

**Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Learner
Autonomy in the ELT Department at Eastern
Mediterranean University**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of the ELT students and their instructors as regards learner autonomy in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in North Cyprus. To achieve this, the ELT students' and instructors' overall perceptions about learner autonomy in general, and learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU specifically were identified.

The present study is a case study, which employs a descriptive -interpretive method. The study was conducted with 69 ELT students and 11 instructors teaching in the ELT Department at EMU. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through three different sources: student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, and teacher interviews.

The results obtained from this study reveal that both students and teachers in the ELT Department have positive views about learner autonomy. The outcomes of the study also show that both ELT students and their instructors believed that students should be involved in decisions about their learning, and that the ELT students have the potential to become autonomous learners. However, most of the instructors and students think that it is *slightly feasible* or *unfeasible* to involve students in every decision, such as classroom management, the teaching methods used, and the time and place of the lesson in the ELT Department. On the other hand, the instructors recommended that they should try to promote learner autonomy more in their courses by revising the ELT curriculum, redesigning the courses, giving freedom to students

to choose their topics for projects and assignments, teaching students how to learn, etc.

To conclude, the results of this study show that the ELT students' and their instructors' perceptions of learner autonomy are positive, and they can be considered ready for it, because they desire it although they think that it is not completely feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) in the ELT Department at the moment.

Based on the results, some pedagogical implications for fostering learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU, and suggestions for further research have been recommended.

Keywords: Autonomy, Learner Autonomy, Teacher Autonomy, Student Perceptions, Teacher Perceptions

ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ) İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) Bölümün'de öğrenen özerkliğinin, öğrencilerin ve öğretim üyelerinin algıları doğrultusunda, ne kadar desteklendiğini araştırmaktır. Bu amaçla, İDE öğrencileri'nin ve öğretim elemanlarının öğrenen özerkliğine karşı genel algıları ve İDE Bölümün'deki öğrenen özerkliğini ile ilgili düşünceleri belirlenmiştir.

Bu çalışma, tanımlayıcı ve yorumlayıcı bir yaklaşımın kullanıldığı olgu çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışma 69 İDE öğrencisi ve 11 İDE öğretim elemanı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Nitel ve nicel veri toplama üç farklı kaynaktan yapılmıştır: öğrenci anketi, öğretim elemanı anketi ve öğretim elemanı görüşmeleri.

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları hem İDE öğrencilerinin hem de öğretim elemanlarının öğrenen özerkliğine karşı olumlu görüşleri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca sonuçlar, İDE öğrenci ve öğretim elemanlarının, öğrencilerin kendi öğrenmeleri ile ilgili kararlara dahil olması gerektiğine ve de bölüm öğrencilerinin bağımsız öğrenenler olma gücüne sahip olduklarına inandıklarını göstermiştir. Bununla beraber, öğretim elemanlarının ve öğrencilerin çoğu, öğrencilerin sınıf yönetimi, öğretme teknikleri, dersin zaman ve yeri gibi konulardaki kararlara dahil edilmesinin kısmen uygulanabilir olduğu görüşünü belirtmişlerdir. Öte yandan, öğretim elemanları öğrenen özerkliğini verdikleri derslerde daha çok desteklemeleri gerektiğini önermişlerdir. Öğretim elemanları, İDE eğitim programının gözden geçirilmesi, derslerin tekrar tasarlanması, öğrencilerin proje ve çalışma konularını

seçmede özgür bırakılması ve öğrencilere nasıl öğrenebileceklerinin öğretilmesi gibi çalışmalarla öğrenen özerkliğinin daha çok desteklenebileceğini belirtmişlerdir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları, İDE öğrenci ve öğretim üyelerinin öğrenen özerkliğine karşı olumlu görüşleri olduğunu, ve İDE Bölümü'nde şu anda tam olarak uygulanabilir olmadığını düşünseler de, öğrenen özerkliğine hazır olduklarını göstermiştir.

Çalışma sonuçlarına dayanarak, öğrenen özerkliğinin İDE Bölümü'nde teşvik edilmesinin eğitsel sezdirimleri ve gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalara ilişkin öneriler ortaya konmuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: Özerklik, Öğrenen Özerkliği, Öğreten Özerkliği, Öğrenci Algıları, Öğreten Algıları

I want to dedicate this study to my husband, Uluç Uzun, for his invaluable and unwavering support. This study is also dedicated to my beloved parents, Maryam Razavi and Fereydoun Farahi, whose love and encouragement, even from far away, helped me in countless ways.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Learner autonomy is a state in which learners take the whole responsibility for their own learning. It has been a major area of interest in foreign language teaching and learning for about three decades. There are various definitions of learner autonomy. For instance, while Holec (1981), defines autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p.3), Little (2010) argues that “autonomous learners are characterized by their active involvement in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning” (p27). On the other hand, Littlewood (1996) defines an autonomous person as “one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions” (p.428). According to Benson (2011), autonomy is “the capacity to take charge of, or responsibility for, one’s own learning” (p.58). Moreover, Cotterall (1995) states that “learners who are autonomous might take responsibility by setting their own goals, planning practice opportunities, or assessing their progress” (p.219). According to Joshi (2011) however, “the term autonomy refers to one’s ability to decide the laws for oneself” (p.13).

Autonomy in language learning is an important factor. According to Littlewood (1996) “language learning requires the active involvement of learners” (p.427). Benson and Voller (1997) point out five different uses of autonomy in language

learning. First, it can be used in cases where learners study a subject entirely on their own. Second, learner autonomy can be useful to learn a narrow set of skills through self-directed learning. Third, this approach can be used to cultivate an innate skill possessed by a student that is not recognized or that may even be suppressed within institutions of learning. Fourth, learner autonomy can be useful in teaching the learner to take responsibility for his or her own learning outcomes. And finally, this approach can be used to empower learners to take control of their learning process and acquisition. Littlewood (1999) focuses on the important role of learners in autonomous learning by arguing that students should take on many of the responsibilities that have typically been seen as the teacher's role, such as setting learning objectives and determining the methods for learning and evaluating knowledge acquisition. Moreover, Chan (2001) believes that "increasing the level of learner control will increase the level of self-determination, thereby increasing overall motivation in the development of learner autonomy" (p.506).

On the other hand, teachers' role is also seen as a key factor in developing autonomy. Benson (2011) states that "in order to foster learner autonomy, teachers themselves must display a degree of autonomy in their approaches to teaching and learning" (p185). In other words, fostering learner autonomy is closely related to fostering teacher autonomy (Thanasoulas, 2000). As Little (2004a) clarifies, promoting learner autonomy does not mean that the teacher stops teaching, which has the effect of disrupting the learning of students, but rather that they must create a learning community for their students. Also, Little (1995) believes that learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy. In fact, he claims that we cannot expect teachers to foster autonomy in their students if they do not themselves know what it is to be autonomous. Teacher and learner autonomy are closely connected. "It is teachers'

autonomy to cultivate a good environment for learners so that learners to acquire and practice the knowledge autonomously” (Hui, 2010, p.68).

It is important to understand teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy when exploring the issue of learner autonomy because teachers' perceptions can shape their practices and, therefore, the learning opportunities learners take (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a). Teachers all around the world have a range of beliefs about what learner autonomy means. According to Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012b), teachers believe that learner autonomy gives learners a freedom to make choices and decisions about their learning. In teachers' beliefs, learner autonomy means that learners can decide about how and what kinds of things they will learn. According to Benson (2008) “from the teachers' perspective, autonomy is primarily concerned with institutional and classroom learning assignments within established curricula” (p.15). Additionally, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012b) argue that learners are not dependent completely on the teacher, but they are responsible for deciding about their own learning. La Ganza (2008), however, argues that in order to foster learner autonomy teachers must learn simultaneously to overcome their own anxieties about giving away some of their control of the classroom and to increase their communication capacities with their learners.

Therefore, promoting learner autonomy is especially important in teacher education programs. For teachers to be able to promote and embrace learner autonomy in their own classrooms, as Balçıkanlı (2010) asserts, they need to experience such autonomous learning in their own training as candidate teachers. With respect to this, Smith (2001) argues that teacher education programs must put a greater emphasis and value on increasing autonomy in teachers' pedagogy and attitudes.

In fact, if students in these programs are trained as autonomous learners, they can be expected to promote autonomy in their future teaching. In other words, if students (i.e. prospective teachers) are not ready or if they have negative attitudes toward learner autonomy, it can be difficult for them to become autonomous teachers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Fostering autonomy in teacher education programs is important for several reasons. First, by acquiring autonomy in their own training, teachers can improve their abilities and skills and develop a greater willingness to learn for themselves. Second, an emphasis on autonomy in their training will help these teachers become confident prospective teachers who can encourage learner autonomy in their own classrooms. Regarding this issue Smith and Erdoğan (2008) claim that “particular dimensions of teacher autonomy might be necessary as conditions for the promotion of learner autonomy” (p.85). Similarly, Holec (1981) states that learners are not innately equipped to take on increased autonomy within a formal learning environment and must therefore be supported and cultivated by others, including their teachers. In other words, learner autonomy is closely tied to, and interacts with, teacher autonomy.

Accordingly, perceptions of students and instructors are important factors in promoting learner autonomy. As indicated in the ELT student handbook (2014-2015), one of the central learning outcomes of the undergraduate English Language Teaching (ELT) program at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) is to train students to become confident, creative and autonomous future language teachers. Therefore, it may be very useful to explore the perceptions of students (prospective teachers) and instructors regarding the promotion of autonomy at the ELT

Department. ELT students should be encouraged to become increasingly autonomous both as learners to improve their English, and as prospective teachers, who can one day help their own students become confident and more independent autonomous learners.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

To encourage student teachers to become autonomous teachers, Balçıkanlı (2010) believes that teacher educators should try to understand the attitudes of the student teachers towards learner autonomy during their training. Likewise, the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) aims to train student teachers to become autonomous prospective teachers. Hence, the main purpose of this study is to find out to what extent the ELT Department promotes autonomy to achieve this aim as perceived by the students and teachers.

