits of developing a language learning environment among learners in language education (Benson, 2001). Nevertheless, different researchers approached learner autonomy differently; therefore, various definitions of learner autonomy exist. This study acknowledges the international trend of the learner-centered classroom.

The benefits of learner autonomy in language education are best described by Little (1991) in three main areas. First, as learners are involved in decision-making, the learning environment should be "focused and purposeful, and thus more effective both immediately and in the longer term" (Little, 1991, p. 8). Second, learners are expected to take responsibility for their learning, and they are also expected to minimize "the constraints between learning and living" that are widely found in teacher-centered classrooms (Littlewood, 1997, p. 72). Finally, as learners take responsibility for their own learning, it is believed that they would be expert [and knowledge-able] in related areas of their studies; as a result, they will be influential members of their society (Little, 1991). However, other researchers have addressed the benefits of autonomy in language learning and education (e.g., Littlewood, 1997; Dam, 2008; Benson, 2008), to name a few. Different researchers have followed different trends when exploring

learner autonomy. For instance, Benson (2008) investigated the mainstream of language education environments, whereas Benson (2013) explored autonomous learning in the EFL context. Therefore, this research study follows the latter trend.

The term "learner autonomy" was first coined and used in pedagogy-related contexts. However, in 1979, it officially appeared in second language learning (henceforth ESL) in the Council of Europe Modern Languages Project (ECML). The ECML was led by Holec, who later published a seminal report (Holec, 1981) and defined learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). Holec's (1981) definition of learner autonomy is remarkable and remains widely cited in the field. However, variations on this definition abound; for instance, "Ability" is frequently replaced by "capacity" (Holec, 1981, p. 3), while "take charge of"' is often replaced by "take responsibility for" or 'take control of one's own learning (Holec, 1981, p. 3). The critical element in autonomy-related definitions is the attribution of learners (Holec, 1981) rather than learning conditions (Dickinson, 1987). Following Holec's (1981) definition, various researchers attempted to define learner autonomy in the context of language learning. For example, Little (2007) combines his previous research (Little, 1995) with Holec's (1981) definition of learner autonomy. Benson and Voller (1997) referred to autonomy in five various elements: a) circumstances in which learners study on their own; "b) an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;" c) skills that can be and applied and learned in self-directed learning; "d) the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning; and e) the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning" (Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 2). According to Nga (2014), a learner's autonomy is "[their] willingness and ability to take responsibility, to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate his/her learning with tasks that are constructed in negotiation with and support from the teacher" (p. 4). As stated above, the literature on learner autonomy revealed many definitions which, in some cases, lacked clarity and caused misconceptions that should be addressed.

Despite the great interest in learner autonomy and learner-centered classroom, teachers are still encountering some misconceptions regarding the notion of learner autonomy in the classroom. Little (1991) illustrated five misconceptions

as regards what learner autonomy entails. The first misconception is that learner autonomy means self-instruction; therefore, the teacher's role is not essential in the classroom. The term "self-instruction" is mistakenly thought of as a synonym of autonomy. However, Little (1991; 1995) believes that self-instruction (i.e., learning without a teacher's [direct] control) is different in aspect from the concept of learner autonomy in the sense that in an autonomous classroom, there is an interconnection between the teacher and the learner (Dickinson, 1987). Esch (1997) warns teachers against pairing autonomy with learning in isolation, especially while using modern technologies in class which have brought some freedom in language learning; however, they cause some sense of isolation that affects learners negatively.

Autonomous learners can indeed be identified by their behavior; however, behavior can take many forms. Therefore, it is assumed that only specific learners can achieve being autonomous (Little, 1991) even though it is believed that there are different stages and degrees to be autonomous (Little, 1999). Furthermore, many researchers who advocate for autonomy argue that "some degree of freedom" in learning is required to develop learner autonomy skills and be autonomous learners. Nevertheless, most scholars think that freedom in learning is not autonomy, and this freedom will always be constrained (Little, 1996). Another misconception is best described by Benson (2001) who believes that two main issues led to the misconceptions of learner autonomy. The first issue is related to the usage of the terminology and the confusion of the term across fields, whereas the second issue is related to the belief that an autonomous learning environment relinquishes the teacher control over the classroom, where some researchers believe that having the teacher intervene in the learners' learning would ruin their autonomy (Nag, 2014).

Another misconception described by Little (1991) is related to the teaching method that the "teacher does to their learners" (p. 3); that is, the teachers have complete control over the classroom. What is understood from this conception is that if learners want to be autonomous, they must refer to their teachers for support. However, this is not simply done by "a series of lesson plans" (Little, 1991, p. 3), but rather it is a lifelong process. A fourth misconception is an assumption that autonomous learning simply describes behavior (Little, 1991).

Other researchers (e.g., Esch, 1997) have introduced similar misconceptions that led to unclarity to understand and implement learner autonomy in the classroom. Esch (1997) exhibited three misconceptions regarding autonomous learners along the same line. The first misconception is a fear of "reduction to a set of skills" (Esch, 1997, p. 165) where "the promotion of autonomous learning is to reduce it to a series of techniques to train language learning skills leading to the display of autonomous behavior" (p. 165). This misconception is whispered among foreign language learners in education. Therefore, Esch (1997) called to face the radical concepts of "teacher control versus learner control in particular" (p. 166). The second misconception is related to the unique features that every language has, which must be considered while fostering an autonomous learning environment. By this, Esch (1997) meant that teachers and educators should understand the difference between language learning and other forms of learning. In the former, language is used to describe, engage, and talk about learning experiences. Therefore, teachers should provide learners with a format to put their experiences into language use (Esch, 1997). The last misconception is the misunderstanding between learning autonomously and "learning in isolation" (Esch, 1997, p. 167). This misconception has been previously discussed by Little (1991). The misconceptions mentioned above can hinder teachers' understanding of learner autonomy and, therefore, having difficulties applying it properly in the classroom.

Considering the previously mentioned studies about learner autonomy, we come to understand that the process of being autonomous learners is spontaneous and takes a long time to bear. While learners try to be autonomous, they should interact with their teachers and peers to learn and acquire a language in authentic manners. To this end, this study aimed at supporting the existing literature on identifying autonomous learners and understanding their behavior, attitudes, and strategies.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Learner autonomy has been granted vital importance since Holec's (1981) seminal proposal for the Council of Europe, and although the idea has been around in education long before that (Cooker, 2012), it has not been widely used

until then. The notion of learner autonomy is not only limited to specific areas of language teaching rather, but it is also widely used among all disciplines of research at higher education and university level (e.g., Bill et al., 2006; Todd et al., 2004). Learner autonomy is also about being a good citizen (Holec,1981); in the sense that learning autonomy is not only about the learner, but it is about the person as a whole. According to Holec's (1981), the need to raise awareness to be autonomous learners stems from the fact that we "need to develop the individual's freedom by developing those abilities which will enable him to act more responsibly in running the affairs of the society in which he lives" (p. 1).

It is significant to develop autonomy among learners for various reasons. First, being autonomous would help learners be more effective in language learning (Benson, 2011; Dafei, 2007). Second, considering that learning is a lifelong process, being autonomous would help learners promote their learning outside the classroom in real life. In other words, to be successful in the classroom, one should further continue their learning outside the classroom, where you do not necessarily need a teacher to support your learning. Good learners never stop learning, even when they leave the classroom.

Therefore, this study aimed at investigating a group of first-year students' perspectives and expectations of autonomous learning. Firstly, it aimed at exploring learners' self-readiness level for self-direction in language learning. Secondly, the study aimed to explore the learners' perceptions of working independently. Besides, this study aimed to understand the learners' perspectives concerning the teacher's role in the language learning process. Another aim of the current research was to investigate the importance of teacher's explanation and supervision in the classroom from the learners' viewpoint.

Likewise, this research aimed to explore the learners' preference concerning language learning activities. The sixth aim was to explore the learners' attitudes towards selecting materials that ought to be used in and for their language learning. Also, it aimed at exploring the learners' preferences for assessment, and finally, to explore their perspectives on the interconnection between language learning and target culture.

1.3 Research Questions

The following questions were answered in the current research:

- What are the learners' levels of readiness for self-direction in language learning?

- What are the learners' views in relation to independent work in language learning?

- How important do the learners view the class/the teacher in their language learning?

- What importance do the learners attach on the role of the teacher's explanation and supervision?

- What are the learners' preferences for language learning activities?

- What are the learners' attitudes towards the selection of content in the language learning process?

- How confident do the learners feel about defining learning objectives?

- What are the learners' preferences for teacher assessment?

- What are the learners' attitudes in relation to target culture?

1.4 The Significance of the Study

Although learner autonomy is gaining momentum rapidly, there is still little known about the notion of autonomous learning from learners' perspectives (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). Therefore, learner autonomy is significant since it, as Little (1998) expresses, can solve many problems that learners face, such as learners' motivation in language learning. The motivation drawn from autonomous learning helps learners take responsibility for their learning, develop, and strengthen the skills to help them be successful learners. Moreover, when learners take it upon themselves to be autonomous, their learning will be effective and authentic. Hence, the effectiveness and authenticity of language learning in an autonomous learning environment means that the skills can be applied to circumstances outside the classroom (Benson, 2011; Littlewood, 1999; Oxford, 2008).

Learner autonomy can be in the area of "lifelong learning" which many researchers (e.g., Littlewood, 1999) believe it does not only promote learners' learning skills, but also generic skills (i.e., self-confidence, self-reflection, organization). Therefore, equipping EFL learners with such skills and promoting an autonomous learning environment is significant in and outside the classroom.

Based on what has been mentioned above, we understand that learner autonomy is significant to inspire and promote a better learning environment where learners can be in charge of their own learning and make decisions about their learning. This research is meant to explore students' beliefs and attitudes towards in an autonomous learning environment. Learner autonomy arises from the individual learner's acceptance of being held accountable for their learning and the decisions that empower them. Meaning that, learner autonomy is a matter of conscious intention as one can take responsibility for their learning and know how to be autonomous learners (Cakici, 2015).

1.5 Definitions of Terms

Learning Autonomy: It is defined as one's "ability to take charge of their own learning," however, the ability is "is not inborn but must be acquired either by 'natural' means or (as most often happens) by formal learning, i.e., in a systematic, deliberate way" (Holec, 1981, p. 3).

L1: stands for a person's First Language.

L2: stands for a person's Second Language.

EFL: stands for English as a Foreign Language.

ESL: stands for English as a Second Language.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter explores the literature on the intersection between learner autonomy and other variables that inspire and empower an autonomous learning environment. The researcher divided this chapter into ten categories. The chapter begins with the theoretical background of the study, where the researcher discusses the constructivist learning theory and its connection to learner autonomy. Then, it is followed by an overview of autonomy and the nature and characteristics of autonomous learners. The third part focuses on the learner-centered approach to English language teaching. It also addresses the paradigm shifts in the learner-centered classroom, the interconnection between autonomous learning and language proficiency, and learners' perceptions towards the learner-centered classroom. The fourth part presents the learners' beliefs and readiness for an autonomous learning environment. Then, it is followed by learners' strategies to be autonomous. It also includes clarifying learning strategies and learning styles with examples from literature. The sixth section addresses learners' attitudes towards language learning. In addition, the researcher also shed light on significant aspects of language learning, such as motivation, self-determination in theoretical concepts, and the correlation between learners' attitudes and academic achievement. The seventh section focuses o learners' attitudes concerning the target language and how culture promotes and strengthens autonomous language learning which is followed by an overview of the teacher's role and instruction strategies in the learner-centered classroom. The ninth part deals with setting learning objectives in a learner-centered classroom. Finally, the researcher concludes this chapter with learners' preferences in classroom assessment.

2.2 Constructivist Learning Theory

Benson (2001) points out that "active learning," which finds its roots in constructivism, is essential to effective autonomous language learning (p. 40). The idea of constructivism originated as a psychological concept illustrating how people acquire knowledge. The definition and understanding of constructivism vary according to everyone's point of view. When pondering the educational contexts, there are different points of view on constructivism and different descriptions by prominent scholars in the field. Holec (1981) used the verb "construct" to signify control, deliberate, and explicit teaching procedures (as cited in Little, 2007, p.16).

Conversely, implicit processes would involve the unconscious and involuntary workings of cognition. Holec (1981) indicated that language is a creative and active operation. Towards the end of the 1970s, his empirical research showed that learning occurs when the learner transforms what he/she has been taught in an organized fashion or by "natural, untreated information" (Little et al., 2017, p. 5). According to Holec (1981), becoming autonomous and developing language proficiency are different abilities (Little et al., 2017). Little (2017) claimed that Holec's perception of autonomy fits the constructivist theory of the language. Barnes (1976) argued that we all could learn new things on top of the previously learned ones. Barnes based his discussion on classroom communication mainly on the constructivist theory (as cited in Little et al., 2017). He claimed that everyone possesses sets of knowledge after attending a lesson, and each learner will leave the class with different stores of knowledge. According to Barnes (1976), learners "make sense of new knowledge by projecting it upon what they know already" (as cited in Little et al., 2017, p. 7).

Tam (2000) views constructivism as the construction of knowledge "while objectivism concerns mainly with the object of knowing" (p.51). Tam (2000) suggests that to create a learner-centered and collaborative learning environment, instructors need to set the ground for the constructivist theory principles that provide guiding patterns to support the "reflective and experiential" learning process, use of technology, and collaboration among learners. According to Woolfolk (1993), the constructivist view of the learning process is affected by some key elements, and while learners construct their

knowledge diligently and actively, they also deal with the input from external factors that influence what the learners learn and experience (Tam, 2000). Jonassen (1991) argues that each learner thinks of the outside world realities differently since learners have unique perceptions and different experiences, beliefs, values, and understandings about the world around them (as cited in Tam, 2000).