Overall, the present study aims at investigating to what extent autonomous learning is promoted at the ELT Department as perceived by the students and their instructors. To achieve this, the present study attempts to identify perceptions of students and instructors on learner autonomy in the (ELT) Department at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU).

1.4 Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the ELT students' perceptions regarding learner autonomy?
2. What are the ELT instructors' perceptions regarding learner autonomy?
3. What are the differences between students' perceptions and instructors' perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department?

4. What are the instructors' suggestions for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may reveal to what extent student teachers are being trained as autonomous teachers in the ELT Department. In addition, the instructors can become more aware of their own assumptions and practices in the classroom concerning learner autonomy. Similarly, this study may raise students' awareness about the concept of autonomy and its importance in language teaching and learning. Finally, all this may help to foster autonomy further in the ELT Department at EMU.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chapter 2 presents some review of literature on autonomy, learner autonomy, and teacher autonomy. Also, it focuses on autonomy in teacher education programs by giving information about the relationship between teacher and learner autonomy. In addition, some literature on learner autonomy in foreign language learning and teaching is presented. Moreover, perceptions of learner autonomy in language teaching and learning are dealt with by reviewing several studies on the perceptions of students and teachers regarding learner autonomy in various contexts.

2.1 Autonomy

Benson (2011) explains how the concept of autonomy emerged as follows: The Council of Europe's Language Project first introduced the concept of autonomy in the field of language teaching in 1971 through its *centre de recherches et d'Applications en Langues* (CRAPEL), which was established at the university of Nancy in France. Although CRAPEL's founder, Yves Chalon, is often called the "father" of autonomy in language learning, due to his untimely death, his successor, Henri Holec is known as establishing the concept of autonomy in language learning. Under Holec's leadership, CRAPEL scholars Philip Riley and Caroline Stanchina launched the first seminar on the subject of learner autonomy at the University of Cambridge in 1976. In 1981, the Center produced a major report on learner autonomy for the Council of Europe. Finally, CRAPEL established *Mélanges Pédagogiques*, in the early 1970s, where they published major articles elaborating on

the concept of autonomy. Many of these articles were then republished in 1985 for an international audience in Riley's book, *Discourse and Learning*. To this day the journal and many of its articles have been considered important resources on the subject of learner autonomy. (Benson, 2011).

In foreign language teaching and learning, autonomy has been a major area of interest for many years (Littlewood, 1996). Many scholars have defined autonomy from different perspectives. For instance, Benson (2006) defines autonomy as the ability of people to have control over their own lives as individuals, and within the specific context of learning, autonomy refers to the individual learner's control over the learning process inside and outside the classroom. Benson (2006) also argues that autonomy in language learning denotes control and decision-making as regards language acquisition, including the various methods and techniques used to acquire the desired language.

Furthermore, Chan (2001) defines autonomy as "to have and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning" (p.505), and Joshi (2011) states that "it is the complete responsibility for one's learning carried out without the investment of a teacher or pedagogic materials" (p.13). Boud (1988, cited in Cotteral, 1995) on the other hand, defines autonomy as the students' taking greater responsibility for their learning and not simply following the given instructions.

Little (1999) argues that since the word 'autonomy' has some popular connotations such as individual freedom and independence, 'autonomy' in the learning environment is often mistakenly understood as a type of learning without a teacher.

Autonomy, according to Benson (1997), can be observed in circumstances where the students take the lead in their own learning, potentially after formal schooling has ended, and he states that the primary issue for educators is how to improve learners' abilities to take on such autonomy when the need arises.

Finally, Dickinson (1987, cited in Benson 2011) describes 'autonomy' in terms of the learner's taking full responsibility for all learning decisions in the classroom, whereas Andreu (2007) approaches 'autonomy' more as an attitude towards learning that rests on the recognition that the learner has responsibilities for their own learning outcomes (cited in Shahsavari, 2014).

2.2 Learner Autonomy and the Autonomous Learner

Learner autonomy has been a major area of discussion in foreign language teaching and learning for about three decades (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a). There are various definitions of learner autonomy. For example, Holec (1981), defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p.3). Holec (1981), explains learner autonomy as the ability of the learner to take responsibility for all aspects of their learning experience, from determining their learning objectives, to defining the content, to selecting the learning methods to be used, to determining how to measure and monitor acquisition. Similarly, Dickinson (1987) elaborates on the concept of 'learner autonomy' by defining it as the learner's ability to take all decisions for his or her learning (cited in Hui, 2010). Littlewood (1996) defines "an autonomous person as one who has an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions" (p.428).

Little (1999) states that “in formal educational contexts, learners are autonomous when they set their own learning agenda and take responsibility for planning, monitoring and evaluating particular learning activities and the learning process overall”(p.77). Also Little (2010) characterizes autonomous learners by their active involvement in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning. Likewise, Chan (2001) believes that autonomous learners must be able to control their learning at every stage, from setting their learning goals to developing study plans and assessing their own progress.

Joshi (2011), on the other hand, defines an autonomous learner as “one who has capacity to make and carry out the choices which govern his or her actions independently” (p.14). When autonomy is encouraged in the classroom, Joshi (2011) suggests, the learners take on more responsibilities and make more of the choices about their learning, yet often with the guidance and support of their teachers.

Furthermore, as Cotterall (1995) states, autonomous learners can take responsibility in identifying their own goals, planning practice opportunities, or evaluating their progress. In addition, Hedge (2000) asserts that they can take responsibility for their learning, by planning and evaluating their learning processes independent of the teacher (cited in Joshi, 2011).

Sinclair (2000) elaborates on the concept of learner autonomy by raising several important issues. Firstly, ‘autonomy’ must be understood as tied to a learner’s capacity. As such, there are degrees of autonomy that vary from student to student and even in the same student, depending on the topic. Secondly, giving complete autonomy to learners is unrealistic. Thirdly, developing autonomy is not only about

giving learners greater independence on certain tasks, but it is also about making learners more aware and self-conscious about taking decisions on their learning. Accordingly, it is not simply about changing teaching strategies. Fourthly, autonomy should be promoted both within and outside the classroom, as well as within groups and individually. Finally, the issue of autonomy cannot be separated from political, psychological, or cultural contexts in which students are learning, as these factors constrain and promote the degree to which autonomy is both interpreted and received by students (cited in Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a).

As Thanasoulas (2000) points out, learner autonomy encourages learners to increase their self-awareness about what their needs and goals are in the classroom and how to satisfy these needs and goals through new, innovative approaches. According to Demirtaş and Sert (2010), on the other hand, “the autonomous learner is one who has the capacity to monitor his learning process. To achieve this he can determine his own goal and define and follow the path toward them” (p.160). Similarly, Chan (2001) argues that autonomous learners can establish learning agendas for themselves that outline and articulate that plan (i.e. goals and content), as well as the pace and methods of evaluation that will mark their progress towards their learning goals.

With respect to qualities of an autonomous learner, Garrigan (1997) explains that learner autonomy rests upon the learner’s self-awareness about the learning context, his or her ability to navigate that context, and finally to critically evaluate their own learning process and set their goals for learning.

Some other scholars have also focused on the concepts of ‘learner autonomy’ and ‘autonomous learner’. For instance, Little (1999) thinks that the learner autonomy approach fosters the ability among individual learners to develop activities and other strategies for their learning. Moreover, emphasizing the close relationship between the terms “autonomy” and “freedom”, Trebbi (2008) argues that freedom is often seen as an essential component of learner autonomy whereas La Ganza (2008) states that “learner autonomy is an achievement, attained interrelationally between the learner and the teacher” (p.65).

Autonomous learning, according to Lamb (2008), means not only assuming control over how one acquires knowledge but also finding the underlying motivations for learning. Likewise, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012a) claim that “learners will not develop autonomy unless they are willing to take responsibility for their learning” (p.4). Littlejohn (1985) also focuses on motivation and states that the more students take control of their language acquisition, the more enthusiastic they will be towards learning (cited in Balcikanli, 2010). Lastly, Rathbone (1971) defines the autonomous learner as an active agent, who initiates their interactions with the world, rather than one who simply allows the world to impact him or her (cited in Thanasoulas, 2000).

2.3 Teacher Autonomy

Since Little (1995) defined ‘teacher autonomy’ as the teachers’ “capacity to engage in self-directed teaching” (p. 176) many scholars have tried to expand on this definition.

Teacher autonomy is defined by Smith (2001) as “the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher in cooperation with others”

(p.1). Also, Smith (2001) argues that for a teacher to be autonomous he or she needs to be self-directed (and have the capacity to be self-directed) in both their action and their professional development, while also asserting their freedom in their action and professional development.

Regarding teacher roles, Yang (1998) states that teachers are taking on new roles as consultants and active participants who work alongside their students, assisting them in their own development and in acquiring techniques of learning. Demirtaş and Sert (2010) on the other hand, view the teacher as both counselor and facilitator who helps students develop and utilize particular skills. Finally, Little (2004b) clarifies that teacher autonomy requires the right balance between claiming responsibility for the classroom and providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge to be successful on the one hand, and knowing when to give up control and allow their students to assume more responsibility on the other.

According to Barfield et. al. (2001, cited in Balçıkanlı, 2010), students' autonomy is dependent on whether their teacher creates a classroom culture which accepts autonomy. Offering a profile of the ideal 'autonomous teacher', De Vries and Kohlberg (1987, cited in Balckanli 2010) describe an autonomous teacher as the one who is grounded in her practical and theoretical convictions; who not only understands how children or students think but also knows how to promote a constructive culture in the classroom. For them, such a teacher does not blindly follow the guidelines provided by curriculum specialists, and takes greater responsibility to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the students instead.

Furthermore, Al Asmari (2013) believes that the teacher plays a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy by creating a learning environment that is conducive to this approach, by firstly understanding and addressing the past learning experiences of their students and then increasingly promoting independence. Additionally, according to Voller (1997), teachers in the context of autonomous learning are often characterized as ‘facilitators’, ‘counselors’, or ‘resources’. At times, they are described as ‘facilitators’ given that they facilitate self-driven, individualized learning among the learners. Their role can also be understood as ‘counselor’, in that they offer guidance and suggestions for individualized learning. However, Voller (1997), asserts that the most relevant description for teachers in an autonomous learning environment is that of ‘resource’ for the learners. Thavenius (1999) on the other hand, defines an autonomous teacher as the one who is independent in his or her own right and thus capable and adaptive enough to allow his or her learners to be independent as well (cited in Benson, 2011).

As to the roles of the teacher in autonomous learning, Joshi (2011) states that “a teacher in autonomous learning is facilitator, an organizer, a resource person providing learners with feedback and encouragement, and a creator of learning atmosphere and space. In other words, a teacher works as a guide, a co-operative and an initiator rather than an authority” (p.16).

According to La Ganza (2008), a teacher’s ability to be creative and to encourage learner autonomy is dependent on:

- 1) The teacher’s relationship to his or her own teachers and partners
- 2) The teacher’s relationship to his or her own students
- 3) The teacher’s relationship to the institutions in which he or she is teaching

- 4) The teacher's relationship to external institutions and bureaucracies in the society

With regard to fostering teacher autonomy, Balçıkanlı (2009) claims that successful language teacher education requires the cultivation of teacher autonomy, so that teachers become more aware of the underlying processes of teaching (i.e. the reasons why they pursue particular strategies) and stay abreast of new ideas in their field.

2.4 Autonomy in Teacher Education: Teacher –Learner Autonomy

As emphasized by a number of scholars, teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are closely related to each other. For example, according to Little (1995), learner autonomy is closely linked to teacher autonomy for two primary reasons. First, for teachers to have the confidence to encourage their students to become autonomous learners, they must understand first-hand what learner autonomy means in their own training as teachers. Second, by being trained to learn autonomously in their teacher training, teachers will be able to be more self-reflective, autonomous teachers. Little (2004a) reiterates the point that learner and teacher autonomy are mutually reinforcing as teachers cannot be autonomous teachers without having been autonomous learners.

With respect to fostering autonomy in teacher education programs, Balçıkanlı (2009) states that “teacher autonomy is an essential aspect of successful language teacher education in a way that it enables teachers to conduct their own teaching more effectively, become more aware of whats and whys of teaching processes, and follow new trends in language teaching/learning” (p.11). Moreover, Smith and Erdoğan (2008) point out that self-directed teacher-learning is essential for encouraging

teachers' willingness to learn for themselves and to develop their own expertise. Smith and Erdoğan (2008) add that while teacher autonomy is important as a pedagogical tool for promoting autonomy among language learners, it can also be seen as significant in its own right as a means by which to promote the professional development of the teacher.

Hacker and Barkhuizen (2008) on the other hand, argue that language teachers should be aware of their beliefs as regards teaching and learning in order "to meet the challenges of autonomy" (p.161). They also believe that "language teacher education programmes, therefore, should create opportunities for participants to examine and develop their personal theories of teaching" (p.161). Furthermore, Smith (2001) claims that since teaching is intrinsically a self-directed process, teacher education programs should encourage teacher-learner autonomy in pedagogical, attitudinal and content-related areas.

Balçıkkanlı (2010) also focuses on the importance of fostering autonomy in teacher education programs by stating that "student teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy are very important components of their future teaching practices. Therefore, teacher educators play a salient role in student teachers' experience with learner autonomy by allowing more room for greater motivation, negotiation and decision making" (p.99).

In addition, Shahsavari (2014) has explored student teachers' perceptions of autonomy and found out that student teachers view autonomy in somewhat absolute terms as an inherently better and newer method of teaching that promotes student individualization and largely eliminates the role of the teacher.

To conclude, Balçıkanlı (2009) claims that autonomous language teachers are considered successful teachers because they have some overlapping qualities such as “awareness of their own teaching, creativity, and problem-solving skills” and “this suggests that teacher autonomy should be emphasized in initial training, not just in in-service training as it usually is” (p.11). Moreover, according to Balçıkanlı and Çakır (2012), the earlier language teachers are exposed to the concepts of learner autonomy, the more readily they may be able to incorporate this approach in their future teaching.

2.5 Learner Autonomy in Foreign Language Learning and Teaching

Learner autonomy in foreign language learning depends on the ability and willingness of the learner to complete both specific and general tasks, and three areas where this autonomy is most relevant in foreign language learning is in communication, learning, and personal development (Littlewood, 1996). Similarly, Little (2004b) believes that “autonomy in language learning is underpinned by three general pedagogical principles: learner involvement, learner reflection, and appropriate target language use” (p.105).

In the context of language learning, Little (2010) argues that as learner autonomy depends on language proficiency in the target language, the learner must be taught mainly in the target language and encouraged to take various roles (i.e. responding and initiating conversations) and to develop their ability for both internal and external language use. Moreover, in order to foster autonomy in the language classroom Balçıkanlı (2008) thinks that it is very important to involve students in decision regarding their learning. Also, Balçıkanlı (2010) states that “students should

be involved in the decision making process concerning the objectives of the course, classroom management, homework tasks, and the selection of materials”(p.98).

One way to promote autonomy in language classes is through course design. For instance, claiming that learner autonomy in language courses requires the shifting of responsibilities from the teacher to the student in all aspects of the learning process—from setting learning goals to evaluating student progress, Cotteral (2000) proposes five principles for designing language courses which promote autonomy. These five principles “relate to (1) learner goals, (2) the language learning process, (3) tasks, (4) learner strategies, and (5) reflection on learning” (p.110).

Illes (2012) specifies that autonomy in language learning contexts demands that learners try to find solutions to various problems on their own, to work collaboratively in groups and pairs, and to develop the tools to assess their own work and the work of their peers. More specifically, she claims that “presenting learners with problems that have no ready-made answers forces them to activate their problems-solving capacity and to work out solutions for themselves” (p.509).

Dang (2012) believes that a combination of both collaborative projects (i.e. debates and group projects) and individual activities (i.e. journal writing, reading) are needed to promote learner autonomy in the classroom. In other words, Dang (2012) states that debate, group work, and individual activities such as reflective journals all help students become more autonomous learners.

Moreover, Thanasoulas (2000) focuses on what learners can do in order to develop autonomy, and states that it is helpful for students to write self-reports, diaries and

evaluation sheets. For instance, he believes that diaries and evaluation sheets “offer students the responsibility to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning, identifying any problems they run into and suggesting solutions” (p.8). In addition, Thanasoulas (2000) proposes a persuasive communication between the teacher and the learners as another way to promote autonomy. For him, a persuasive communication is a means to alter learner beliefs and attitudes. In other words, such a communication can change negative beliefs and attitudes into positive, and therefore can facilitate learning.

With regard to promoting autonomy, McDevitt (1997) views learner autonomy as necessary for developing important social skills such as effective communication, working in teams, negotiations, and taking initiative. To help promote this autonomy, McDevitt (1997) suggests creating self-access centers for students, where they can assess their own work and report failures. Moreover, Benson (2011) clarifies that such self-access centers need to utilize new computer technologies that provide necessary resources and simulate various scenarios (situational learning) to facilitate language learning.

Additionally, arguing that “self-directed learning involves taking responsibility for the objectives of learning, self-monitoring, self-assessing, and taking on active role in learning” (p.282), Lee (1998) explains the implementation of a self-directed learning program and its benefits for university students in Hong Kong. This program takes into consideration five factors which are important for developing learner autonomy. These factors are voluntariness, learner choice, flexibility, teacher support and peer support.

Teachers can also help their students become autonomous self-reflective learners by encouraging them to work collaboratively with others (including their teachers), remain open to criticism, observe their own activities via videotape, and most importantly, provide one another feedback (Balçıkkanlı, 2009).

As Camilleri (1999) points out, though teachers play a central role in promoting learner autonomy, their work is affected by larger national education policies, particularly national examination systems and rigid syllabi, which need to be adapted to foster greater learner autonomy.

2.6 Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning

This section reviews the literature on perceptions of learner autonomy in language teaching and learning. It will be divided into three subsections: the first subsection focuses on literature related to students' perceptions of learner autonomy; the second is on teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy; and finally, the third subsection reviews studies on both students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy.

2.6.1 Studies on Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

This first section focuses on studies that attempt to examine or identify students' perceptions of learner autonomy.

Chan (2001) did a study with 20 English language students in Polytechnic University in Hong Kong to identify their perceptions regarding autonomy. In her study, she used a questionnaire and interviews to gather information concerning students' views of learner autonomy. The study explores learners' prospects of language learning, teacher and learner roles and their perceptions regarding learner autonomy. She

found out that while the students demonstrated tremendous capacity to be autonomous learners, they still expressed heavy dependence on their teachers to guide them towards such autonomy.

Similarly Koçak (2003) administered a questionnaire to 186 English Language preparatory school students at Başkent University in Ankara, Turkey. The aim of this study was to explore learners' readiness for autonomous learning and their perceptions regarding teacher roles in learning English. He found out that while students used metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring and self-evaluation, they still considered the teacher as more responsible for their learning than themselves.

Moreover, in a study with 219 first year EFL students in Japan, Mineishi (2010) focuses on differences between perceptions of successful and less successful learners regarding learner autonomy. In his study, he found out that the success of learners was tied in some ways to their perceptions of learner autonomy, and despite what is traditionally expected in Japanese classrooms, some students aspired to learn autonomously rather than passively.

Porto (2007), on the other hand, carried out a study with 95 Argentine, Caucasian students at the National University of La Plata in Argentina. The aim of this study was to identify the learners' perceptions of lessons and developing learner autonomy. She found out that providing learners with opportunities for reflection and critical thinking in foreign language learning contexts is important.