Pricthart and Woollard (2010) examine constructivist thinking in three distinct ways: reality, knowledge, and learning. Like knowledge, the researchers believe, reality is something that an individual constructs in social constructivism (Pricthart & Woollard, 2010). Even though all individuals might face similar realities, their interactions and experiences can be very different. According to social constructivists, knowledge is human-made but constructed with the help of cultural experiences and social interactions (Pricthart & Woollard, 2010). The last important aspect of constructivist theorists' belief is that they view learning as an active social process (Pricthart & Woollard, 2010).

An earlier introduction of constructivism by Dewey (1916) coined the term learning by doing rather than learning by passively listening and acquiring. Dewey (1916) associates learning with constant planning, alteration, and redevelopment of acquaintance. Vygotsky introduced the social constructivism formula early in the twentieth century (Pricthart and Woollard, 2010). Pricthart and Woollard (2010) stated that the social constructivist theory appreciates the strong influence of cultural experiences in shaping the learning process. Bada and Olesegun (2015) acknowledged that the learners' beliefs and attitudes influence individual and collective learning. Tam (2000) suggests that constructivism supports and creates a learning community composed of teachers and learners.

All in all, constructivism, in language learning, involves actively learning and gradually constructing knowledge using learners' experiences as a basis for new understanding. Little (1991) likens Barnes (1976) "school knowledge" and "action knowledge" to his distinction of "learning and living" (p.3). School knowledge is presented to us by our teachers and relatively by someone else. This learned knowledge is not our own produced product, and if we do not use it, we will most likely forget it. When we use this learned knowledge for our

interests and purposes in real-life situations, it turns into action knowledge. In this context, Little (1991) compared his idea about learning to Barnes's school knowledge. Little also compares his idea about the living to Barnes's action knowledge. Constructivism continues building on top of this fundamental understanding and develops new knowledge by interacting with our surroundings.

2.3 Definition of Learner Autonomy and Autonomous Learner

The notion of learner autonomy, which was previously subjected to much research and studied by many researchers, is not a relatively new concept and is broadly mentioned in English language teaching (Pina et al., 2018). Benson (2001) gives a brief update about the learner autonomy in the learning and teaching discipline. Benson (2001) states that learner autonomy first entered the field later admittance when the European Center for Modern Languages project (ECML) was formed in 1971. Following that, "Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues (CRAPEL)" was established at the University of Nancy, France. CRAPEL became a primary focus in the learning and teaching field, especially in ELT (as cited in Cetinkaya, 2019, p. 7). Later, Holec (1979) introduced the term learner autonomy in his report "Autonomy and Foreign Language Learning," which was published by the Council of Europe in 1979 (as cited in Little et al., 2017).

Many researchers across disciplines have identified the term learner autonomy. For instance, Benson's (2011) definition of learner autonomy is a means to effective learning but also a "legitimate and desirable goal" itself (p. 2). Holec (1981) defines learner autonomy as "[…] the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). Little (1991) defines autonomy as "the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (p. 4). Benson (2001) depicts that "autonomy is a recognition of the rights of learners within educational systems" (p. 29). Dam (1995) portrays autonomy as" awareness of HOW to learn facilitates and influences WHAT is being learned and gives an improved insight into HOW to learn" (as cited in Little, 1996, p. 3).

Boud (1988) comments on the significant features of autonomy by saying that autonomy is a method of learning for responsible learners who take progressive

and notable steps forward after the given instruction. After a teacher's guidance, autonomous learners improve and take their learning to the next level. Sometimes they do not learn from a classroom environment or the teacher's guidance but rather learn on their own and outside of the classroom. Omaggio (1978) summarizes the qualities of an autonomous learner as someone who takes an active role inside of the class and practices the target language outside of the classroom through their own self-discipline and free will. The researcher also claims that learners find new ways to improve their learning, recover from their mistakes, and calculate the probabilities and risks (Omaggio, 1978).

Among the other qualities and features of autonomous learners, Thanasoulas (2000) suggests that these learners have a "tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language" (p.2). Moreover, Little (1991) pointed out three pedagogical principles (i.e., learner empowerment, reflectivity, and appropriate target language use) that characterize an autonomous learner in the language classroom. Little (1991) further explains the learner empowerment principle, which requires teachers to involve the learners in the learning process, by saying that teachers must bring their learners to a point where they take responsibility for their own learning (Little, 1991). Cakici (2015) states that the reflectivity of autonomous learning is a critical component of the learning process.

Benson and Voller (1997) classify autonomy into five different aspects. First, learners learn and study primarily on their own. Second, learners can apply the learned skills towards autonomy (i.e., self-direction). Third, autonomy is an inborn capacity that is restrain-restricted by "institutional education." Forth, learners practice taking their own responsibility. Finally, learners have the right to determine their learning goals.

Benson (2001) distinguishes between the terms "autonomy" and "autonomous learning," as they are often confused and mistaken with synonyms such as 'self-study,' 'self-education," self-instruction,' 'self-access,' 'out-of-class learning' or 'distance learning' (p. 48). The concept of "autonomy" in ELT displays an essential and meaningful degree of freedom from the control of others. To clarify, Benson (2001) describes autonomous learners as those who plan, practice, and study to understand the logic and the psychology of learning. For

Benson (2001), autonomous learners "manage their planning, organization, and evaluation of learning" with minimal supervision; their self-control is "understood as a psychology matter in language learning" (pp.76 -78). Autonomous learners enjoy their freedom and use teacher instruction as a guideline to carry out their learning after the given instruction. Therefore, autonomous learners can be defined as individuals who understand the purpose of their learning. These learners know their potential, enjoy independent learning, apply what they have learned, and set goals for their academic and professional future (Little et al., 2003).

Holec (1981) argues that autonomous learners can choose objectives, methods, and techniques, decide what to study, know how to monitor their progress, and evaluate what they have learned. Studies show that many aspects such as cognitive, social, psychological, and affective factors help, promote, or limit learners' independent learning. Everyone learns differently, even in the same setting; students will vary in their responses to the same given tasks. In this context, Little (1996) notes that autonomous learners who follow the rules of self-improvement and self-instruction will achieve a high degree of autonomy, but many learners will fail to do so.

Sinclair (2000) states that degrees of autonomy change based on a broad series of values such as learners' attitudes towards the subject matter, the teachers, the learners' desire and motivation, the learners' state of being (e.g., feeling tired, sick, or hungry), the setting of the learning environment such as external factors (e.g., noise, the temperature in the classroom, and peer learners in the classroom) (Nucamendi et al., 2011). However, Scharle and Szabo (2000) mark that those responsible learners are not expected to be role models; they are the ones who act accordingly to progress profoundly.

However, no student, anywhere, will have their teachers to accompany them throughout their life (Littlewood, 1999). Researchers (e.g., Candy, 1991; Thanasoulas, 2000) confirm that learning is not a habit formation; instead, it is a social, active, and constructive process that involves comprehending the whole concept by connecting the little pieces that are meaningful rather than rote memorization. Nevertheless, meaningful learning is not only what a teacher

covers in the classroom but rather mainly what learners discover in and out of the classroom.

2.4 Learner-Centered Approach to English Language Teaching

Over the years, finding the best teaching and learning methods has been a significant focus for many researchers. As of early as the 1970s, active student engagement in language learning focused more on the fluency and meaning of the target language and less on the accuracy and grammar. Many researchers called this spectrum differently. For example, Farrell and Jacobs (2010) called this a "paradigm shift" (p.2). Long (1997) describes this as a revolution from "behaviorist psychology and form-based linguistics" to "cognitive psychology and meaning-based linguistics" (as cited in Farrell and Jacobs, 2010, p. 5).

According to Farrell and Jacobs (2010), some key elements forced this paradigm shift. First, the main focus shifted from traditional, teacher-centered instruction to learner-centered. The student-centered approach gained significant importance by reshaping education beyond the classroom. Finding new ways and methods to raise awareness of students' self-direction, self-reflection, and self-discipline skills became a strong focus for language learning educators. The second element of the paradigm shift was learning as an active process—this shift towards process-oriented learning, away from the product-oriented learning model. The researchers believe that learning is an interactive social activity between learners, co-learners, teachers, and environments; therefore, those stakeholders are inseparable. The third element is that diversity is recognized and appreciated among students, which means that diverse individuals are not an obstacle but an asset, as the researchers called for individual differences in learning. The fourth element is creating awareness and understanding for the learners' purpose of learning. The fifth feature is connecting the school. Beyond the school, there is a whole world to explore and discover, which leads teachers to promote holistic learning. The sixth key is considering that a significant shift is on the meaning rather than the form. In other words, learning is not based on drills, habit formation, or rote learning. Another significant element that took a big role in this paradigm shift was the form "whole to part orientation instead of [a] part to [the] whole approach."

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That includes helping students understand and recognize the different parts of the text, the text's structure, and the word choice in a meaningful context. Finally, an essential element for the paradigm shift recognizes that learning is not a temporary act but a lifelong process (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010).

Dafei (2007) studied 129 non-English learners to investigate relationships between learner autonomy and proficiency in a teacher college in China. Defai's (2007) results indicated a connection between learner autonomy and the learners' proficiency level. The researcher further claims that the more autonomous the learner becomes, the higher their proficiency in language learning will be (Dafei, 2007).

Along the same lines, McCombs (2006) tried to determine the relationship between the learners' perception of learner-centered implementations and their achievement and motivation. The researcher worked to define the relation of these practices to learners' troublesome behaviors and classroom absences. McCombs (2006) particularly focused on differences in learners' motivation and achievement in high, medium, and low learner-centered groups. McCombs also tried to determine if there are ethnic and gender differences in high, medium, and low learner-centered groups. The study results indicate that learner-centered based groups have the highest levels of achievement in all ethnic and gender groups. The study data from different statistical tests show us that "additional evidence that best predicts student motivation and achievement, at all age levels, are practices that create positive relationships between students and teachers and a positive climate for learning" (McCombs, 2006, p.13).

2.5 Learners' Beliefs and Learners' Readiness on Self-directed Learning

Previous studies indicate that learners' metacognitive knowledge, beliefs, and the strategies they use and develop have a strong connection with language learning. For instance, Cotterall (1995) points out that learners' beliefs are essential ingredients for planning autonomy as their beliefs will profoundly shape their study habits. Haseborg (2012) depicts a classroom environment initially shaped by the students' collective and diverse experiences. Haseborg (2012) suggests that it is essential to review the literature on learners' beliefs to understand the learner autonomy and applications of autonomy.

Bergen (1989) and prominent experts in the field came up with a definition of "Bergen's definition" during a workshop where it took place in Norway. Bergen's (1989) definition points out that; autonomy is one's inner will and motivation to be in control and fully aware of their study purpose in the learning process. Individuals can use practical reasoning skills to purposefully self-manage and evaluate their learning experience (as cited in Vázquez, 2016).

Cotterall (1995) states that autonomous learners display that they are in charge and responsible for their own learning. The researcher further explains that learners have specific abilities, tactics, and strategies to broaden and discover their learning skills. Moreover, Cotterall's (1999) research findings indicate that learner beliefs help learners attain their previously set goals. Therefore, the findings indicate that most learners are average at language learning, and most are undecided about whether they are over average in language learning. The researcher also suggests that learners think that having their work evaluated by others is not intimidating but somewhat helpful to flourish their autonomy.

Murray (1999) studied 23 ESL learners who independently worked on an interactive video program. The researcher analyzed the relation to see if technology simulation promotes language learning and learner autonomy. The study results reported that participants need the desire and self-driven discipline to work and learn independently. It also supported some evidence that motivation provides learner autonomy (as cited in Yildirim, 2008).

The findings of a study done by Yildirim (2008) show that learners have a positive attitude towards behaving autonomously; they think they can use their abilities for autonomous behavior. Oxford and Shearin (1994) point out that language learners with low self-efficacy beliefs usually fail in language learning (as cited in Cotterall, 1999).

According to Little (2017), autonomous learners have three self-sustaining roles in the classroom. Firstly, communicators as learners who use and develop their communicative skills moderately. Secondly, experimenters of the language who work and develop on the analytical and systematical parts of the target language and are also aware of the cultural costumes, traditions, and social restrictions which form its use. Lastly, intentional learners moderately develop an awareness of the metacognitive and affective parts of the language.

Concerning understanding learners' beliefs, emotions, and strategies, Horwitz (1988) states that learners' use of language learning helps teachers understand their learners' anticipation of dedication to and fulfillment of their learning (as cited in Yang, 1999, p. 515). Horwitz (1987; 1988) developed an instrument called "Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory" (BALLI) to analyze learners' beliefs towards language learning in five significant aspects. These aspects are 1) foreign language learning aptitude, 2) the difficulty of language, 3) the nature of language learning, 4) learning and communication strategies, and 5) motivations and expectations" (as cited in Yang in 1999, p. 516). McCombs (2006) believes that providing the right tools and all the limits can help transform and expand the notion of learning which will create "healthy and productive lifelong learners" (p. 14). McCombs (2006) argues that learner-centered learning and teaching constantly remind us that the human factor must be a significant concern even in advanced technology-supported learning-teaching settings.

According to McCombs (2006), the favorable learning model for now and future must recognize, appreciate, and include the diverse learners and context of learning that do not cohere to a "standardized" or "one size fits all" agenda (p. 14). Capturing the learners' perceptions concerning the role of the teacher in the classroom, McCombs (2006) indicated that learners believe that teachers have a significant contribution to their high level of achievement.