Lastly, Chan, Spratt and Humphreys (2010), administered a questionnaire and interviews to 508 undergraduate students in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. They conducted a research on students' attitudes toward learner autonomy, and their perceptions of teachers' role in language learning process. The results of this study showed that the students considered the teacher as more responsible for classroom management. Additionally, the heavy reliance on the teacher and heavy workload were found out to be impediment to fostering learner autonomy.

2.6.2 Studies on Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

Due to the fact that teachers play an important role in promoting autonomy, and their beliefs or perceptions of autonomy have impact on their practices, this section aims to review some studies on teachers' perceptions or beliefs of learner autonomy and how these influence their teaching.

Despite thirty years of study on the issue of learner autonomy in language teaching contexts, very little attention has been given to the views of teachers on this issue (Borg & Al Busaidi 2012a). However, it is vital to explore teachers' perceptions and beliefs because they shape their practices. As Wedello (2009) states, "an understanding of teachers' beliefs needs to be an integral part of initiatives that aim to promote change in what teachers do in the classroom" (cited in Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012b, p.283).

Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012a), conducted a study with 61 English language teachers in Oman by administering them questionnaires and interviews. They consider identifying teachers' beliefs concerning autonomy an important element in designing professional development activities which aim at promoting learner autonomy. In their study they found out that teachers had favorable views of learner autonomy, but

they saw fixed curricula and a lack of enthusiasm and understanding about independence in the classroom among students as the greatest barriers to encouraging such autonomy.

Similarly, Balçıkanlı (2010) did a study with 112 student teachers in Gazi University in Turkey to identify their perceptions of autonomy. To collect data, he administered a questionnaire and conducted interviews. He found out that prospective teachers favored the promotion of learner autonomy in their classrooms, and they believed students should be encouraged to make more decisions on their learning both inside and outside the classroom. More specifically, the students should be involved in the decisions concerning the objectives of the courses, classroom management, homework tasks, and the selection of materials.

Al Asmari (2013) also worked on perceptions of English language student- teachers at Taif University in Saudi Arabia. The aim of this study was to find out student-teachers beliefs as to what extent students should be involved in decisions regarding their own learning. The researcher administered a questionnaire to 60 teachers. He obtained that both students and teachers lacked experience and knowledge on how to be more independent learners, and therefore would benefit greatly from targeted training in this area.

Additionally, Nakata (2011) conducted a study with 80 English language teachers in a high school in Japan to investigate their readiness for promoting learner autonomy. He found out that despite displaying different dimensions of autonomy, the EFL teachers especially those not fully familiar with the classroom and school context, were not fully ready to promote learner autonomy.

2.6.3 Studies on Both Students' and Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy

Due to the fact that it is essential to understand the perceptions of both teachers and students in promoting learner autonomy, this section aims to review some studies on both students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy.

Phan (2012) did a study with both students and English teachers at Vietnamese university. The aim of this study was to explore the understanding of autonomy in a very specific setting, tertiary English education in Vietnam. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews and observations. He found out that in line with other East Asian societies, the participants in the study were highly unfamiliar with the concept of autonomy.

By contrast, Joshi (2011) conducted a mixed-method study (using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, etc.) with 80 graduate students and 6 teachers at a university in Nepal. The aim of this study was to investigate the students' and teachers' beliefs about the role of the teachers and students in learner autonomy. The findings of the study revealed that both teachers and students understood and highly favored the concept of autonomous learning in the classroom. Additionally, they believed that learners has to be responsible for their learning and they took the teachers' role as an important component in learning process.

Finally, in her study, Shahsavari (2014) worked with 150 EFL teachers and 150 learners in Gooyesh Language Institute in Isfahan, Iran to find out the students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy. The results obtained from a questionnaire and interviews showed that the students' and teachers' perceptions of learner

autonomy were positive; they perceive learner autonomy as an efficient way to learn. Despite this aspiration, however, teachers and students were less optimistic about the feasibility of this learning approach.

2.7 Summary

In this chapter literature on autonomy, learner and teacher autonomy, and how they are connected has been illustrated. Moreover, autonomy in language teacher education (i.e. teacher-learner autonomy) and autonomy in the context of language learning and teaching have been focused on. Finally, several studies that examine teachers', student-teachers' and students perceptions or beliefs of learner autonomy in various countries have been presented.

Chapter 3

METHOD

This chapter is organized into ten sections that explain the overall research design and the method of the present study. The first section describes the overall design of the research, and it is followed by the second section which presents the study's context. Later, the third section explains the research questions, and the fourth one introduces the participants of the study. The fifth section focuses on the data collection instruments of the present study and the sixth section explains the data collection procedures. This is followed by the seventh section where the piloting procedure is introduced. In section eighth, the data analysis procedure is explained. Finally, in the last part the limitations and delimitations of the study are presented.

3.1 Overall Research Design

The present study is a case study which employs a descriptive approach to explore students' and teachers' perceptions concerning 'learner autonomy'. It also attempts to interpret the identified perceptions. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), "case studies tend to provide detailed descriptions of specific learners (or sometimes classes) within their learning setting" (p.171). In addition, Dörnyei (2007) does not consider case study as a specific technique but as a method of data collection and organization "so as to maximize our understanding of the unitary character of the social being or object studied" (p.152).

According to Salkind (2006) “ descriptive research describes the characteristics of an existing phenomenon” (p.11). As to Thorne (2008), interpretive description is a research approach whereby the researcher reconciles actual practice goals with an understanding about what is known and unknown based on available empirical data.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), “triangulation involves using multiple research techniques and multiple sources of data in order to explore the issues from all feasible perspectives” (p.368). Mackey and Gass (2005) favor the ‘triangulation’ approach to data analysis, which they find is more credible and transferable within qualitative research. The study uses a triangulation approach, given that the data has been collected through student questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and teacher interviews.

3.2 Context

The study was conducted in 2013-2014 Academic Year Spring Semester with a group of undergraduate students and their instructors in the ELT Department at EMU in North Cyprus.

As indicated in the ELT Student Handbook (2014-2015), the ELT Department was founded in 1995. The ELT Department is responsible for promoting the highest international standards in the training of English language at undergraduate and graduate levels.

The department offers several degrees including, a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Master of Arts (M.A.), and a Ph.D. degree in ELT to students of various nationalities. The ELT Department’s mission is to offer contemporary education, “to maintain quality standards in teaching and research at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, to

keep abreast of the academic developments and professional innovations, and to meet the educational challenges in the globalizing world” (Student Handbook, 2014-2015, p.1).

The main purpose of the BA program is to prepare students with specific knowledge and skills, and equip them for their future teaching. As such, the undergraduate curriculum includes courses that help students become successful prospective teachers. The curriculum includes courses such as language improvement courses, linguistics, approaches to ELT, special teaching methods, teaching language skills, classroom management, testing and evaluation, etc.

3.3 Research Questions

In promoting learner autonomy, it is essential to understand the perceptions of both teachers and students because perceptions influence their actions. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the perceptions of instructors, and undergraduate students regarding learner autonomy in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). More specifically, the study focuses on students’ perceptions of and readiness for learner autonomy. At the same time, it attempts to identify the perceptions of the ELT instructors, and what they think about the promotion of autonomy in their teaching in the ELT Department. In pursuit of these aims, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the ELT students’ perceptions regarding learner autonomy?
2. What are the ELT instructors’ perceptions regarding learner autonomy?
3. What are the differences between students’ perceptions and instructors’ perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department?

4. What are the instructors' suggestions for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department?

3.4 Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 69 first, second, third and fourth year ELT students at Eastern Mediterranean University in North Cyprus. In addition to these students, 11 instructors teaching in the ELT Department participated in this study. All undergraduate students who volunteered to participate and all instructors (full and part time) teaching ELT courses participated in the study. The two groups of participants will be introduced in the following sections.

3.4.1 Students

As stated above, the student participants in this study were the ELT undergraduate students who accepted to participate in the study. The total number of the ELT undergraduate students in the ELT Department was 97 but only 69 students participated in the study (19 first year students, 26 second year students, 17 third year students, and seven fourth year students). 44.9% of the students were male and 55.1% of them were female. Their ages ranged from 17 to 30 years old. 49.3% of the students were from Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), 26.1% from Turkey (TR), 5.8% from England, and the rest were from different countries namely Kazakhstan, Pakistan, USA, Kyrgyz, Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia. The majority of the students (73%) had Turkish as their mother tongue. This was followed by English with 7.2%. Moreover, 5.8% were native speakers of both Turkish and English (bilingual), and the rest spoke other languages such as Kazakh, Russian, Urdu, Kyrgyz, Persian, Russian and Arabic as their mother tongues. Lastly, 27.5% of the participants were first year students, 37.7% were second year, 24.6% were third year and 10.1% were fourth year students.

3.4.2 Instructors

Eleven instructors teaching at the ELT Department participated in this study. Eight of these instructors were full-time instructors of the ELT Department while three of them were part-time. Of the eleven instructors, six of the instructors were females and five of them were males. Their ages ranged between 38 and 63 years old. Their years of teaching experience ranged from 15 to more than 25 years. All of the instructors were non-native speakers of English. Ten of them were Turkish Cypriots and one was Azeri Cypriot.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In the present study three different sources of data were utilized: student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, and teacher interviews. As Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) state, using data from different sources can help researchers “overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single method, single-observer, and single-theory studies” (p.157). Additionally, Patton (1990) argues that using data from various sources can increase the validity and reliability of the studies.

3.5.1 Student Questionnaire

The student questionnaire used in this study contains five sections (Appendix B). The questionnaire was prepared by the researcher by adapting instruments from different sources (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012a; Camilleri, 1999; Chan, 2001; Demirtaş & Sert, 2010; Joshi, 2011; Littlewood, 1999). The questionnaire aims to find out students’ perceptions regarding learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general and in the ELT Department specifically.

There are five main sections in the questionnaire. The first section focuses on information about the students. The purpose of this section is to find out information about the students' gender, age, nationality, mother tongue and class.

Section 2 focuses on students' perceptions about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. In this section there are 28 closed-items in the form of the five point Likert-scale [Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Unsure (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)].

Section 3 is related to desirability of learner autonomy. In other words, items in this section attempts to obtain to what extent students want to be involved in decision making about different aspects and how they perceive themselves as having ability to do things that promote autonomy. There are 21 closed-items in the form of a 5 point Likert scale from Never to Always: Never(1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Always (5).

Section 4 focuses on feasibility of learner autonomy in the ELT Department. More specifically, this section aims at finding out the students' perceptions about learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU. To this aim, they are asked to respond to 21 closed-items in the form of a 5 point Likert scale [Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), Always (5)]. The items in section 4 are the same as the ones in section 3, but in section 4 students are required to state how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) the given statements (i.e. items) are for them in the ELT Department at EMU.

Section 5 includes 4 open-ended questions about the students' perceptions of learner autonomy and their learning experiences in the ELT Department at EMU.

To measure the reliability of the questionnaire, a reliability test was run (SPSS 18) and it was found that the questionnaire had a reliability value of .93.

3.5.2 Teacher Questionnaire

In order to find out the perceptions of ELT instructors about learner autonomy at ELT Department of EMU, the researcher has prepared a teacher questionnaire based on the questionnaires used by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012a) and Camilleri (1999) (Appendix C).

There are four main sections in this questionnaire. Section 1 focuses on the background of the teachers. The purpose of this section is to find out information about each teacher's gender, age, nationality, mother tongue, years of teaching experience, years of experience as an instructor in the ELT Department at EMU, and his or her academic title.

Section 2 focuses on the teachers opinions about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. In this section there are 37 closed-items in the form of five point Likert-scale [Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Unsure (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)].

Section 3 seeks to obtain information about desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in the ELT Department as perceived by the instructors. There are 21 statements in this section. The first twelve statements focus on involving learners in decisions about different aspects such as course objective, materials, pace of the

lesson, etc. The rest of the statements are related to students' abilities to do different autonomous activities like identifying their own strengths, learning cooperatively, etc. This section is made of two sub-parts:

Part A asks the instructors to state how desirable (i.e. ideally) the given statements are while Part B asks them to say how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) they are for the ELT students they currently teach in the ELT Department at EMU.

In Part A, a four-point scale ranging from *undesirable* to *very desirable* [Undesirable (1), Slightly Desirable (2), Quite Desirable (3), Very Desirable (4)] is used, and in Part B again a four point scale from *unfeasible* to *very feasible* [Unfeasible (1), Slightly Feasible (2), Quite Feasible (3), very Feasible (4)] is used.

Finally, section 4 contains two open-ended questions, which gives the teachers an opportunity to comment more specifically on their own teaching in the ELT Department at EMU.

3.5.3 Teacher Interviews

In addition to administering a questionnaire, interviews were conducted with the instructors to investigate their beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general, and their perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU specifically. The interview questions (Appendix D) have been adapted from Borg & Al-Busaidi, (2012a).

In total, there are 10 open-ended questions in the teacher interview. The questions are divided into two main parts. Part 1 includes four open-ended questions focusing on teacher's overall perceptions about learner autonomy. More specifically, in the first

two questions, the instructors are asked to define ‘learner autonomy’ and ‘autonomous learners’ and in the third and fourth questions they are inquired about the contribution of learner autonomy to L2 learning and language teacher education, respectively. Part 2, on the other hand, consists of six open-ended questions about teacher’s perceptions about learner autonomy in the ELT Department. In this part, the instructors are asked whether or not the ELT students are autonomous, what they do to promote autonomy in their classes, how desirable and feasible it is to promote learner autonomy in the ELT Department, what challenges they face in fostering autonomy, and what they suggest for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The data for the present study were collected during the spring semester of the academic year 2013-2014. The process of gathering data included several steps. First, permission letter was collected from the ELT department (Appendix A).

Second, the ELT students were administered a questionnaire (Appendix B), after they signed consent forms. It took about 25 minutes for students to complete the questionnaire.

Third, the ELT instructors were requested to respond to the teacher questionnaire, and in the last stage of data collection, appointments were taken from the teachers and the interviews were conducted with them (Appendix D). Before collecting data from the teachers, they were also asked to sign a consent form. Each interview lasted about 20 minutes. In addition to audio recording the interviews, the researcher took down some notes.

3.7 Piloting

All research studies benefit from piloting data collection instruments. According to Dörnyei (2007), “just like theatre performances, a research study also needs a dress rehearsal to ensure the high quality (in terms of reliability and validity) of the outcomes in the specific context.” (p.75).

Thus, before administering the student questionnaire, the researcher organized a pilot study that included 5 undergraduate students from the first, second, third, and fourth year. The pilot study was conducted to make sure that the items are clearly written, and the questionnaire is useful and applicable. Therefore, the researcher asked the students to read the items carefully, indicate any unclear points, and suggest how to rewrite them. Except for few items, the students did not indicate any problems in understanding the questions. For example, most of them had difficulties in understanding item 24 in Section 2. Accordingly, item 24 was changed from “teachers not only have to teach ‘what’ English is but should also teach ‘how ‘to learn English ’” to “teachers not only have to teach ‘what’ but should also teach ‘how’ of English”. Also, in sections 3 and 4, the researcher replaced ‘speed’ as ‘pace’ and added the synonym of ‘co-operatively’ in brackets.

3.8 Data Analysis

After collecting the data through student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire and teacher interviews, the data were analyzed in several stages. The present study used both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data included the closed-items in the student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire, and they were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0. Through descriptive statistics, the data were analyzed and frequencies were calculated.

Qualitative data, on the other hand, were collected through open ended items in the student and teacher questionnaires and teacher interviews. The qualitative data were analyzed by organizing all raw data under each question, and then identifying the key themes for each question and giving codes. After categorizing and coding, frequencies were calculated.

To analyze the teacher interviews, all the audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher. Then, the researcher followed the above-explained procedure to analyze the interviews. The researcher categorized the raw data by each question (in the interview), and then analyzed all responses to find out main themes or parallel points.

3.9 Limitations and Delimitations

The present study has some limitations. The first limitation is related to the limited number of participants. This limitation was due to the small number of undergraduate students in the ELT Department at Eastern Mediterranean University. To increase the sample size, in addition to undergraduate students, graduate ELT students could have been included in the study. Another limitation was the lack of observations. It is suggested that researchers employ other data collection techniques, including in-class observations, student interviews and materials analysis to obtain a more comprehensive picture of such a complex issue as learner autonomy.

On the other hand, the data collected for this study used a variety of methods, namely student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, and teacher interviews, which can be viewed as the delimitation of the study. Moreover, the findings of this study may

increase the students' and teachers' awareness regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU.

3.10 Summary

To conclude, Chapter 3 has introduced the methodology of the present study .The research design and the context of the study have been described in the first two sections. In the third and fourth sections, the research questions have been listed and the participants of the study have been introduced respectively. Afterwards, the data collection instruments and procedures have been described in sections 3.5 and 3.6. Next, the piloting of the questionnaire have been clarified in section 3.7. Finally, the data analysis procedures and limitations and delimitations of the study have been explained in sections 3.8 and 3.9.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in this chapter. First, the results obtained from the student questionnaire are explained. Then, the results of the teacher questionnaire are shown, and finally, the results obtained from the teacher interviews are presented.

4.1 Students Questionnaire

In order to investigate the ELT students' perceptions regarding learner autonomy, they were administered a questionnaire. The results obtained from the student questionnaire are presented under the four subheading: Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching, Desirability of Learner Autonomy, Learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU, and Students' Perceptions and Experiences of learner autonomy.

4.1.1 Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

In this section, the results concerning how student perceive learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general have been presented. The results were obtained from the second section of the questionnaire, which includes 28 closed (five point Likert-scale) items. The results reveal that the vast majority of the students were positive towards learner autonomy in language learning and teaching because a great number of students strongly agreed or agreed (SA/A) with most of the items in section 2 of the questionnaire. The average mean was found out to be 4.04 out of 5, showing that the students *agreed* with the given statements, which are related to learner autonomy. The results for section 2 are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Students' Perceptions about Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

Items		SA + A %	Unsure %	D + SD %	Mean
1	Students should make decisions and set goals of their learning.	89.7	4.4	5.9	4.22
2	Students should make good use of their free time in studying English.	85.3	10.3	4.4	4.13
3	Students should make notes and summaries of their lessons.	84.1	11.6	4.3	4.17
4	Students should practice English outside the class such as: record their own voice; speak to other people in English.	82.6	13	4.3	4.29
5	Students should use library to improve their English.	45.6	36.8	17.6	3.47
6	Students should note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.	87	10.1	2.9	4.29
7	Besides the contents of the course, students should read extra materials in advance.	76.5	11.8	11.8	3.96
8	When students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.	65.2	20.3	14.5	3.75
9	Students should use the Internet and computers to study and improve English.	89.9	7.2	2.9	4.38
10	Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of language learning.	88.4	7.2	4.3	4.2
11	Students should use self- study materials to learn English.	79.7	20.3	0	4.12
12	Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.	84.1	15.9	0	4.12
13	Students should have a right to be involved in selecting the course content.	66.7	27.5	5.8	3.81
14	Students should be involved in selecting learning tasks and activities.	73.5	19.1	7.4	3.93
15	Students should be responsible for their own learning.	82.4	8.8	8.8	4.13
16	Students should assess their own progress.	68.1	26.1	5.8	3.88
17	Students should plan their time while learning English.	72.5	18.8	8.7	3.94
18	Students should look for better ways to learn English.	89.7	7.4	2.9	4.28
19	Students should exchange ideas with their friends and /or teachers on how to learn English.	84.1	13	2.9	4.23
20	Students (rather than the teacher) should be responsible for evaluating how much they have learnt.	63.8	24.6	11.6	3.65

Items		SA + A %	Unsure %	D + SD %	Mean
21	A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.	48.5	29.4	22.1	3.41
22	Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand language.	85.3	11.8	2.9	4.26
23	Teachers should point out the students' errors.	83.8	10.3	5.9	4.16
24	Teachers not only have to teach 'what' but should also teach 'how' of English	97.1	2.9	0	4.54
25	Teacher should let students find their own mistakes.	78.3	14.5	7.2	4.06
26	Teachers should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals.	84.1	13	2.9	4.14
27	The teacher is an authority figure in the classroom.	75.4	14.5	10.1	4
28	Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves.	52.2	31.9	15.9	3.46

As shown in Table 4.1, almost all the students (97.1%) expressed agreement (SA/A) with item 24 (*Teachers not only have to teach 'what' but should also teach 'how' of English*), which is related to students' perceptions concerning the teacher's role in learner autonomy. This was the item with the highest agreement; the mean was 4.54 for item 24. In addition, high percentages of students agreed (SA/A) with items **9** (*Students should use the Internet and computers to study and improve English*), **18** (*Students should look for better ways to learn English*), **1** (*Students should make decisions and set goals of their learning*), **10** (*Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of language learning*), and **6** (*Students should note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them*), with the percentages of 89.9%, 89.7%, 89.7%, 88.4%, 87.0%, respectively. The mean for item 9 was 4.38, 4.28 for item 18, 4.22 for item 1, 4.20 for item10, and 4.29 for

item 6; these means indicate that the learners were in high agreement with the statements which focuses on the roles of learners in autonomous learning.