Felder and Spurlin (2005) developed a learning style model, and this model includes four different learning style dimensions: "active/reflective, sensing/intuitive, visual/verbal, and sequential/global" (as cited in Brown et al., 2007, p. 526). Felder and Spurlin (2005) argue that active learners understand and learn better if they do something actively, while reflective learners choose to think thoroughly and quietly at first and then process. While Felder and Silverman (1988) argue that active learners prefer and enjoy working with a group, reflective learners choose to study alone (as cited in Brown et al. 2007).

2.6 Learner Strategies

"Where there is a will, there is a way" is a famous proverb conveying that when we have willpower, anything is possible. There has been a significant focus on

identifying responsible and successful learners and how to become one. Many researchers have aimed to define and explain the characteristics of successful learners and their strategies. Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (as cited in Cotterall & Reinders, 2004, p.1). Cotterall and Reinders (2004) suggest that "focusing on strategies allows students to experience success and boost their motivation" (p. 9). Also, Scharle and Szabo (2000) compare the learning strategies to a tool that helps learners improve their language competence, and if learners are aware of these tools, they can manage and be more responsible for their learning. However, what makes a good learner? What are the characteristics of good learners? How can we identify good learners? For instance, Rubin (1975) defines good learners as interested in learning. Successful learners are good guessers and risk-takers who are not afraid of making mistakes while they are learning (as cited in Pull, 2016).

On the difference between learning "strategies" and learning "styles," Brown (1987) distinguishes between them as the latter refers to individuals' consistent and lasting preferences and actions. Multiple intelligence plays a vital role in considering learning styles (Hsu, 1999). Each student learns differently and at a different pace. As stated previously, students will respond differently to the same given tasks even though they are in the same learning setting. Some might learn better when they hear, others when they see, and some will be more reflective than others. However, the former strategies, as opposed to styles, are planned methods for problem-solving. They are means designed towards achieving specific goals, "planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information" (Hsu, 1999, p. 89). Moreover, Wenden (1987) distinguishes strategies in three parts: language learning behaviors learners engage in to learn and regulate the learning of a second language, what learners know about the strategies they use, and what learners know about aspects of their language learning other than the strategies they use (as cited in Cotterall & Reinders, 2004).

Along the same line of the previous research on learning strategies and styles, Oxford (1990) states that the degree to which learners display the skills to use

certain types of tactics for taking control, such as cognitive, social, and metacognitive during the learning process. Cohen (1998) notes the term for strategies as conscious behaviors and actions constructed by learners, varying in nature. Cohen (1998) continues by stating that strategies can fluctuate in nature from controlling to monitoring skills (cognitive), critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (metacognitive), interacting with other learners or native speakers of the target language, asking questions for clarification of the social roles, asking questions to complete to a given task (social), learners emotions, motivation, and willingness towards learning and learning-related objectives. These can be barriers or support for learners.

Cotterall and Reinders (2004) elaborate cognitive strategies in two ways: a) strategies for learning the target language (i.e., rehearsal includes saying and writing a couple of times and elaboration strategy is linking the new information to the previously learned one or connecting the new parts of the new information and b) strategies for using the target language. The latter cognitive strategy guides learners to identify what they already know, "what they want to say when they are communicating" (as cited in Cotterall & Reinders, 2004, p. 3). However, in the former cognitive strategy, approximation (i.e., is when learners use a general word than the actual word to express themselves and paraphrasing is when learners do not know a word, listeners are often helping them out by saying the target language word) and paraphrasing are good examples for learning the target language.

Other learning strategies are metacognitive strategies that include three essential elements for successful language learning. First, during the learning process, learners frequently feel overwhelmed by the amount of information they receive. That affects their motivation and self-confidence. Using metacognitive strategies such as planning, in which learners can classify their learning needs and focus accordingly, gives learners a sense of control for their own learning that eventually leads to success. The second element of metacognitive strategies helps learners personalize their learning. Learners can identify their learning purposes and goals with the help of metacognitive strategies. The third element of metacognitive strategies is developing their own independence by using self-monitoring and self-assessment to measure their process. Cotterall and Reinders

(2004) provide two typical examples for metacognitive strategies, which are: "planning the organization of written or spoken language" and "monitoring while performing a task" (p. 5). When learners plan and use a mind map before they do a writing assignment, and as learners pay attention to target language structural components like pronunciation and grammar and monitor their process as they talk, in both cases, learners use metacognitive strategies to use target language appropriately.

Another strategy is social and affective strategies related to learners' feelings and relationships with others. Cooperation uses their social skills to solve and share common problems with collaboration. For example, self-talk is an effective strategy that involves learners' own ideas about themselves. In a stressful or troublesome situation, learners quietly comfort themselves by saying "I can do it" repeatedly. That gives the learner a sense of confidence and gradually to another positive state of carrying on. Questioning for clarification helps learners to reflect and omit ambiguity. It helps learners to comprehend the subject matter by using their social strategy during the learning process (Cotterall and Reinders, 2004).

Cohen (1998) describes that being a second language learner involves improving skills. Some factors are related to a learner's genetics, "such as having the better innate ability," and some are the complexity of the language learning a different part of the language, as in "morphology" (Cohen, 1998, p. 3). These strategies are significant for practicing the language they have learned in their busy life, strategies for monitoring their own progress, remembering, and recalling the related language forms. Also, the learners' vocabulary and self-identity are included, such as the family they were born into, learners' exposure to the target language, and the need to learn another language. Therefore, Cohen and Weaver (2006) distinguish two language learning strategies: the first involves initially learning the basics of the language material, and the second includes real-life applications of the learned language skills (as cited in Cohen 2014). Nunan (1988) suggests that the humanistic method of education is established on the idea that learners should have a voice and choice about what and how to learn.

2.7 Attitudes Towards Language Learning

Most people think that attitude is a synonym with motivation. Aldosari (2014) suggests that "attitudes influence our motivation for learning, simply, given that an attitude has to do with what one likes or dislikes" (p.1). There is a common belief in the context of education that there is a positive correlation between learners' attitudes and academic success (Palomar et al., 2020). Many studies emphasize the importance of language motivation and attitude (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 1985; Wenden, 199; Dörnyei, 1998; Chambers, 1999; Oxford, 1990; Gardner, 2001; Palomar et al., 2020). For instance, Oxford (1990) stated that attitudes are robust gauges of motivation in foreign language learning as in other aspects of life. Wenden (1991) defined attitude as the individuals' motivation, valued beliefs, or evaluation. Learners' motivation, willingness towards learning, the teacher's role, the environment or difficulty of given tasks, and other affective variables play roles in learning autonomy. The learners' attitude and motivation which can be positive or negative, can also be intrinsic or extrinsic, which may directly affect the learners' learning and success.

Dornyei (1998) depicts motivation and achievement as complementary and interrelated learning components. The researcher claims that a positive attitude facilitates, strengthens, and eases the learning process against a negative attitude which is a barrier to learning (Dornyei, 1998). According to Gardner (2001), motivation contains three interrelated elements, and they are a) effort to learn a language, b) desire (i.e., wanting to achieve an aimed goal and c) positive affect (i.e., enjoy the given tasks of learning the language) (Garnder, 2001).

Most learners set goals and try to achieve their goals successfully. Some students handle and manage the stress very well, but some others have negative attitudes or not having any motivational goals or self-discipline which drag them to a deeper place where they feel overwhelmed and lost in the process. Chambers (1999) notes that self-determinators and risk-takers are also the ones who constantly develop new ways and strategies to learn and improve themselves and their learning, but most importantly, they can reflect on what they have learned. These learners are the ones who are self-motivated and have a positive attitude in learning.

In the self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (1985) distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The former motivation refers to doing things for inherent enjoyment or satisfaction, whereas the latter refers to doing something for different expectations or results, such as rewards or punishments. Chambers (1999) argues that meaningful learning happens when learners have a positive attitude towards learning.

Other studies (e.g., Palomar et al., 2020) reveal a correlation between learners' attitudes and academic achievement. Palomar (2020) studied 418 students from five primary schools and one middle school who came from four European countries, participating in a quantitative study. The findings suggest that learners expressed involvement in the learning and did not find it boring (Palomar et al., 2020).

2.8 Learners' Attitudes concerning Target Culture

Changing global needs demands that everyone connects with other cultures and become a global citizen. In education, learners have many reasons to learn other languages, such as communicating with a friend from another country, keeping up with popular culture, preparing for their future profession, and job-related purposes.

Language is an inseparable part of a culture, as Kramsch (1998) states that language is systematically sequenced with signs. Each represents a particular meaning and helps us to communicate with one another. Overall, it is an expression and reflection of our cultural reality. The way we say things and our gestures (i.e., socio-linguistic competence), how we interact with each other (i.e., speech community), linguistic codes (i.e., discourse competence) are some components of language. Kramsch (1988) suggests that common beliefs, values, traditions, languages, and historical backgrounds form a group of cultures. Stainer (1971) states that "studying culture gives students a reason to study the target language as well as rendering the study of L2 meaningful" (as cited in Bada & Genc, 2005, p.74). Moreover, Farrell and Jacobs (2010) point out that diversity acknowledges and recognizes that everyone is different and comes from different cultures, backgrounds, and ways of communication with other cultures. In short, raising the awareness and understanding among learners

creates cross-cultural understanding, respect for human rights, and knowledge for diversity.

Previous studies focus on the relation between L2 learning and culture elicited in their research by many scholars (e.g., Kramsh, 1988; 1993; 1996; 2001; Genc & Bada, 2005). For instance, McKay (2003) states that culture plays a significant role in teaching language linguistically and pedagogically. Culture influences language learning linguistically in which semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-level of the language progress. Therefore, culture simulates the language pedagogically in deciding the teaching method and materials, such as using authentic materials from the target language (as cited in Genc & Bada, 2005). Choice of the teaching methods and materials are the designing and planning parts of effective learning. Using authentic materials such as textbooks provide sources and references to the target culture.

Introduction, implementation, and creating the awareness of culture and cultural values for the learners and teachers first need to consider that their learners come from different backgrounds, experiences, and descents from different cultures that are then designed in an integrated curriculum (Jacobs & Farrell, 2010). Macaro (1997) argues that the target language should be the "natural medium" in the classroom to teach and learn a foreign language. Bada and Genc (2005) state that "culture classes have a humanizing and a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process" (p. 75). The language production in the classroom should be authentic and exhibit native speakers' use of the language. Using authentic materials will help expose the learners to familiarity and understanding of the target culture. Bada and Genc (2005) argue that most L2 learners live in monocultural and monolingual surroundings worldwide. Culturally bound individuals tend to have irrelevant preconceptions about the target and other cultures. Most of these individuals have limited knowledge and misconceptions about the target culture and even their own culture. Therefore, creating and raising awareness for the target culture and learners' own culture is a significant part of planning a practical lesson. Chirkov (2008) states that autonomous individuals around the globe are aware of their inner self-regulated potential, which is usually shaped by society regardless of their country and culture.

From the communicative perspective, Jiang (2000) likens the language and culture to swimming. In her metaphor, Jiang (2000) proclaims that swimming is communication, the ability is the language, and water is culture. The researcher concludes by stating that culture and language are interactive and interrelated functions that complete one another (Jiang, 2000). Bada and Genc (2005) suggest that "culture classes have a humanizing and a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process" (p. 75). Overall, these effects help learners recognize and understand the similarities and differences among their culture and other cultures.

2.9 Teachers' Role and Instruction Strategies in Learner-Centered Classroom

Benson (2001) and Little (2007) agreed that autonomy is not only a skill but also a process of interaction between learners and their teachers, which is a continuous procedure. Teachers help learners express their individualism by setting goals and using their abilities in this process. Teachers also construct a democratic classroom environment, such as the interaction between themselves and their learners (Haseborg, 2012). Cotterall's (1999) key variables in the language learning study mark that teachers play an essential role in language learning. The study results suggest that most participants expect their teachers to provide them with opportunities to practice the language and guide them to take on the responsibility for their language learning (Cotterall, 1999). The researcher, therefore, emphasizes the importance of four variables which are: effort, practice, opportunities, and feedback for effective language learning; however, the researcher ranked learners' effort as the most critical variable in language learning as it plays a significant role in learners' success (Cotterall, 1999).

Swazey (1993) suggests that the culture of the academic profession highlights individual autonomy, which leads to cooperative self-direction. Johnson (1995) states that learner-centered teaching aims to promote autonomy among the learners, and it trains learners to be active participants instead of passive listeners who take more responsibility for their learning. While learner-centered teaching practices are changing the role of the teacher, teachers should understand and believe in the self-direction and reflection paradigm. While

doing this, teachers need to learn about their learners' interests and goals to prepare the grounds for autonomy.

Nam (2008) states that the primary function of communication between individuals who come together as a classroom or a group is exchanging ideas with one another. Regarding learner-centered teaching applications, learners also need to identify and understand that they need to be aware of their learning purpose to reach their academic and personal goals.

Teachers have a great responsibility in creating an environment for collaborative learning and forming the classroom culture. A teacher who instructs and guides the classroom will eventually determine the learners' independence (Johnson et al., 1990). Farrell and Jacobs (2010) emphasize the importance of connecting schools with the outside world, which leads teachers to promote holistic learning. Teachers must understand and believe the self-direction and reflection paradigm for autonomous learners and the autonomous classroom.

In order to promote autonomy among learners, teachers need to understand the process of autonomy and construct autonomy accordingly. Teachers should also investigate their learners' interests, goals, and expectations during and after the course or term. While teachers give the freedom of choice to their learners to choose their study objectives and instruct the meaningful negotiation between the learners, they foster autonomy. Teachers try to engage their learners in collaborative learning while learners find and develop new strategies to reflect on giving different tasks and activities. Creating awareness about learning and the process of learning helps learners to be autonomous.

 Teaching learners how to organize their studies, such as checklists and mind mapping for writing after brainstorming, are great learning tools to help teachers, especially learners, monitor and access their progress (Cakici, 2015). While teachers carry on the planned curriculum, they try to teach and implement the ideas for independent working skills for language learning. To establish the grounds for the appropriate target language, teachers need to engage learners in interacting with each other and at the same time require learners to use the target language to express themselves.

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In creating an effective learning environment, the teachers' role and direction are essential. Many scholars marked and mentioned the teachers' role in the teaching and learning process. Harmer (1991) defines the teacher's role as controllers, investigators, resources, assessors, and participants (co-learners). According to Moustafa et al. (2013) in constructivist classes, the teachers must promote student autonomy, encourage student participation, and act more as guides than lecturers. Also, Cohen (2008) instructs those teachers, much like their students, take an approach to their role heavily influenced by their identities, attitudes, ideas, values, and experiences. However, Mopondi (1995) believes that the teacher's explanation is a function that is an instrument utilized by a speaker for comprehending or giving meaning to the subject of communication or discussion (as cited in Novotna, 2003).

The role of the teacher's explanation is to clarify the meaning of an object by establishing the required interval between the focus of the action or study. An explanation is a utility that learners and teachers use during learning and teaching to achieve the common aim of understanding (Novotná, 2003). Teachers and learners are the transmitters and receivers and can even reverse their roles on occasion. They are also experienced autonomous learners who are teaching learners to become autonomous learners.

Farrell and Jacobs (2010) state that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focuses on language instructors as knowledge retainers who convey the message to the learners and actively participate and engage in the learning process. Therefore, teachers are also co-learners who teach in the same environment. In this context, teachers set an example for learners. Learning is a classroom assignment-based activity and a lifelong learning process. Setting the example as co-learners trying to implement, promote, and teach, the autonomy gradually moves the learners forward. Teachers who give constructive feedback and engage learners in a positive environment are essential features of learning and teaching phenomena (Farrell and Jacobs 2010).

2.10 Setting Learning Objectives in Learner-Centered Classroom

A well-planned and thoughtfully designed curriculum covers different degrees of specific details and strengthens learners' achievement of the given tasks while

learners recognize the importance of the process of learning. According to Kerry (2002), articulating the objectives, assessment methods, choosing and implementing the instructional methods are the main structural components for effective learning. Kerry (2002) suggests that all learning objectives have two essential qualities, which are: 1) the teacher's intention and 2) the learning outcome, which the learner accomplishes. Kerry (2002) also adds that learning objectives should be as simple as possible. Thus, at the end of the course, term, or lesson, teachers need to ask themselves, "what do I want my learners to learn and understand?" and "what will progress their learning from its current point?" Likewise, learners should ask themselves, "what do I want to learn and know?" (p. 2). Kerry (2002) classifies learning objectives into three domains in his book. The first domain is knowledge, and the domain question is: "What do I want the students to know that they did not know before?" (p. 2). The second domain is the skill domain which demands the answer to this question: "What do I want my students to be able to do that they could not do before?" (p. 4). The third learning objective in the domain of understanding is the answer to: "What do I want my students to understand at the end of the lesson that they did not understand before?" (p. 5).

In contrast, Hay-Mcber (2000) calls for the attitudinal domain, one of the other domains of learning objectives, that includes the teacher's passion for helping their learners. The second further domain is the affective domain. Hay-Mcber (2000) emphasizes the teacher's role in setting learning objectives and the teacher's relation to her/his learners and learner to learner (as cited in Kerry, 2002).

Mckimm and Swanwick (2009) state that learning objectives represent behaviors that can be observable and measurable outcomes. Learners accomplish that as a result of their participation in the learning program. Mckimm and Swanwick (2009) add that the terms 'objectives', 'competencies,' and 'outcomes' are frequently used interchangeably in the learning process. The researchers liken the learning objectives and outcomes to building blocks of any learning, teaching occurrences, and key components to other learning-related aspects such as learning methods, assessment, and evaluation (Mckimm & Swanwick, 2009, p. 406-407).

A well-planned and thoughtfully designed curriculum covers different degrees of specific details and strengthens learners' achievement of the given tasks while learners recognize the importance of the process of learning. For example, Chatterjee and Corral (2017) state that learning objectives are associated but unlike learning goals. Little (1996) suggests that "it is not the task itself that determines learning success, but the kind and quality of the interaction in which it is embedded" (p. 4). Our learning objectives are roads that take us to our destination – our learning goals. Learning objectives are designed for learners' goals, but Little (1991) suggests that fostering and developing learner autonomy cannot be "programmed in a series of lesson plans" (p. 3).

Chatterjee and Corral (2017) claim that using Bloom's taxonomy (1956) links the depth of learning and helps outline the setting of the learning objectives. Bloom's Taxonomy defines six levels of hierarchy in the cognitive domain: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Knowledge is the first level of the six, which refers to remembering the previous knowledge. The action verbs generally used for the knowledge level of the cognitive domain are recall, name, define, recognize, relate, etc. Comprehension is the level that is beyond knowledge. It is the ability to reach the level of understanding of the given task or material. The action verbs for comprehension are: identify, classify, explain, indicate, etc. The application marks the ability to utilize the already learned material in concrete situations. The action verbs for application are: apply, employ, choose, interpret, write, etc. The analysis is the level of breaking material into parts and deciding how the components connect. Some examples of action verbs for analysis are: analyze, compare, contrast, examine, categorize, etc. Synthesis is concerned with bringing different parts together to create a whole new meaning. The action verbs for synthesis are: predict, test, design, arrange, combine, etc. The sixth higher order is evaluating, encouraging learners to think critically to produce new ideas and reach the higher level of the cognitive domain. The action verbs for evaluating metacognitive thinking are: determine, assess, judge, critique, etc. (Chatterjee & Corral, 2017).

Chatterjee and Corral (2017) conclude that it is essential to identify specific qualifications while setting each learning objective. First, learning objectives

need to answer what, when, how well, who, and will do questions. The second step is determining the subject matter, topic, and theme that learners expect to learn. Third, deciding and clarifying the measurable and observable content is crucial to accomplish the desired learner's performance. Learning objectives should be considerable, specific, relevant, achievable, measurable, and time-restricted. Well-defined learning objectives will set the grounds for intended, desirable, and achievable outcomes.

2.11 Teacher Assessment in Learner-Centered Classroom

Hattie (2003) elaborates assessments mainly pertain to giving information and feedback about the learners' or teachers' level of participation and performance, which helps us have an idea about the three feedback questions: "Where am I going? How am I going? and Where to next?" (p.2). The researcher distinguishes between formative and summative feedback as it is "related to interpretations and time as embellished by Bob Stake's maxim: "When the cook tastes the soup it is formative when the guests taste the soup, it is summative" (Hattie, 2003, p. 7). Hattie (2003) emphasizes that the significance of the feedback is more important in contrast to the evaluation instrument if it is formative and summative.

Assessment is an essential method to evaluate how effective teachers teach and is a monitoring and evaluating tool to observe our students' process to plan and design future lessons. Gottlieb (2006) depicts that the assessment entails the "documentation of student performance that is planned, collected, and interpreted by language teachers as part of the instructional cycle" (as cited in Jacobs & Farrell, 2010, p. 99). However, many teachers use the traditional summative assessment during their teaching process or at the end of the term. Jacobs and Farrell (2010) note that the CLT approach brought a new understanding and beliefs about teaching. CLT also signifies that learning is about fluency, grammar, thinking skills, and alternative assessment methods and instruments (Jacobs & Farrell, 2010).

Jacobs and Farrell (2010) suggest five essential qualities of alternative assessment in traditional testing methods. First, the focus is on the meaning rather than on the form. Second, most alternative assessment methods are based

on process-oriented assignments rather than product-oriented ones. It measures learners' success and progress at the end of the course or term and ensures that they are consistently measured during the course period. The researchers add that portfolios involve careful thought, design, and decision regarding the choice of content, quantity, quality, timing, and presentation (Jacobs & Farrell, 2010). The third quality is how CLT approaches learning as an active social process. Pair and group work on tasks that include the alternative assessment as an evaluation and observation instrument, considering the social nature of learning.

Regarding learner autonomy, the fourth quality is that learners take more responsibility for their learning, including their direct involvement in self-assessment. The last feature of alternative assessment is connecting the "integrated curriculum." Learners are asked to engage by using authentic materials and real-world assessment tasks to raise awareness about the "world beyond the classroom" (Jacobs & Farrell, 2010, p. 100). However, teachers can use different strategies such as portfolios, self-reports, self-assessment and peer assessments, and group tests to implement alternative assessment methods.

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) was put forward by the Language Policy Programme of the ECML to support and brace the development of learner autonomy, multilingualism and intercultural awareness, and competence. ELP aims to help learners keep records of their learning progress and achievements while using the targeted language. Portfolios are systematical tasks that the teacher gives. These portfolios provide information about each learner, which helps teachers keep track and observe learners' progress in a certain period (Farrell & Jacobs, 2010). Portfolios can be used in different courses to develop and improve learners' different skills. They are also great instruments that allow the integration of different skills. Portfolios engage and encourage learners to work on the task and take more responsibilities as individuals or group members. Gottlieb (2006) suggests that portfolios are ideal tools for the students to demonstrate their progress and language mastery (as cited in Jacobs & Farrell, 2010, p. 101). Therefore, portfolios contribute to autonomous learning by empowering the students to reflect on what they have learned during the process. Teachers and learners can monitor their strengths

and weaknesses while they work on their portfolio tasks. Teachers must prepare and clearly explain the rules of the portfolio. Guidance sheets and checklists can help direct learners to follow up the process. Preparing a balanced grading scale is vital for the evaluation of each portfolio.

Farrell and Jacobs (2010) diversify alternative assessments, such as peer evaluations shared between the students. For the learners to grade each other's work, the teacher must set clear and specific rules that inform learners on what to do, how to proceed, and the guidelines to follow. Peer assessment items may include "who is the hardest participant in the group? did s/he share the information and materials with their groupmates? who did the least work? who was the hardest worker in the group?" (p. 102). As the role model, the teacher should set the example for learners to give constructive feedback.

Self-reports are another alternative assessment instrument in education that monitors learners' progress and achievement. Farrell and Jacobs (2010) define self-reports as learner self-developed documents to observe and make other decisions for the learner's progress and involvement during the course. Gottlieb (2006) indicates that self-reports are valuable and beneficial evaluation methods for learners as follows: they supply insights for learners to transfer their way of understanding the learning, encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning; promote creativity, develop the expectation of sharing and exchanging ideas between learners and teachers, help learners set achievable and realistic goals to accomplish, provide feedback to teachers for future lesson plans, give ideas on learners perception about the course and process (as cited in Jacobs and Farrell, 2010, p. 104).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter focuses on the research methodology, the participants, the research design, the data collection instruments, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis.

- **Participants**

The current study involved 52 first-year students enrolled in the the faculty of engineering architecture and faculty of health and science at a foundation university in Istanbul. The curriculum was designed around twelve hours in a week and the lessons were divided into two sections: main course and skill. In Table 3.1. the biodata collected from the students is presented.

Table 3.1: Biodata Profile of Learners in the Questionnaire

Variable	F	%
Gender		
Male	17	32.7
Female	35	67.3
Age		
18-21	51	98.1
31 and above	1	1.2
Level of English		
Beginner	52	100

As seen in Table 3.1, female participants outnumber the male ones by almost 2 to 1. In terms of age, most of the participants (98.1%) aged between 18-21, whereas only one participant (1.2%) aged 31 and above. However, all participants (n=52) reported that they were beginners concerning language proficiency.

3.2 Research Design

This study was designed as survey-based research. The researcher used quantitative research methods in data collection and analysis, which the Oxford dictionary defines as investigating phenomena involving collecting and analyzing numerical data. Such methods are particularly associated with surveys and experiments. According to Matthews & Ross (2010), quantitative research methods are applied to collect structured data and could be represented numerically. This study depended on a questionnaire to collect the data from the participants. A questionnaire is an important instrument and a tool for research and data collection. Also, it is planned and designed to gather precise information. It also initiates a conventional inquiry, supplements data, checks previously gathered data, and helps to verify any prior hypothesis, and its function is to measure (Oppenheim, 1992).

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

The data of this study was collected through Autonomy Learner Questionnaire (ALQ), which was developed by Egel (2003) (Appendix A). The questionnaire includes 44 statements based on nine dimensions related to language learning. Each item in these dimensions assesses the level of control the students feel in a particular view of their own learning (Appendix B). The ALQ is based on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale from "Always True" (5) to "Never True" (1). The questionnaire includes nine dimensions of learner autonomy, as Egel (2003) identified. The first dimension, "readiness for self-direction", is included in items 1, 3, 4, 16, 28 and 32; the second dimension, "independent work in language learning", is in items 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 20 and 35; the third – items 8, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 27 and 36 – aims to elicit answers on the importance of the classroom and the teacher in language learning, while dimension four "the role of the teacher's explanation and supervision" constitute items 9, 14, 15, 21 and 22. Dimension five, in items 17, 37, 23, and 24, aims to elicit "students' preferences for language learning activities," while dimension six, in items 25, 26, and 29, elicits the "students' attitudes towards the selection of content in language learning." Dimension seven – items 31 and 33 – tests "the students' confidence in relation to set learning objectives"; dimension eight – items 30,

34, 38, 39, and 40 – attempts to find out "the students' preferences for teacher assessment" and dimension nine – items 41, 42, 43 and 44 – investigates "the students' attitudes in relation to the target culture."