Moreover, most of the students also expressed agreement (SA/A) with items 2 (Students should make good use of their free time in studying English), 22 (Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand language), 3 (Students should make notes and summaries of their lessons), 12 (Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better), 19 (Students should exchange ideas with their friends and /or teachers on how to learn English), 26 (Teachers should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals), 11 (Students should use self- study materials to learn English), and 25 (Teacher should let students find their own mistakes). The mean for item 2 was 4.13, 4.26 for item 22, 4.17 for item 3, 4.12 for item 12, 4.23 for item 19, 4.14 for item 26, 4.12 for item 11, and 4.06 for item 25.

On the other hand, comparatively lowest percentages of students agreed with items 16 (Students should assess their own progress), 13 (Students should have a right to be involved in selecting the course content), 8 (When students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.), and 20 (Students (rather than the teacher) should be responsible for evaluating how much they have learnt); however, still more than half of the students expressed agreement.

The results at the same time, reveal that comparatively higher percentages of students disagreed (D/SD) with items 21 (*A lot of learning can be done without a teacher*), 5 (*Students should use library to improve their English*), 28 (*Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves*), and 8

(When students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.): 22.1% disagreed (D/SD) with item 21, 17.6% disagreed (D/SD) with item 5, 15.9% disagreed (D/SD) with item 28, and 14.5% disagreed (D/SD) with item 8. Additionally, item 21 was the item with the lowest mean (3.41).

Furthermore, according to the results, comparatively more students (36.8%, 31.9%, 29.4% 27.5%, and 26.1%) were unsure about items 5 (*Students should use library to improve their English*), 28 (*Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves*), 21 (*A lot of learning can be done without a teacher*) 13 (*Students should have a right to be involved in selecting the course content.*), and 16 (*Students should assess their own progress*).

Overall, the results for section 2 indicate that generally the students were positive towards learner autonomy in language teaching and learning. The means for 28 statements ranged between 4.54 and 3.41.

4.1.2 Desirability of Learner Autonomy

Section 3 in the student questionnaire focuses on desirability of learner autonomy. In the first twelve items students are asked to indicate to what extent they want to be involved in taking decisions about different issues, and in the last nine items they are asked to explain their opinions about their abilities, which help to develop autonomy. The results of this section are shown in Table 4.2 next page.

Table 4.2: Students' Perceptions about Desirability of Learner Autonomy

Items	Questions	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %
I want to be involved in decisions about						
1	The objectives of a course	12	18	32	22	16
2	The materials used	4.5	16.4	31.3	22.4	25.4
3	The kinds of tasks and activities I do	0	13.2	20.6	33.8	32.4
4	The topics discussed	2.9	10.3	29.4	29.4	27.9
5	How learning is assessed	10.4	11.9	28.4	32.8	16.4
6	The teaching methods used	9	20.9	20.9	23.9	25.4
7	Classroom management	13.4	22.4	25.4	20.9	17.9
8	The course content	13.4	14.9	20.9	31.3	19.4
9	The choice of learning tasks	10.4	14.9	25.4	25.4	23.9
10	The time and place of the lesson	13.4	11.9	19.4	16.4	38.8
11	The pace of the lesson	7.5	11.9	23.9	28.4	28.4
12	The homework tasks	1.5	9	22.4	31.3	35.8
I have the ability to :						
13	Identify my own needs	1.5	7.5	14.9	25.4	50.7
14	Identify my own strengths	1.5	5.9	13.2	38.2	41.2
15	Identify my own weaknesses	1.5	7.4	11.8	36.8	42.6
16	Monitor my progress	1.5	8.8	32.4	33.8	23.5
17	Evaluate my own learning	2.9	11.8	26.5	36.8	22.1
18	Learn co-operatively	5.9	7.4	19.1	30.9	36.8
19	Learn independently	3	7.5	19.4	29.9	40.3
20	Assess myself, rather than be tested	6	17.9	25.4	31.3	19.4
21	Find out learning procedures by myself	5.9	10.3	27.9	35.3	20.6

The results reveal that the vast majority of the students want to be involved in decisions about their learning, because most of them selected *sometimes*, *often* or *always* as appropriate answers. For example, all the students want to be involved in decisions about *the kinds of tasks and activities they do*, in different degrees. More specifically, 32.4% of them marked *always*, 33.8% *often*, 20.6% *sometimes*, and only

13.2% marked *rarely* for this item. Similarly, almost all the students indicated that they want to decide about *the homework tasks* (35.8% Always, 31.3% Often, 22.4% Sometimes, 9% Rarely, 1.5% Never). Moreover, most of the students want to be involved in decisions about *the topics discussed* (27.9% Always, 29.4% Often, 29.4% Sometimes, 10.3% Rarely, 2.9% Never), *the materials used* (25.4% Always, 22.4% Often, 31.3% Sometimes, 16.4% Rarely, 4.5% Never), *the pace of the lesson* (28.4% Always, 28.4% Often, 23.9% Sometimes, 11.9% Rarely, 7.5% Never), *the teaching methods used* (25.4% Always, 23.9% Often, 20.9% Sometimes, 20.9% Rarely, 9% Never), *the choice of learning tasks* (23.9% Always, 25.4% Often, 25.4% Sometimes, 14.9% Rarely, 10.4% Never), and *how learning is assessed* (16.4% Always, 32.8% Often, 28.4% Sometimes, 11.9% Rarely, 10.4% Never).

On the other hand, comparatively fewer students demanded to be part of decision making regarding *classroom management* (17.9% Always, 20.9% Often, 25.4% Sometimes, 22.4% Rarely, 13.4% Never), *the course content* (19.4% Always, 31.3% Often, 20.9% Sometimes, 14.9% Rarely, 13.4% Never), and *the course objectives* (16.2% Always, 22.1% Often, 32.4% Sometimes, 17.6% Rarely, 11.8% Never).

Likewise, with regard to their abilities, the majority of the students stated that they have all the abilities given in section 3 (last nine items). These abilities are the ones adopted by autonomous learners generally. More specifically, most of the students thought that they have the ability to: *identify their own needs* (50.7% Always, 25.4% Often, 14.9% Sometimes, 7.5% Rarely, 1.5% Never); *identify their strengths* (41.2% Always, 38.2% Often, 13.2% Sometimes, 5.9% Rarely, 1.5% Never); and *weaknesses* (42.6% Always, 36.8% Often, 11.8% Sometimes, 7.4% Rarely, 1.5% Never); *learn independently* (40.3% Always, 29.9% Often, 19.4% Sometimes, 7.5%

Rarely, 3% Never); *evaluate their own learning* (22.1% Always, 36.8% Often, 26.5% Sometimes, 11.8% Rarely, 2.9% Never); *monitor their progress* (23.5% Always, 33.8% Often, 32.4% Sometimes, 8.8% Rarely, 1.5% Never); *learn cooperatively* (36.8% Always, 30.9% Often, 19.1% Sometimes, 7.4% Rarely, 5.9% Never); and *find out learning procedures by themselves* (20.6% Always, 35.3% Often, 27.9% Sometimes, 10.3% Rarely, 5.9% Never).

Overall, the results in section 3 demonstrate that most of the students thought that they have the desire to be involved in decision making as regards their learning, and they also believed that they have the abilities to engage in various activities, which can be considered as indicators of autonomy.

4.1.3 Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU

The aim of section 4 in the student questionnaire was to find out the students' perceptions about learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU. In other words, this section attempted to obtain how feasible, the students think, it is to foster autonomy in the ELT Department. The results of this section are shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Students' Perceptions about Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU

No.	Items	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %
In our Department, students are involved in decisions about:						
1	The objectives of a course	47.8	10.4	19.4	13.4	9
2	The materials used	41.8	10.4	17.9	14.9	14.9
3	The kinds of tasks and activities I do	31.3	16.4	16.4	25.4	10.4
4	The topics discussed	32.8	10.4	20.9	25.4	10.4
5	How learning is assessed	38.8	14.9	20.9	14.9	10.4
6	The teaching methods used	47.8	14.9	11.9	17.9	7.5

No.	Items	Never %	Rarely %	Sometimes %	Often %	Always %
7	Classroom management	43.3	14.9	14.9	16.4	10.4
8	The course content	44.8	11.9	11.9	17.9	13.4
9	The choice of learning tasks	33.3	21.2	25.8	9.1	10.6
10	The time and place of the lesson	46.3	11.9	14.9	13.4	13.4
11	The pace of the lesson	38.8	9	25.4	16.4	10.4
12	The homework tasks	35.8	14.9	20.9	13.4	14.9
In our Department, students have the ability to :						
13	Identify my own needs	0	18.2	31.8	31.8	18.2
14	Identify my own strengths	0	16.7	37.9	28.8	16.7
15	Identify my own weaknesses	0	18.5	36.9	30.8	13.8
16	Monitor my progress	3	27.3	31.8	21.2	16.7
17	Evaluate my own learning	9.2	23.1	23.1	29.2	15.4
18	Learn co-operatively	4.5	11.9	25.4	31.3	26.9
19	Learn independently	9.1	16.7	27.3	33.3	13.6
20	Assess myself, rather than be tested	16.7	24.2	24.2	21.2	13.6
21	Find out learning procedures by myself	12.1	21.2	31.8	18.2	16.7

Contrary to the results of section 3, the results in section 4 (given in Table 4.3) show that students believed that they are not involved in decision making very often because the majority of the students marked *Never* or *Rarely* as appropriate answers in this part. For instance, almost half of the students think that they are *never* involved in decisions about *course objectives* (47.8% Never, 10.4% Rarely, 19.4% Sometimes, 13.4% Often, 9% Always), and *the teaching methods used* (47.8% Never, 14.9% Rarely, 11.9% Sometimes, 17.9% Often, 7.5% Always).