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

Having received the required approval to conduct the study (Appendix A), the researcher distributed the participants the questionnaire and provided them with a detailed explanation on how to fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was in both English and Turkish. The data from the participants were collected in the 2019-2020 academic year from a foundation university in Istanbul.

3.5 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the participants were subjected to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, and the findings were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The aim behind using descriptive analysis is to analyze a significant number of observations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

This study aimed to investigate a group of first-year university learners' attitudes and beliefs towards a self-directed learning environment. In particular, this study explored the learners' readiness for self-direction in language learning, learners' views towards autonomous language learning, and the significant role of the teacher in the classroom from the learners' perspective. Also, it sheds light on the implication of teachers' explanations and supervision in the classroom, learners' preferences for language learning activities, and their attitudes towards selecting the classroom materials. Finally, it examined the learners' confidence about the objectives of their studies and how they feel about them, learners' preferences for their teachers' assessment, and learners' attitudes concerning language learning and target culture.

The researcher implemented the Autonomy Learner Questionnaire (Appendix A). In the questionnaire, demographic data were collected from the first-year students. Then, through the nine dimensions questionnaire, the study participants were asked to gauge their views and perspectives on different issues that target their language learning. The dimensions were: "readiness for self-direction," "independent work in language learning," "the importance of class/teacher," "role of the teacher: explanation/supervision," "language learning activities," "selection of the content," "objectives/evaluation," "assessment/motivation," and "target culture," respectively. The results from the study are presented under one section: quantitative findings. The quantitative data included the results from the Autonomy Learner Questionnaire (Section 4.2).

4.2 Quantitative Findings

This section aimed to discuss the quantitative data collected during the study through the Autonomy Learner Questionnaire with first-year university learners. The researcher aimed to present and discuss the findings based on the order of dimensions of the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Findings on the learners' readiness for self-direction

Table 4.1. presents the findings of six statements that aimed to investigate the learners' readiness to be self-directed in their own learning.

Table 4.1: Findings Related to the Learner's Readiness for Self-direction

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. When I am learning English, I try to relate the new things I have learned to my former knowledge.	22	42.3	17	32.7	11	21.2	2	3.8	0	0
3. When I hear someone talking in English, I listen very carefully.	16	30.8	16	30.8	12	23.1	6	11.5	2	3.8
4. I want to talk in English with my family or friends	17	32.7	9	17.3	15	28.8	7	13.5	4	7.7
16. In the future, I would like to continue learning English on my own/ without a teacher.	26	50.0	11	21.2	9	17.3	3	5.8	3	5.8
28. If I haven't learnt something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it	21	40.4	9	17.3	18	34.6	3	5.8	1	1.9
32. I hesitate on the matter of compensating what I have missed in English lessons.	10	19.2	15	28.8	11	21.2	10	19.2	6	11.5

The responses from Item 1 yielded that 22 learners (42.3%) always related their previous knowledge when they learn English, while 17 learners (32.7%) said that they try to relate the newly learned things in the English language to their former knowledge. However, 11 participants (21.2%) sometimes relate their new knowledge with the former knowledge while they learn the language, and two learners (3.8%) rarely did so. The findings from this item suggest that a majority number of the learners (75%) integrate their former knowledge with the new ones while they have learned in their English lessons; in a way to bridge their understanding of learning the language.

The findings from Item 3 showed that 16 participants (30.8%) always listened when they heard someone speaking English, and the same number of the participants (n=16 or 30.8%) mostly agreed on the latter. Another 12 learners (23.1%) stated that they sometimes listened carefully if they heard someone speaking in English, whereas half of the latter (n=6 or 11.5%) rarely did listen if they heard people speaking in English around them. However, only two learners (3.8%) said they never listened attentively had they heard someone speaking in English around them. The findings from this item showed that more than half of the learners (61.6%) are aware of the importance of the listening skill to be better communicators.

The findings from Item 4 yielded that 17 participants (32.7%) always have a desire to communicate in English with their social circle (i.e., family, friends), while almost half of the latter (n=9 or 17.3%) mostly want to talk and practice the language with their family members and friends. However, 15 participants (28.8%) sometimes have a desire to communicate in English with their family members and friends, 7 participants (13.5%) rarely wanted to talk in English with their family and friends, and four learners (7.7%) never have the desire to do so. The findings from this item exhibited that half of the learners (50%) prefer to communicate in English with their social environment.

The findings from Item 16 showed that 26 participants (50%) always wanted to continue learning English independently without the help of a teacher, whereas 11 participants (21.2%) mostly wanted to learn the language independently in the future. However, nine learners (17.3%) stated that they sometimes considered continuing their English language learning without the help of a

teacher's guideline, three learners (5.8%) stated that they rarely and never, each distributively considered resuming their English language learning in the future autonomously. The findings from this item showed that most of the participants (71.2%) expressed their interest in learning the English language independently without relying on their teacher's guidance or help.

The findings from Item 28 yielded that 40.4% of the participants (n=21) said that they always take responsibility for what they have not learned in their English lessons, while nine learners (17.3%) stated that they mostly take responsibility for what they have not learned during the English lessons. However, 18 learners (34.6%) declared that they sometimes feel that they were responsible for what they have not learned in their classes, three learners (5.8%) said they rarely feel responsible for what they have not learned in their English lessons, and only one learner (1.9%) felt no responsibility for what they did not learn in the classroom. The findings from this item show that more than half of the learners (57.7%) felt responsible for their own learning, which is one of the essential points of being an autonomous learner.

However, in Item 32, ten participants (19.2%) shared they always hesitated to make up for what they have missed in English lessons, while 15 participants (28.8%) mostly hesitated regarding compensating for what they had missed in their English lessons. However, 11 learners (21.2%) stated that they sometimes hesitated to compensate for the missed things from their English lessons, ten learners (19.2%) rarely did hesitate, and six learners (11.5%) never did hesitate to compensate for what they have missed in their English lessons. The study findings suggest that nearly half of the study participants (48%) exhibited hesitation towards compensation for what they have missed during English lessons.

4.2.2 Findings of learners' independent work in language learning

Table 4.2. presents the findings of seven statements aimed to investigate the learners' independent work during language learning.

Table 4.2: Learners' Independent Work in Language Learning

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2. I use other English books and resources on my own will.	6	11.5	19	6.5	13	25	13	25	1	1.9
5. It is my own preference to read English books written in basic English.	18	34.6	10	19.2	14	26.9	8	15.4	2	3.8
6. While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on my own.	31	59.6	14	26.9	5	9.6	1	1.9	1	1.9
7. I like trying new things while I am learning English.	18	34.6	18	34.6	11	21.2	4	7.7	1	1.9
10. If I cannot learn English in the classroom, I can learn working on my own.	10	19.2	20	38.5	15	28.8	3	5.8	4	7.7
20. I like learning English words by looking them up in a dictionary.	8	15.4	9	17.3	17	32.7	11	21.2	7	13.5
35. I think that I learn English better when I work on my own.	7	13.5	5	9.6	20	38.5	15	28.8	5	9.6

Item 2 in Table 4.2. showed that six learners (11.5%) stated that they always prefer to use alternative English books and resources independently; 19 learners (26.5%) declared that they mostly do so. About 25% of participants (n=13) said that they sometimes use other English books and resources autonomously, another 13 learners (25%) stated that they rarely use other English materials on their own, and only one learner (1.9%) marked that never true. These findings indicate that less than half of the study participants (38%) take it upon themselves to learn independently and autonomously.

The responses from Item 5 yielded that 18 learners (34.6%) stated that they always prefer to read English books written in basic English; ten learners

(19.2%) mostly prefer to read English books written in easy language. About 19,2% of the participants (n=14) stated that they sometimes prefer to read books that are written in primary language; eight learners (15.4%) declared that they rarely prefer to do so, and only two students (3.8%) stated they never read books that are written in basic English. That suggests that 53.8% of the learners prefer to read books in a language that is easy for them to understand, and they desire to be independent learners where they do not need to depend on their teachers.

Item 6 showed that 31 learners, the majority of the participants (59.6%) affirmed that they always like activities where they can learn English on their own, whereas 14 learners (26.9%) declared that they mostly enjoy activities in which they can learn English independently. While five learners (9.6%) said they sometimes like to engage in activities where they can learn English independently; however, one learner stated that they rarely (1.9%) and never (1.9%) find that true, respectively. That explains the significant role which autonomous learning serves to all individual needs. Therefore, various activities in language learning; enhance learners' motivation and communication strategies as they learn and draw on their experiences that might help them be autonomous learners.

The results from Item 7 indicated that 18 learners (34.6%) said they always like to try new things while learning English; another 18 learners (34.6%) declared they mostly like to do so. However, 11 learners (21.2%) shared that they sometimes like to try new things while learning English; four learners (7.7%) said they rarely try to do so, and only one learner (1.9%) never tried to learn new things while learning English. The findings of this item suggest that a significant number of the respondents (69.2%) are aware of autonomous language learning, where learners are responsible for their learning without being reliant on the teacher.

The responses from Item 10 showed that ten learners (19.2%) said they always can learn what they could not learn in the classroom on their own, whereas 20 learners (38.5%) declared that they mostly learn on their own what they cannot learn in their English lessons. About 28.8% of the participants (n=15) said they sometimes work alone if they were incapable of learning English in the

classroom. However, three learners (5.8%) said they rarely try to learn alone if they could not learn in the class, and four learners (7.7%) stated they never could manage to do it alone. This finding indicates the learners' awareness of the leading foundations of being autonomous learners where they can depend on themselves to meet their educational needs.

In Item 20, eight learners (15.4%) said they always like to learn new vocabulary by looking them up in a dictionary, nine learners (17.3%) mostly liked to learn English vocabulary by looking them up in a dictionary, and 17 learners (32.7%) sometimes preferred looking up English words in a dictionary. However, 11 learners (21.2%) rarely liked to check the meaning of English vocabulary in a dictionary, and seven learners (13.5%) never did so. This finding suggests that less than half of the participants (32.7%) only use a dictionary— that effectively facilitates vocabulary comprehension and enhances incidental vocabulary acquisition— to look up vocabulary when learning English.

In Item 35, seven learners (13.5%) declared they always felt better when they worked on their own; five learners (9.6%) said they mostly felt better learning English alone, whereas 20 learners (38.8%) stated they sometimes feel better working independently. However, 15 learners (28.8%) affirmed they rarely felt better depending on themselves to learn English, and five learners (9.6%) never thought it was any better. The findings from this item might suggest that some learners (23.1%) are aware of the autonomous aspect of language learning, while the rest of the study participants are still behind, autonomous-wise.

4.2.3 Importance of Classroom and Teacher for Autonomous Learning

Table 4.3. presents the findings of eight statements that aim to understand classroom and teacher importance in promoting an autonomous learning environment.

Table 4.3: Importance of Classroom and Teacher for Autonomous Learning

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
8. I am afraid that I will not learn a topic if the teacher does not explain it in the English class.	10	19.2	7	13.5	14	26.9	9	17.3	12	23.1
11. I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.	22	42.3	21	40.4	3	5.8	4	7.7	2	3.8
12. I can learn English only with the help of my teacher.	3	5.8	7	13.5	18	34.6	15	28.8	9	17.3
13. My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.	15	28.8	13	25	11	21.2	11	21.2	2	3.8
18. I can learn the English grammar on my own/ without needing a teacher.	8	15.4	8	15.4	21	40.4	9	17.3	6	11.5
19. I use my own methods to learn vocabulary in English.	18	34.6	13	25	12	23.1	5	9.6	4	7.7
27. I know how I can learn English the best.	9	17.3	6	11.5	16	30.8	14	26.9	7	13.5
36. I only study for the English lesson when the teacher gives me homework.	3	5.8	8	15.4	10	19.2	12	23.1	19	36.5

The results from Item 8 in Table 4.3. shows that ten learners (19.2%) always were afraid of being incapable of understanding their lessons if the teacher did not explain it in the classroom, while seven learners (13.5%) stated they mostly felt afraid that they would not understand a topic if the teacher did not explain it during their lesson. However, learners (26.9%) declared that they sometimes felt afraid that they would not understand a topic in their English lessons if the teacher did not explain it in the class. Also, nine learners (17.3%) said they rarely felt afraid to comprehend a topic their teacher did not clarify in a classroom setting; however, 12 learners (23.1%) said they never felt so. The

findings of this study might suggest that a few learners (32.7%) are dependent on their teachers, unlike the majority of the participants (67.3%) who chose to be more self-reliant and advocate for autonomous learning.

In Item 11, 22 learners (42.3%) declared they always felt more confident as the teacher was beside them in the classroom and almost the same number of participants (n=21 or 40.4%) stated they mostly felt more confident as the teacher accompanied them in the class as they learned English. Another three learners (5.8%) said that sometimes they felt self-assured having the teachers beside them in the classroom. However, four learners (7.7%) stated they rarely felt confident to have the teacher beside them as they learned English, and two learners (3.8%) said they never felt self-assured in their English classes if the teacher was beside them. The findings from this item might suggest that a significant number of the participants (82.7%) built strong confidence and connection with the language when the teacher was present in the classroom.

The responses given to Item 12 showed that three learners (5.8%) were always dependent on their teachers to learn English, seven learners (13.5%) mostly relied on their teachers to learn English, and about 34.6% of the participants (n=18) stated they could not learn English unless the teacher helps them. It is also shown in the table that 15 learners (28.8%) rarely did depend on their teachers to learn English, and nine learners (17.3%) never did depend on their teachers to learn English. The findings from this item might suggest that some students (19.3%) advocate a teacher-centered classroom, unlike the rest of the participants who are aware of the importance of being self-reliant and autonomous learners where the classroom is learner-centered.

In Item 13, 15 learners (28.8%) assured that they always have to receive guidance from their teachers when learning English, while 13 learners (25%) stated they mostly need instructions from their teachers as they learn English. While 11 learners (21.2%) stated that they sometimes had their teachers' guidance when learning English, only two learners (3.8%) said they had never always received guidance from their teachers while learning English. This item suggests that more than half of the respondents (53.8%) are self-reliant on their teachers in the classroom settings; that might harm their learning skills and hinder their ability to become autonomous learners.

However, the responses to Item 18 show that eight learners (15.4%) said they are always capable of learning English grammar without the help of their teachers, whereas the same number of learners (n=8 or 15.4%) stated they were most capable of studying the English grammar independently. A significant number of the learners (n=21 or 40.4%) affirmed that they sometimes could learn the English grammar on their own without the help of a teacher; nine learners (17.3%) stated they rarely could study the English grammar without the assistance of a teacher. However, only six learners (11.5%) said they could never learn grammar without a teacher's help. The findings from this item are diverse; nevertheless, an insignificant number of participants (30.8%) are self-reliant towards learner-centered classrooms, and the rest of the participants, to some degree, depended on their teachers to learn.

The answers to Item 19 show that 18 learners (34.6%) always used methods of their own to learn vocabulary in English, 13 learners (25%) mostly used methods of their own to learn lexis, whereas 12 learners (23.1%) stated they sometimes used their own techniques to learn vocabulary in English. However, five learners (9.6%) said they rarely used their own methods to learn English vocabulary, whereas four learners (7.7%) said they never used any techniques to learn lexis in English. That suggests that 59.6% of the participants feel the significance of being autonomous learners and are aware of one of the basic aspects of the learner-centered learning approach.

Item 27 indicates that nine learners (17.3%) stated they always knew how they could best learn English, six learners (11.5%) said they mostly knew how one could depend on themselves to learn the English language, and 16 learners (30.8%) sometimes felt they knew how they could best learn English. However, 14 learners (26.9%) declared they rarely knew how they could learn English independently, and half of the latter (n=7 or 13.5%) never knew how they could learn English on their own. The findings of this item suggest that some participants (28.8%) are aware of the methods and techniques to guide themselves to learn the language. Nevertheless, the rest of the participants were unaware of the techniques to learn English or failed to attain their learning goals.

However, in Item 36, three learners (5.8%) always limited their English lesson studying if the teacher gave them homework and eight learners (15.4%) said they mostly do so. While ten learners (19.2%) said they mostly studied English only when they had homework, and 12 learners (23.1%) said they sometimes prepare for their English lessons if given assignments. However, 19 learners (36.5%) said they never limit their English studying to homework. The findings from this item suggest that a significant number of participants (78.8%) are taking responsibility for their own learning and are aware of the significance of being autonomous learners.

4.2.4 The Role of teacher and classroom supervision

Table 4.4. presents the findings of five statements that aimed at understanding the learners' perspectives on the role of the teacher and their role as supervisors in the classroom.

Table 4.4: The Role of the Teacher in Classroom Supervision

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
9. I don't like learning English on my own.	13	25	10	19.2	9	7.3	10	19.2	10	19.2
14. While learning English I would like my teacher to repeat grammatical rules.	18	34.6	15	28.8	12	23.1	6	11.5	1	1.9
15. I feel happy when my teacher explains very detail of English.	30	57.7	10	19.2	8	15.4	2	3.8	2	3.8
21. Only my teacher can teach me the English grammar. I cannot learn on my own.	4	7.7	4	7.7	12	23.1	17	32.7	15	28.8
22. I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn.	19	36.5	16	30.8	9	17.3	3	5.8	5	9.6

Item 9 in Table 4.4. reveal that 13 learners (25%) did not like to learn English solely all the time, ten learners (19.2%) stated they did not like to learn English most of the time on their own, while nine learners (7.3%) stated they sometimes did not feel like learning English independently. Nonetheless, ten learners said that they rarely (19.2%) felt like learning English on their own and the same number of participants (n=10 or 19.2%) stated they never find that accurate. The findings from this item were almost equal; however, we can assume that the general theme is that learners are more interested in being autonomous when they have a chance to lead their own learning.

Item 14 shows that 18 learners (34.6%) declared that they always liked to have their teachers repeat the grammatical rules, and 15 learners (28.8%) stated that they mostly liked to have their teachers do so. However, about 23.1% of the participants (n=12) said they sometimes would like their English teachers to restate the grammatical rules in the English language, and six learners (11.5%) rarely preferred their English teachers to repeat the grammatical rules in the classroom. However, only one learner (1.9%) never liked their teacher to go over the grammatical rules while learning English. The findings of this item suggest that more than half of the participants (63.4%) prefer their teachers to repeat the grammatical rules in the classroom. Therefore, we can assume that learners prefer their teachers to repeat grammatical rules to facilitate language learning and make it easier to understand and remember. Although, we might notice that the classroom environment is more teacher-centered than learner-centered.

The answers to Item 15 show that more than half of the participants (n= 30 or 57.7%) affirmed that they felt pleased when the teacher provides a detailed explanation in the English language, and ten learners (19.2%) stated that they mostly felt happy when their teachers explain the lessons in detail. However, eight learners (15.4%) said they sometimes felt glad when the teacher explains every detail, two other learners (3.8%) declared that they rarely felt happy about have a detailed explanation, while another two learners (3.8%) never felt happy about that.

Item 21 illustrates that four learners (7.7%) felt that they were only able to learn English grammar with the help of their teachers, and another four learners

(7.7%) said they mostly could not learn English grammar on their own but with the help of the teacher. However, 12 learners (23.1%) stated that they sometimes could not learn English grammar independently and they needed their teachers' assistance. Another 17 learners (32.7%) declared that they rarely felt the need to learn English grammar from their teachers; instead, they can depend on themselves to do so, and lastly, 15 learners (28.8%) assured that they never felt that the teacher is the only person that can teach them grammar; however, they could depend on themselves to learn on their own. The findings of this item show the tendency of 84.6% of learners to learn English grammar autonomously.

However, in Item 22, about 36.5% of learners (n=19) stated that they always wanted their teacher to provide them the lexis which they were to learn, and another 16 learners (30.8%) said they most needed their teachers to give them the vocabulary they were to learn. However, nine learners (17.3%) sometimes wanted their teachers to provide them with the words they were to learn, three other learners (5.8%) rarely wanted their teachers to give them the lexis, and about 9.6% of learners (n=5) stated that they never wanted their teachers to provide them with the vocabulary they were to learn. The findings of this item suggest that more than half of the participants (67.3%) advocate for a teacher-centered classroom where the teacher can do all the work.

4.2.5 Learners' language learning activities preferences

Table 4.5. presents the findings of four statements that aimed to investigate the learners' preferences towards language learning activities inside and outside the classroom.

Table 4.5: Learners' Preferences for Language Learning Activities

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
17. In the English lesson I like projects where I can work the other students.	10	19.2	12	23.1	12	23.1	8	15.4	10	19.2
23. I would like to use cassettes/ video/ CDs in the foreign language, outside of the classroom.	15	28.8	13	25	13	25	7	13.5	4	7.7
24. In fact I like to listen and read in English outside of the classroom.	10	19.2	9	17.3	14	26.9	13	25	6	11.5
37. I find it more useful to work with my friends than working on my own for the English lesson	9	17.3	13	25	12	23.1	10	19.2	8	15.4

Item 17 of Table 4.5. demonstrates that ten learners (19.2%) stated that they always liked to attend cooperative projects and work with other students. Likewise, 12 learners (23.1%) said they mostly liked to work on projects with other students, and the same number of participants (n=12 or 23.1%) sometimes felt the same towards working on projects with other students. Nevertheless, 15.4% of the participants (n=8) shared that they rarely felt the need to work with other students, and ten learners (19.2%) said they never liked to work with other students in English lesson projects. To sum up, the findings from this item suggest that more than half of the respondents (57.7%) prefer to work solely in an environment where they can learn autonomously.

The responses to Item 23 show that 15 learners (28.8%) always desired to use informal language learning materials such as CDs and videos to enhance their language proficiency. However, 13 learners (25%) stated that they sometimes liked to use audio-visual aid materials to support their language learning skills. Another 13 learners (25%) said they sometimes liked to use such tools to improve their English language learning outside the classroom, whereas seven

learners (13.5%) declared that they rarely felt like using such materials. Four learners (7.7%) said they never felt like using CDs and videos outside the classroom to improve their English language learning. The findings from this item suggest that more than half of the participants (53.8%) felt the significant role of being autonomous and using audio-visual tools to promote their language learning understanding is proof of their support towards a learner-centered classroom.

The responses given to Item 24 indicate that ten learners (19.2%) always tended to listen and read in English outside the classroom, while almost the same number of participants (n=9 or 17.3%) stated they mostly liked to listen and read in English outside the classroom. However, 14 learners (26.9%) sometimes liked to read and listen outside the classroom, 13 other learners (25%) rarely liked to listen and read in English, and almost half of the latter (n=6 or 11.5%) said they never liked listening to and reading in English outside the classroom. The findings from this item suggest that few learners (36.5%) liked to listen and read on their own outside the classroom.

The answers to Item 37 illustrate that nine learners (17.3%) found it was always more beneficial to work with their friends rather than alone for better language understanding. Likewise, another 13 learners (25%) stated they mostly found it helpful to work with their friends for better English language learning. However, almost the same number of the latter (n=12 or 23.1%) declared they sometimes found working with their friends better than working alone as they achieve better results in their English lessons. On the other hand, ten learners (19.2%) rarely found working with their friends beneficial for their learning, and eight learners (15.4%) never found it more helpful to work with friends. The findings of this item suggest that few participants (42.3%) preferred getting involved in a cooperative learning environment where learners can promote their social and interpersonal skills; instead, more than half of the participants (57.7%) favored being autonomous learners.

4.2.6 Setting objectives

Table 4.6. presents the findings of three statements that aimed to explore and understand learners' objectives that affect their language learning.

Table 4.6: Learners' Choices on Setting Objectives

ALQ Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
25. I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.	11	21.2	13	25	14	26.9	8	15.4	6	11.5
26. I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson.	15	28.8	10	19.2	17	32.7	5	9.6	5	9.6
29. I would like to choose the content of what is to be taught in the English lesson.	4	7.7	7	13.5	12	23.1	15	28.8	14	26.9

The responses to Item 25 show that 11 learners (21.1%) always liked to choose the materials for their foreign language learning lessons, while 13 learners (25%) mostly liked to choose their own learning materials. Even though almost the same number of the latter (n=14 or 26.9%) stated that they sometimes liked to select the materials for their foreign language lessons, eight learners (15.4%) rarely liked to choose their foreign language lessons materials, and six learners (11.5%) never liked to do so. The findings suggest that almost half of the participants (46.2%) are aware of the significance of being responsible for their own learning. Hence, they choose the materials they know they are best at and what they need to work hard at. However, the rest of the participants (53.8%) were more dependent on their teachers, for they showed less tendency to choose their learning materials.

In Item 26, about 28.8% of the learners (n=15) stated that they always liked to decide what to do in their English lessons and ten other learners (19.2%) liked to share this responsibility most of the time. Nevertheless, 17 learners (32.7%) said they sometimes liked to decide what to do in their English classes, whereas five learners (9.6%) declared they rarely and never, respectively, wanted to share decision-making about what to do in their English lessons. Thus, based on the responses to this item, it can be suggested that 48% of the participants are

aware of the significance of taking responsibility for their own learning and the freedom of decision-making that allows them to take ownership of their learning.

Nevertheless, Item 29 shows that four learners (7.7%) always wanted to choose the content of their English lessons, while seven of them (13.5%) most of the time wanted to choose the content of their English lessons. At the same time, 12 learners (23.1%) declared that they sometimes wanted to choose the content of their English lessons, 15 learners (28.8%) rarely wanted to choose the content of their English lesson, and 14 participants (26.9%) never wanted to choose the content of their English lessons. The findings of the item imply that few participants (21.2%) were interested in the decision-making process and choosing the content of what to be taught in their English lessons.

4.2.7 Learners' attitudes towards language learning

Table 4.7. presents the findings of two statements aimed at understanding the learners' attitudes towards English language learning.

Table 4.7: Learners' Attitudes Towards Language Learning

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
31. I think my friends are better than me in the foreign language. I want to reach their level of English.	11	21.2	12	23.1	13	25	10	19.2	6	11.5
33. I believe that I will reach a good Level in the English language.	23	44.2	12	23.1	12	23.1	4	7.7	1	1.9

The answers to Item 31 exhibit that 11 learners (21.2%) always felt their English level was inadequate compared to their friends and wanted to get to their level. Likewise, 12 other participants (23.1%) most of the time thought their friends' English is better than theirs and wanted to reach their levels. However, 13 learners (25%) stated they sometimes think their English level is inadequate and they wanted to be on their friends' level of proficiency, ten learners (19.2%) rarely thought their English level was better than their friends,

and six learners (11.5%) never thought that their friends' English level were better than theirs. The findings suggest that about 44.3% of the participants assume that their English skills are inadequate, and being aware of that, they feel they need to improve their English level.