Furthermore, most of the students reported that they are involved in decisions but not very frequently; in other words, their involvement in decision taking is limited. To exemplify, according to the majority of the students, the department *never* or *rarely* involves them in decisions about *the time and place of the lesson* (46.3% Never,

11.9% Rarely, 14.9% Sometimes, 13.4% Often, 13.4% Always); *the course content* (44.8% Never, 11.9% Rarely, 11.9% Sometimes, 17.9% Often, 13.4% Always); *classroom management* (43.3% Never, 14.9% Rarely, 14.9% Sometimes, 16.4% Often, 10.4% Always); and *the materials used* (41.8% Never, 10.4% Rarely, 17.9% Sometimes, 14.9% Often, 14.9% Always). However, the students stated that they are involved comparatively a bit more in decisions about *the kinds of tasks and activities they do* (31.3% Never, 16.4% Rarely, 16.4% Sometimes, 25.4% Often, 10.4% Always), *the topics discussed* (32.8% Never, 10.4% Rarely, 20.9% Sometimes, 25.4% Often, 10.4% Always), and *the choice of learning tasks* (33.3% Never, 21.2% Rarely, 25.8% Sometimes, 9.1% Often, 10.6% Always).

Contrary to the above- given results, the majority of the students believed that the students in the ELT Department at EMU possess the abilities which help to develop autonomy. As shown in Table 4.3, the majority of the students claimed that the ELT students at EMU have the ability to: *learn co- operatively* (26.9% Always, 31.3% Often, 25.4% Sometimes, 11.9% Rarely, 4.5% Never); *identify their own needs* (18.2% Always, 31.8% Often, 31.8% Sometimes, 18.2% Rarely); *identify their own strengths* (16.7% Always, 28.8% Often, 37.9% Sometimes, 16.7% Rarely); and *weaknesses* (13.8% Always, 30.8% Often, 36.9% Sometimes, 18.5% Rarely); *finding out learning procedures by themselves* (16.7% Always, 18.2% Often, 31.8% Sometimes, 21.2% Rarely, 12.1% Never); and *learn independently* (13.6% Always, 33.3% Often, 27.3% Sometimes, 16.7% Rarely, 9.1% Never). However, the results also show that the students thought that the ELT students have comparatively a bit less ability in *assessing themselves, rather than be tested* (40.9% Never/Rarely); *finding out learning procedures by themselves* (33.3% Never/Rarely); *evaluating*

their own learning (32.3% Never/Rarely); and *monitoring their progress* (30.3% Never/Rarely).

In general, the results (in section 4) concerning the feasibility of learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU show that while the majority of the students believed that their (ELT students) involvement in decisions in the Department is limited (not frequent enough), they at the same time claimed that the ELT students have the necessary abilities to learn autonomously.

4.1.4 Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Learner Autonomy

Section 5 of the student questionnaire comprises four open-ended questions, which give the students an opportunity to express their perceptions of learner autonomy in detail and comment more specifically on their own learning experience in the ELT Department at EMU.

In response to Question 1 (“What is learner autonomy?”), 30.4% of the students stated that they don’t know what it is, and 13.03% of them left it unanswered. On the other hand, 27.5 of the students (especially 3rd and 4th year students), defined it as ‘learning independently’, ‘learning by yourself’, ‘learning without a teacher’, ‘taking responsibility for your own learning’ and ‘doing self-evaluation’. For example, S42 answered this question by stating “the person takes control of his or her own learning”. Similarly, S32 stated that autonomy means “students take responsibility for their own learning”.

Regarding the second question (“Are you an autonomous learner? Please explain”), 33.3% of the students stated that they don’t know what it is, and 20.2% of them left it unanswered. Also, 14.4% of them said that they need their teacher to monitor them

because they think they cannot learn new things without the help of a teacher. On the other hand, 31.9% of the students claimed that they are autonomous learners and they gave different reasons for their answers. Some of them said that no one can force them, they study because they want to do so. They stated that they can process their own learning without the help of their teachers. Also, they thought that by studying at home and searching for information from the Internet sources or books they can learn more. For instance, S13 said that “when I don’t understand the topic in the classroom, I like to search it from the Internet or books by myself”. In addition, S16’s response was: “I am an autonomous learner because I am participating in classroom activities”.

Upon Question 3 (“Which methods, ways, or techniques do you use when you are learning? Please explain”), students come up with different ways of learning. For instance, 25% of them reported that they use underlining and note-taking techniques for better learning, and 19.7% of them stated that they prefer visual aids because they can learn more effectively by watching. Additionally, 18.8% of the students considered memorization, especially before the exam, repeating the new things, and summarizing the chapters as important techniques in learning. Meanwhile, 13.0% of them mentioned that they can learn a lot through group work activities and from the Internet sources. Also, 8.6% of the students stated that they learn best through practicing four skills. However, 5.7% of them said they prefer to use only writing technique because in this way they can keep everything in their mind.

Concerning the fourth question (“Do the instructors in the ELT Department give you opportunities to take control of your own learning? Please explain.”), most of the students did not express positive views. To exemplify, 37.6 % of the students

claimed that the ELT program is not flexible, and their classes are usually teacher-centered. However, some of the students 28.8% stated that their instructors give them opportunity to take control of their own learning by giving them options in some classroom projects, tasks, presentations and discussion topics. For example, S43 said that “they give us a list of topics and we are free to choose our own topic”. Also, S15 stated “they give us opportunity to take control of our learning by giving us different classroom activities and discussion”.

4.2 Teacher Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed to investigate the teachers’ perceptions about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general, and their opinions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU. As in the student questionnaire, the results obtained from the teacher questionnaire are given under four subheadings: Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching, Desirability of Learner Autonomy, Feasibility of Learner Autonomy, Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU.

4.2.1 Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

In this section, the results as regards the instructors’ perceptions of learner autonomy in language learning and teaching are presented. The results come from the second section of the teacher questionnaire, which contains 37 items. Table 4.4 shows the results of section 2.

Table 4.4: Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

Items		SA + A (N)	Unsure(N)	D + SD (N)	Mean
1	Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.	6	4	1	3.64
2	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.	8	3	0	3.91
3	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.	10	1	0	3.91
4	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.	11	0	0	4.27
5	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.	8	2	1	3.82
6	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.	6	4	1	3.45
7	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.	10	1	0	4
8	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.	2	4	5	2.64
9	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.	2	2	7	2.45
10	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults	9	1	1	3.82
11	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.	9	2	0	4.09
12	Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.	7	4	0	3.82
13	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.	7	4	0	3.82
14	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.	10	1	0	3.91
15	Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centered classrooms.	5	3	3	3.18
16	Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.	9	1	1	3.91
17	Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.	5	2	4	3.09

Items		SA + A (N)	Unsure(N)	D + SD (N)	Mean
18	Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.	2	7	2	3.09
19	Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.	10	1	0	4
20	Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.	0	2	9	1.82
21	Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access center.	7	4	0	3.64
22	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.	3	7	1	3.18
23	Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.	0	5	6	2.36
24	Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.	1	3	7	2.45
25	Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.	10	1	0	3.91
26	Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.	1	4	6	2.45
27	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.	8	2	1	3.64
28	Learner-centered classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.	7	4	0	3.64
29	Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.	11	0	0	4.36
30	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.	7	4	0	3.73
31	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.	9	2	0	3.82
32	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.	10	1	0	4.36
33	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.	8	3	0	4
34	The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.	5	5	1	3.45
35	The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.	10	1	0	4.18

Items		SA + A (N)	Unsure(N)	D + SD (N)	Mean
36	Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.	11	0	0	4.27
37	To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.	10	1	0	4.36

The results show that the ELT instructors are aware of the concept of learner autonomy, and they have positive attitudes toward fostering learner autonomy in language learning and teaching, because a great number of them strongly agreed or agreed (SA/A) with most of the items in section 2 of the questionnaire.

The results in Table 4.4 reveal that all the instructors expressed agreement (SA/A) with items 4, 29 and 36. They all believed that *autonomy means learners can make choices about how they learn, learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy, and learner autonomy has a positive effect on success of a language learner*. In other word, all of them emphasized the importance of learning to learn or deciding about how to learn, and the positive impact of learner autonomy on successful language learners.

Moreover, almost all the instructors (10 out 11) strongly agreed or agreed with items 3,7, 14, 19, 25, 32, 35 and 37. They thought that learners can develop autonomy by working alone as well as by working cooperatively with each other in groups. Also, they focused on the importance of involving students in decision making about what to learn and giving them choices in the kinds of activities they do. In addition, the instructors (10) believed that the teacher has an important role to play in supporting

learner autonomy, but at the same time they indicated that students should develop the ability to monitor their own learning and do self- evaluation in order to be autonomous.

Similarly, most of the instructors expressed agreement (SA/A) with items 10 (It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults), 11 (Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence), 16 (Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other), 31 (Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy) (9 out of 11instructors) and items 2 (Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy), 5 (Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners), 27 (Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials) and 33 (Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated) (8 out of 11 instructors).