Item 33 shows that 23 learners (44.2%) always believed that they would reach a good level in their English skills; similarly, 12 learners (23.1%) stated that they mostly believe that their English language will be at a better level. However, another 12 learners (23.1%) declared that sometimes they believe that their English will get to a reasonable level, four learners (7.7%) stated that they rarely believe that their English language level will improve to be good, and only one learner (1.9%) never believed in the improvement of their English language. The findings of this item suggest that a significant number of the participants (67.3%) believed in their ability to improve their English skills.

4.2.8 Teacher assessment

Table 4.8. presents the findings of five statements that aimed to understand the learners' attitudes towards teachers' assessment in the classroom.

Table 4.8: Learners' Perspectives on Teacher Assessment

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
30. I didn't study the topics after I get a good grade from my test.	7	13.5	9	17.3	9	17.3	13	25	14	26.9
34. I study English when we are going to have a test.	14	26.9	14	26.9	12	23.1	6	11.5	6	11.5
38. I do the English lesson activities only when my teacher is going to grade me.	6	11.5	4	7.7	19	36.5	8	15.4	15	28.8

Table 4.8: (con) Learners' Perspectives on Teacher Assessment

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
39.I like it when my teacher gives us different test types, other than written tests.	21	40.4	12	23.1	12	23.1	4	7.7	3	5.8
40. I like it when my teacher does a lot of tests in our English lesson.	10	19.2	10	19.2	10	19.2	9	17.3	13	25

Item 30 shows that seven learners (13.5%) always neglected their lessons after getting good grades in tests, nine learners (17.3%) stated that they mostly, and nine others (17.3%) sometimes did not study the topics after getting good grades from their tests. While 13 learners (25%) declared that they rarely neglected their lessons after passing tests with good grades, 14 learners (26.9%) never stopped studying their lessons after passing tests with good grades. The findings suggest that a significant number of the participants (69.2%), regardless of passing their tests with good grades, still attended their lessons and kept in touch with the language.

In Item 34, about 26.9% of the participants (n=14) always studied English for an exam. The exact same number of participants (n=14 or 26.9%) mostly studied English when they were to have an exam. However, 12 learners (23.1%) sometimes studied English for an exam, six learners (11.5%) stated they rarely, and another six people never studied English for the sake of a test. The findings show that more than half of the respondents (53.8%) only study their English lessons when they have an exam; otherwise, they would not study English.

The findings of Item 38 indicate that six learners (11.5%) always attended in the activities if the teacher were to grade them; similarly. four learners (7.7%) mostly participated in the activities in case their teacher was to grade them. However, 19 learners (36.5%) said they sometimes did the activities only if the teacher was going to grade them, eight learners (15.4%) stated that they rarely

did the activities merely when the teacher was going to grade them, and 15 learners (28.8%) declared that they did not limit their English learning activities to whether the teacher was to grade them or not. The findings propose that only a few participants were (19.2%) reluctant to be autonomous learners.

In Item 39, about 40.4% of the participants (n=21) always liked doing different types of tests that were not written, and 12 learners (23.1%) stated that they mostly liked various test types that were not written ones. Another 12 learners (n=23.1%) sometimes liked their teachers to give them different test types that were not written, four learners (7.7%) rarely liked other types of exams, and three learners (5.8%) never liked different types of tests but written tests. The findings from this item suggest that most of the participants (63.5%) preferred to have different test types other than the written tests that put them under pressure.

However, in Item 40, ten learners (19.2%) always liked having many tests in their English lessons. Another ten learners (19.2%) mostly liked having their teachers do many tests in their English lessons. The exact same number of participants (n=10 or 19.2%) said they sometimes liked having exams in their English lessons and nine learners (17.3%) rarely liked attending too many exams in their English lessons. However, 13 learners (25%) declared they never liked having many exams in their English lessons. The findings of this item exhibit various views regarding exams in English lessons; however, few learners (38.4%) liked having many tests in their English lessons.

4.2.9 Target culture and learner autonomy

Table 4.9. presents the findings of four statements that aimed to highlight the target culture's influence on the learners and the interrelationship between the target culture and learner autonomy.

Table 4.9: Target Culture Influence on Learner Autonomy

Items	AT		MT		ST		RT		NT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
41. I try to understand the jokes and riddles of the foreign language.	10	19.2	11	21.2	11	21.2	9	17.3	11	21.2
42. I also investigate the culture of the foreign language I am learning.	5	9.6	8	15.4	16	30.8	15	28.8	8	15.4
43. I also investigate the idioms and sayings of the foreign language I am learning.	8	15.4	4	7.7	13	25	13	25	14	26.9
44. I ask people who have lived abroad about the lifestyles of the people living there.	31	59.6	8	15.4	8	15.4	3	5.8	2	3.8

The answers to Item 41 indicate that ten learners (19.2%) always tried to understand the jokes and riddles of the English language, 11 learners (21.2%) mostly tried, and another 11 learners (21.2%) sometimes tried to understand the jokes and riddles of English language. However, nine learners (17.3%) said that they rarely tried to understand the jokes and riddles of the English language, and 11 learners (21.2%) declared that they never tried to understand the jokes and riddles of the English language. The findings of this item suggest that some participants (40.4%) favored cross-cultural communication where knowing the culture may help learners enhance the target language.

The responses to Item 42 show that five learners (9.6%) always looked up more information about the culture of the target language in which they were studying; likewise, eight learners (15.4%) said they most of the time would look up materials related to the culture of the language in which they were learning. However, 16 learners (30.8%) declared that they sometimes investigated the

culture of the target language they were learning, 15 learners (28.8%) rarely did investigate the culture of the target language, and eight learners (15.4%) never did. These findings from this item suggest that only a few learners (25%) are interested in understanding the target language's culture.

The findings of Item 43 illustrate that eight learners (15.4%) always investigated the idioms and sayings of the target language, and four of them (7.7%) did so most of the time. However, 13 learners (25%) declared that they sometimes, and another 13 learners (25%) rarely would investigate the target language idioms and sayings, while 14 learners (26.9%) never did investigate the idioms and sayings of the language they were learning. In conclusion, this item's findings show that a few participants (23.1%) investigated idioms and sayings from the language culture they were learning, which is significant to enhance their language learning abilities.

Additionally, in Item 44, the responses reveal that 31 learners (59.6%) always asked people who live abroad about the lifestyle of the residents, and eight learners (15.4%) most of the time did so; however, another eight participants sometimes asked people who have lived overseas about the lifestyle of the people living there. However, three learners (5.8%) said they rarely asked, and two learners (3.8%) never did ask about the lifestyle of the people living abroad. To sum up, a significant number of the participants (75%) showed a tendency to communicate across cultures, and that might help them build a better understanding of the target language, in this case, the English language.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This quantitative study explored first-year university learners' perspectives and beliefs towards a self-directed learning environment. The research probed further in the topic and addressed other areas like learners sense and readiness for self-direction, autonomous language learning, the critical role of the teacher in the classroom, the teacher explanations and supervision in the classroom, the activities to be carried out in the context of language learning, the selection of those materials, the learners' objectives and their methods of evaluation, learners' assessment, and finally the relationship between language learning and target culture in building bridges.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion, implications, and limitations of the current research. First, the researcher attempts to answer the research questions based on the existing literature on the EFL learners' views regarding autonomous learning among first-year university students based on the data collected via a questionnaire. Second, the researcher discusses the study implementations offering insights on the findings to understand and interpret them. Thirdly, the researcher introduces the limitations of the study and proposes future suggestions to be considered in the research area.

5.2 Conclusion

5.2.1 Learners' levels of readiness for self-direction in language learning

Self-directed learning (SDL) is a language learning context where individuals take full charge and responsibility for their learning. The SDL was first introduced by Knowles (1975) and has been studied more thoroughly by many scholars and researchers (e.g. Candy 1991; Smith, 1982, among many others). Similarly, Wiley (1983) stated that it is "the degree the individual possesses the attitudes, abilities and personality characteristics necessary for self-directed learning" (p. 182).

Furthermore, based on the definitions of SDL and the findings of the current study, more than half of the participants have a high level of readiness for self-direction in language learning, which means they take responsibility for their own learning, which results in being autonomous learners. The findings indicated that the majority of learners do activities outside of the classroom and are independent of their teacher to improve their language skills, and they see themselves as responsible in their learning or not learning something. Hence, that is an indication that they perceive being autonomous as a vital component

of the language learning process. Likewise, Fisher (2001) stated that the degree to which learners are self-ready is crucial for it shows their level of personal control and acknowledges the freedom associated with learning which is essential for promoting learner autonomy.

5.2.2 Learners' views in relation to independent work in language learning

The notion of independence in the learning process has gained considerable attention among researchers through the years. Over the last three decades, researchers have identified significant issues concerning learners' choice and independence in language learning (e.g., Holec et al., 1996; Rubin, 1975; White, 2008). The current research also revealed that more than half of the participants sought materials to help them learn English independently. That is to say; they were willing to take action for their own learning, make choices about their learning, and work on their own throughout the learning process.

Consequently, throughout this research, the majority of the participants stated that they think, learn, and achieve their learning goals better when they work on their own and incorporate other learning sources and materials of their interest into the learning process. According to Dickinson (1994), teachers can foster an independent classroom environment by preparing learners to think critically about their language needs, goals, objectives, then move [strategically] to how they can structure their learning. Additionally, selecting materials for their own learning according to their learning needs is considered important in the process of fostering learner autonomy (White, 2008).

5.2.3 Learners' views on the class/the teacher in their language learning

Researchers argue that a teacher's style in classroom settings influences learners' motivation, which affects their learning autonomy. Deci (1991) asserted that autonomous learners are most likely to have their teachers' support in increasing their language learning competence and motivation. The data collected over the duration of this study suggested that almost half of the respondents viewed the teacher as an important element in language learning. They acknowledged that the teacher's guidance and his/her presence give them confidence while learning in the classroom. As a result, teachers play a significant role in the process of language learning. However, they need to

resort to a sort of student-centered approach to help the learners discover the knowledge needed on their own rather be knowledge transmitters for them, which in turn facilitate fostering learner autonomy in language learning (Voller, 2014).

5.2.4 The role of the teacher's explanation and supervision

According to Benson (2001) and Little (2007), autonomy is not only a skill rather it is a continuous process of interaction between learners and their teachers. Similarly, Lowenthal (2009) stated that discourse is an essential part of the social process; therefore, students' and teachers' interaction is an inevitable communication. However, researchers emphasize that teachers' presence in the classroom should only facilitate learning rather than dominate the classroom (Voller, 1997). Self-directed learning does not mean to omit teacher's instruction and to learn independently rather; it means that teachers are resources, facilitators, and guides at the same time. They are also co-learners who act socially and interactively in and out of the classroom. To implement and promote autonomy individually for each learner and in the classroom setting as a group, teachers need their freedom to teach their students how to learn, but they also become the partners of the learners to accomplish the common goals.

Meanwhile, the findings of the current study also indicated that the majority of the participants agreed that they would like the teacher to explain the details and supervise them while learning the language. Hence, the researcher believes that the teacher's supervision facilitating in the classroom aids students to perform better and pave the ground for their improvement. To conclude, the teacher's presence and supervision are significant and facilitate students' smooth progress in the learning process.

5.2.5 Learners' preferences for language learning activities

Nunan (1999) and Samperio (2017) define "activities" as "the elements of the task that specify what the students will perform with the input; for instance, listening to recordings, writing a sentence, answering questions, etc." (Samperio, 2017, p.52).

Furthermore, based on the findings of this study, more than half of the respondents believed that learning would be more effective and enjoyable for them when they try to learn through certain activities such as in groups with other learners, outside the class activities, through listening to songs, reading books, and utilizing English materials of their interests. Consequently, learners' preferences of language learning activities would help them take responsibility for their own learning since that is how they want to learn and have directly to do with promoting learner autonomy.

5.2.6 Learners' attitudes towards the selection of content and defining learning objectives in the language learning process

According to Benson (1996), the selection of content is based on three interrelated levels: a) control of the learning process, b) control of resources, and c) control of the language. Likewise, the findings of the current study illustrated that almost half of the participants stated they would like to choose their own learning materials, to share the responsibility of deciding what to do, and to choose the content of what to be taught in English lessons. That is to say, half of the respondents are aware of the significance of being in control of their own learning and setting the learning objectives and as a result being autonomous learners. Being aware of this control is crucial since the more the learners are in control, the better learners are motivated and the smoother the learning process is (Chan, 2001).

5.2.7 Learners' preferences for teacher assessment

Assessment is an essential method not only to evaluate how effective teachers teach and how smooth the learners' progress is but also to plan and design future lessons (Gottlieb, 2006). The teacher's assessment is a vital component of the learning process since the feedback which is provided after the assessment helps teachers and learners to realize where to go? How to get there? and where to next? (Hattie, 2003).

The findings of this research indicated that more than half of the participants (63.5%) would like to be tested and preferred to have different types of assessment over the course of their learning process which in turn shows their understanding of the importance of being tested and getting feedback afterward.

However, they also stated that they only studied when they had a test, and they participated in activities only when the teacher was to grade them, which means they studied only to get a good mark or pass a test. Subsequently, the summative assessment was mainly taken place rather than formative assessment, which is not considered a learner autonomy friendly tool to evaluate students' performance and progress.

5.2.8 Learners' attitudes in relation to target culture

Culture is one of the critical and core aspects of learning any language (Brown, 2000). Language and culture are interrelated, and learning one without understanding the other means that the learner is "a fluent fool who speaks a language well but does not understand the social or philosophical content of that language, [the culture]" (Bennett, 1993, p.9). However, with the target culture, the teachings have not been (and still) not accepted easily due to religious beliefs and [cultural misunderstandings and prejudice] (Jabeen & Shah, 2011).

Moreover, in the current study, the findings exhibited that 75% of the participants showed a tendency to communicate through other cultures since they believe that understanding the target language's culture (i.e., through investigating the culture in general, investigating idioms and sayings, or understanding the jokes and riddles in the target language) help them understand the language more effectively. Such cultural literacy, which is called by Bada (2000), is of great importance in the learning process since it would make the communication between learners and native speakers of the language easier and far more authentic. It also facilitates language usage to protect learners from falling under inappropriate judgments or being called ignorant and "ill-mannered" (Genc & Bada, 2005). In sum, learning the target culture will help promote learner autonomy since an autonomous learner is the one who constantly learn – a lifelong learner – being aware of the target culture will help learners develop their communication competence and persistently keep learning the nuances of the language even after finishing a course and start using the target language out there in their real life.

5.3 The Implications of the Study

This section will discuss the study implications and the possible changes that might be elicited within the study. The study implications might be discussed under the following headings: autonomous learners' experiences, independent learners' readiness for autonomous learning, and learners' attitudes towards target culture.

Autonomous learners. Barnes (1976) argued that we all could learn new things and add new experiences to the previously learned ones (cited in Little, 1991) The findings of this study exhibited that autonomous learners could connect their newly learned knowledge to what they already knew previously and then construct new knowledge. This is very significant in terms of learning as learners are showing responsibility for their own learning and changing the narrative of learning where a teacher used to be the center of the classroom. Therefore, this transformation from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered classroom makes the learners' experience authentic. The findings of the present study align with Barnes's findings (1976). A significant number of the participants stated that they were responsible for their own learning and how this is substantial for their learning experience. Thus, the majority of the participants were aware of learner autonomy and how to be autonomous.

Learners' readiness for autonomous learning. Independent learners are self-directed and can reflect on the things they have learned. Most of the participants were able to demonstrate this ability. The study participants exhibited positive attitudes, willingness, and beliefs towards learning that directly affect their learning. Gardner (2001) stated that motivation includes three essential ingredients: desire, effort to learn, and positive affect. According to Boud (1988), autonomy is a perspective and point of view to learning that learners mainly take responsibility for their learning while responding to given instructions (as cited in Cotterall, 1995). In our study, while learning English, participants like to work on the activities of the given task and believe that they can learn on their own. Cotterall (1995), in her study, categorized "responses to the questionnaire items (role of the teacher, role of feedback, learner independence, learner confidence in study ability, experience of language learning and approach to studying) and argued that learners' beliefs reflect their

readiness for assuming greater responsibility for their learning." (p.3). Participants feel confident and happy when their teacher is beside them and when their teacher explains the details of English while they are learning; on the other hand, they do not believe they can only learn English with the help of their teacher. As much as the researcher tried to promote awareness towards autonomous learning and create a learner-centered classroom, learners still want and need the teacher's guidance and explanation.

Learners' attitudes towards target culture. A significant number of the participants are interested in the target culture. The data reveals that communicating across cultures might help learners better understand the target culture and better learn the language itself. Belli (2018), Kahraman (2016), and Onalan (2004) share similar findings that show learners have positive attitudes towards learning the target culture.

Importance of teacher and classroom. Most participants are aware of autonomous learning and self-regulated learners in a learner-centered classroom, but they still want to be nourished by their teachers. Deci (1991) asserted that autonomous learners are most likely to have their teachers' support, increasing their language learning competence and motivation. Participants of the study also have an attachment to their teachers, need their support, and feel happy when their teacher accompanies them while learning.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Certain limitations constrained the study and the scope of the research as the researcher collected the data. These limitations were the small number of participants and the absence of qualitative data. On the one hand, the small number of participants in the questionnaire has narrowed down the study scope. Therefore, more participants would have been better to enhance the study validity and ensure the authenticity of the findings. Also, more participants could have yielded more perspectives towards learners' autonomy and helped in, somehow, to understand more about the nature of autonomous learning. Therefore, the findings of this study are only valid for this group and cannot be generalized. On the other hand, the absence of qualitative data in the scope of the study made it hard for us not only to understand more about why the

findings were the way they were but also to elicit more data and widen our understanding of the challenges and perspectives supporting the findings of the study.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

First of all, it would be of great significance to run the study on a larger sample of participants to generalize the findings. Another recommendation could focus on mixed methods research to understand more about learner autonomy among learners and include language educators in the study to aid the study and validate the findings. The third focus for future studies might be further exploring the current dimensions related to learners' learning strategies since most of the currently available literature only involves learners presenting a list of strategies they employ in their learning process; however, a more focused and methodologically advanced investigation might lead to more authentic findings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Autonomy Learner Questionnaire
APPENDIX B Nine Dimensions in the Autonomy Learner Questionnaire
APPENDIX C Ethical Approval Form

Appendix A

AUTONOMY LEARNER QUESTIONNAIRE

5=Always True (Her Zaman Doğru)
4= Mostly True (Çoğu Zaman Doğru)
3= Sometimes True (Bazen Doğru)
2= Rarely True (Nadiren Doğru)
1= Never True (Hiçbir Zaman Doğru Değil)

1	İngilizce öğrenirken bildiklerimle yeni öğrendiklerim arasında ilişkiler kurmaya çalışırım. When I am learning English I try to relate the new things I have learned to my former knowledge.				
2	İngilizce yazılmış olan kitaplardan ve kaynaklardan kendi isteğimle faydalanırım. I use other English books and resources on my own will.				
3	İngilizce çalışan bir insan duyduğumda onu çok dikkatlice dinlemeye çalışırım. When I hear someone talking in English, I listen very carefully.				
4	Arkadaşlarımla veya ailemle İngilizce konuşmak istiyorum. I want to talk in English with my family or friends.				
5	Basit İngilizce ile yazılmış olan kitapları kendi isteğimle okurum. It is my own preference to read English books written in basic English.				
6	İngilizce öğrenirken kendi kendime öğrenebileceğim alıştırmaları severim. While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on my own.				
7	İngilizce öğrenirken kendi kendime yeni şeyler denemeyi severim. I like trying new things while I am learning English.				
8	İngilizce bir konuyu öğretmen anlatmazsa, onu öğrenemeyeceğim diye korkarım. I am afraid that I won't learn a topic if the teacher doesn't explain it in the English class.				
9	İngilizce'yi kendi kendime öğrenmek zorunda kalmayı sevmem I don't like learning English on my own.				
10	İngilizce dersinde öğrenemediğim konuyu tek başıma çalışarak öğrenebilirim. If I cannot learn English in the classroom, I can learn working on my own.				
11	İngilizce öğrenirken öğretmenimin yanımda olması beni rahatlatıyor. I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.				
12	İngilizce'yi sadece öğretmenin yardımıyla öğrenebilirim. I can learn English only with the help of my teacher.				
13	İngilizce öğrenmem için öğretmenim bana her zaman yol göstermelidir. My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.				
14	İngilizce öğrenirken öğretmenimin dilbilgisi kurallarını tekrarlayarak anlatmasını isterim. While learning English I would like my teacher to repeat				

	grammatical rules.					
15	Öğretmenim bize İngilizce'deki her ayrıntıyı anlatınca sevinirim. I feel happy when my teacher explains very detail of English.					
16	Gelecekte İngilizce'yi tek başıma/öğretmenim olmadan öğrenmeye devam etmeyi isterim. In the future, I would like to continue learning English on my own/ without a teacher.					
17	Diğer öğrencilerle çalışabileceğim ingilizce proje ödevlerinden hoşlanırım. In the English lesson I like projects where I can work with other students.					
18	İngilizce'nin dil bilgisini kendi kendime/ öğretmene gerek duymadan öğrenebilirim. I can learn the English grammar on my own/ without needinga teacher.					
19	İngilizce'deki sözcükleri öğrenmek için kendi yöntemlerimi kullanırım. I use my own methods to learn vocabulary in English.					
20	İngilizce'deki sözcükleri sözlük karıştırarak geliştirmeyi severim. I like learning English words by looking them up in a dictionary.					
21	Sadece öğretmenim İngilizce dil bilgisi kurallarını bana öğretebilir. Tek başıma öğrenemem. Only my teacher can teach me the English grammar. I cannot learn on my own.					
22	Öğreneceğimiz sözcükleri öğretmenin vermesini isterim. I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn.					
23	Yabancı dil derslerimle ilgili kaset/video/ CD'leri sınıf dışında kullanmak isterim I would like to use cassettes/video/CD's in the foreign language, outside of the classroom.					
24	İngilizce okumayı ve dinlemeyi aslında sınıf dışında yapmayı tercih ederim. In fact I like to listen and read in English outside of the classroom.					
25	Yabancı dil derslerim için malzemeleri kendim seçmek isterim. I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.					
26	İngilizce dersinde neler yapılacağı konusunda sorumluluk paylaşmak isterim. I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson.					
27	Ben İngilizce'yi nasıl en iyi şekilde öğrenebileceğimi bilirim. I know how I can learn English the best.					
28	İngilizce dersindeki bir konuyu öğrenmemişsem, sorumlusu benim. If I haven't learnt something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it.					
29	İngilizce dersinde öğretilecek konuları kendim belirlemek isterim. I would like to choose the content of what is to be taught in the English lesson.					
30	Yazılıdan iyi bir not alınca, bir daha o ders konularını çalışmam. I don't study the topics after I get a good grade from my test.					
31	Arkadaşlarımın yabancı dilde benden daha iyi olduğunu düşünürüm. Onların seviyesine ulaşmak isterim.					

	I think my friends are beter than me in the foreign language. I want to reach their level of English.					
32	İngilizce derslerimle ilgili eksiklikleri nasıl telafi edeceğim konusunda endişelenirim. I hesitate on the matter of compensating what I have missed in English lessons.					
33	İngilizce'de iyi bir seviyeye geleceğime inanıyorum. I believe that I will reach a good level in the English language					
34	İngilizce'yi sınav olacağımız zaman çalışırım. I study English when we are going to have a test					
35	İngilizce'yi kendi kendime çalışınca daha iyi öğrendiğimi düşünüyorum. I think that I learn English better when I work on my own.					
36	İngilizce dersini sadece öğretmenimin verdiği ödev için çalışırım. I only study for the English lesson when the teacher gives homework.					
37	İngilizce'yi yalnız çalışmaktansa arkadaşlarımla çalışmak bana daha faydalı oluyor. I find it more useful to work with my friends than working on my own for the English lesson.					
38	İngilizce alıştırmaları sadece öğretmenim not vereceği zaman çalışırım. I do the English lesson activities only when my teacher is going to grade me.					
39	Öğretmenimin yazılı sınavlardan daha farklı sınav türleri yapması hoşuma gider. I like it when my teacher gives us different test types, other than written tests.					
40	Öğretmenimin İngilizce dersi için çok sınav yapması hoşuma gider. I like it when my teacher does a lot of tests in our English lesson.					
41	Öğrendiğim yabancı dildeki fıkraları anlamaya çalışırım. I try to understand the jokes and riddles of the foreign language.					
42	Öğrendiğim yabancı dilin kültürünü de araştırırım. I also investigate the culture of the foreign language I am learning.					
43	Öğrendiğim yabancı dilin atasözlerini ve deyimlerini de araştırırım. I also investigate the idioms and sayings of the foreign language I am learning.					
44	Yurtdışında yaşamış olan insanlara, oradaki insanların yaşam biçimleriyle ilgili sorular sorarım. I ask people who have lived abroad about the lifestyles of the people living there.					

Appendix B

Nine Dimensions in the Autonomy Learner Questionnaire

Section	Number of Items	Focus	Questions
Dimension 1	6 items	Readiness for Self-direction	What are the learners' beliefs relating to self-directed learning in general?
Dimension 2	7 items	Independent Work in Language Learning	What are the learners' beliefs relating to independent work in language learning?
Dimension 3	8 items	Importance of Class/ Teacher	How important do learners see the class/ the teacher in their language learning?
Dimension 4	5 items	Role of Teacher: Explanation/ Supervision	What importance do learners give to teacher explanation and supervision?
Dimension 5	4 items	Language Learning Activities	In relation to particular language learning activities, what are the learners' attitudes?
Dimension 6	3 items	Selection of Content	What are the learners' attitudes relating to the selection of content for language learning?
Dimension 7	2 items	Objectives/ Evaluation	How confident do learners feel about defining objectives?
Dimension 8	5 items	Assessment/ Motivation	How important is external assessment in motivating the learners' work?
Dimension 9	4 items	Other Cultures	What are the learners' attitudes relating to the culture of other countries?

APPENDIX C Ethical Approval Form

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

Sayı : 88083623-020
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Sayın Şebnem KÜÇÜK GENTRY

Tez çalışmanızda kullanmak üzere yapmayı talep ettiğiniz anketiniz İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyonu'nun 28.01.2020 tarihli ve 2020/01 sayılı kararıyla uygun bulunmuştur.

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

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

Evrakı Doğrulamak İçin : https://evrakdogrula.aydin.edu.tr/enVision.Dogrula/BelgeDogrulama.aspx?V=BEKA3A30H

RESUME

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Languages:

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-English: Advanced

Skills:

- Communication, Teamwork, Problem Solving, Flexibility, Creativity

- Computer skills (Microsoft Office) and others