On the other hand, the majority of the instructors disagreed or strongly disagreed (D/SD) with the idea that it is harder to promote autonomy with proficient language learners (item 9) or easier to promote it with beginning language learners (item 26).

Regarding the role of the teacher, the instructors generally think that the teacher has an important role. For instance, 5 of them disagreed with item 8 (*Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher*) and 4 of them were not sure. Also, seven instructors did not agree that *learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher* (item 24). In item 35, almost all the instructors

emphasized that *the teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy*.

In general, the results in section 2 show that the instructors are aware of the concept of learner autonomy and they have positive attitudes toward developing it in language learning.

4.2.2 Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

In the teacher questionnaire, section 3 aims to find out desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in the ELT Department, as perceived by the instructors. To this aim, the instructors are given two sets of statements and for each statement they are asked to indicate how desirable (i.e. ideally) they feel it is and then how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) they think it is for the students they currently teach in the ELT Department. The first 12 statements focus on decisions students might be involved in, and the following statements on the abilities they might have.

The results of section 3 are presented under two separate sub-headings: Desirability of Learner Autonomy, and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy.

4.2.2.1 Desirability of Learner Autonomy

The results concerning desirability of learner autonomy are given in Table 4.5 next page.

Table 4.5: Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Desirability of Learner Autonomy

Items	Statement	Undesirable	Slightly Desirable	Quite Desirable	Very Desirable
Learners are involved in decisions about :					
1	The objectives of a course	0	3	7	1
2	The materials used	0	2	7	2
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they do	0	1	5	5
4	The topics discussed	0	0	6	5
5	How learning is assessed	0	2	5	4
6	The teaching methods used	0	4	6	1
7	Classroom management	1	5	4	1
8	The course content	0	4	5	2
9	The choice of learning tasks	0	2	4	5
10	The time and place of the lesson	2	3	2	4
11	The pace of the lesson	0	2	4	5
12	The homework tasks	0	1	5	5
Learners have the ability to :					
13	Identify their own needs	0	1	6	4
14	Identify their own strengths	0	1	4	6
15	Identify their own weaknesses	0	1	4	6
16	Monitor their progress	0	1	4	6
17	Evaluate their own learning	0	2	4	5
18	Learn co-operatively	0	1	3	7
19	Learn independently	0	0	3	8
20	Assess themselves rather than be tested	0	4	4	3
21	Find out learning procedures by themselves	0	3	4	4

The results show that the vast majority of the instructors wanted students to be involved in decision taking, because most of them marked *Quite Desirable* or *Very Desirable* as appropriate responses. For example, all the instructors found involving students in decisions about *the topic discussed* quite desirable or very desirable. Furthermore, ten instructors thought that involving students in decisions about *the kinds of tasks and activities they do* and *the homework tasks* is quite desirable or very

desirable. Most of the instructors (9 out of 11) also believed that it is quite desirable or very desirable to involve students in decisions about *the materials used, how learning is assessed, the choice of learning tasks, and the pace of the lesson*.

However, comparatively fewer teachers argued that students should be part of decision making as regards *the teaching methods used* (7 out of 11), *the course content* (7 out of 11), and *the time and place of the lesson* (6 out of 11). Regarding the decisions about *classroom management*, only five teachers marked quite desirable or very desirable; six of them felt it is slightly desirable or not desirable to involve students in such decisions.

Similarly, concerning students' abilities, the majority of the instructors expressed that ideally the students should have all the listed abilities. As shown in Table 4.5, 7-11 teachers felt it is quite desirable or very desirable that students have the abilities to: *learn independently* (11 instructors); *identify their own needs, strengths and weaknesses* (10 instructors); *learn co-operatively* (10 instructors); *evaluate their own learning* (9 instructors); *find out learning procedures by themselves* (8 instructors).

Overall, the results indicate that most of the instructors feel it is quite or very desirable to involve students in decision making and that the students should ideally have the listed abilities.

4.2.2.2 Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

The results as regards the feasibility of learner autonomy in the ELT Department as perceived by the instructors are shown in Table 4.6 next page.

According to the results in Table 4.6, the instructors' ideas showed differences depending on the type of decision they want students to be involved in. For instance, of the 11 instructors, eight instructors found it very feasible or quite feasible to involve students in decision about *the topics discussed* while three of them thought that it is slightly feasible or not feasible at all.

Table 4.6: Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

Items	Statement	Unfeasible	Slightly Feasible	Quite Feasible	Very Feasible
Learners are involved in decisions about :					
1	The objectives of a course	2	6	2	1
2	The materials used	0	6	5	0
3	The kinds of tasks and activities they do	1	5	3	2
4	The topics discussed	1	2	5	3
5	How learning is assessed	3	2	5	1
6	The teaching methods used	2	6	3	0
7	Classroom management	2	7	1	1
8	The course content	3	4	3	1
9	The choice of learning tasks	2	3	5	1
10	The time and place of the lesson	5	3	1	2
11	The pace of the lesson	0	4	5	2
12	The homework tasks	0	4	4	3
Learners have the ability to :					
13	Identify their own needs	2	3	5	1
14	Identify their own strengths	0	4	6	1
15	Identify their own weaknesses	0	4	5	2
16	Monitor their progress	1	4	5	1
17	Evaluate their own learning	1	4	5	1
18	Learn co-operatively	0	2	6	3
19	Learn independently	0	2	5	4
20	Assess themselves rather than be tested	1	7	2	1
21	Find out learning procedures by themselves	0	5	5	1

Moreover, seven (out of 11) instructors marked quite feasible or very feasible for involving students in decisions about *the pace of the lesson* and *the homework tasks*, but four instructors marked slightly feasible. Additionally, as to decisions about *the choice of learning tasks* and *how learning is assessed* six instructors found it quite feasible or very feasible whereas five of them found it slightly feasible or unfeasible.

On the other hand, for the rest of the decisions, more than half of the instructors marked slightly feasible or unfeasible. For example, nine instructors didn't find it feasible (Slightly Feasible or Unfeasible) to involve students in decisions about *classroom management*; only two instructors thought it is feasible (Quite Feasible or Very Feasible) to do so. Similarly, 8 instructors didn't find it feasible (Slightly Feasible or Unfeasible) to involve students in decisions about *the teaching methods used*, and *the time and place of the lesson*; only three instructors thought it is feasible (Quite Feasible or Very Feasible) to do so.

With respect to students' abilities, teachers had varying opinions. To exemplify, while nine instructors felt it is realistically achievable for the ELT students to *learn cooperatively* and *independently*, two instructors found it slightly feasible. Moreover, more than half of the instructors (six or seven instructors) stated that the ELT students have the ability (Quite Feasible or Very Feasible) to *identify their strengths, weaknesses and needs, evaluate their own learning, and find out learning procedures by themselves*. However, only three instructors believed that their students can *assess themselves rather than be tested*, seven of them marked slightly feasible and one marked unfeasible for this statement.

4.2.3 Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU

This section comprises two open-ended questions, which ask the teachers to express their opinions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department and comment more specifically on their own teaching in terms of learner autonomy.

As to the first open-ended question (“Are your students in the ELT Department autonomous? Please explain.”), nine instructors stated that some of them are autonomous, some of them are not, while two instructors said that the ELT students are not autonomous in general. Teachers in the ELT Department had different opinions regarding this issue. Majority of them believed that students’ educational background has an impact on how they study and they are not ready to take responsibility of their own learning. In other words, they thought that the students want to be spoon-feed. In their views, students need guidance. For instance, T1 said that “students are not aware of their strengths and weaknesses”. Also, some of the instructors believed that the current syllabus doesn’t promote autonomy. For example, T6 stated that “current syllabus does not let students become autonomous”. In addition, T4 cited enthusiasm and willingness as cardinal elements in fostering autonomy.

Responding to the second question (“To what extent do you promote learner autonomy in your teaching? If you promote learner autonomy, how do you do this? If you don’t promote autonomy, please explain why developing learner autonomy is not an issue you face on in your teaching.”), nine of the 11 teachers said that they try to promote autonomy whereas two of them expressed that they don’t do much to promote autonomy. When asked how they promote autonomy, the majority of the teachers (seven) said that they give students options in projects, tasks and get them

to work in groups inside and outside the classroom. For instance, T1 said “through some in or out of class tasks, I get them to develop some study skills”. They also mentioned that they show them various strategies and teach them how to learn. For example, T3 uttered: “I try to focus on strategy training, I attempt to teach them how to learn”. In addition, T1 and T6 mentioned that they get them to develop some study skills and they try to raise their language awareness. Furthermore, T4 and T11 believed that they are in the age of technology, so students must be autonomous for achieving their goals. Also, T7 expressed that by identifying students’ preferences and encouraging them to make their own choices teachers can promote autonomy in their classrooms. On the other hand, T1 and T10 stated that they don’t involve students in decision-making as regards course objectives and content material.

4.3 Teacher Interviews

Teacher interviews were conducted to find out the instructors’ beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general, and their perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU, specifically. The interviews helped to reach in-depth data about teachers’ overall beliefs about learner autonomy in both language teaching and learning, and language teacher education, as well as their perceptions and practices of learner autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU. Only the eight full-time instructors in the ELT Department participated in the interviews. The results are presented according to the two main parts in the interviews.

4.3.1 Teachers’ Overall Perceptions about Learner Autonomy

In this section, the instructors’ responses to the four question in Part 1 of the interview are presented.

In response to the first question (“How do you define learner autonomy?”), teachers defined autonomy in different ways. For example, four instructors focused on the idea of being the decision-maker in your learning, and the other three emphasized having self-motivation to work inside and outside of the classroom. Additionally, two instructors defined autonomy as being able to choose what to learn” and the other two defined it as taking responsibility for their own learning. For example, T8 stated that “autonomy is a process that starts with zero autonomy and finishes with complete autonomy”. Also, T2 pointed out that “selecting and using the materials for enlarging his or her communicative competency”.

Regarding the second question, (“What are the characteristics of autonomous language learners?”), three of the instructors argued that autonomous language learners can take certain decisions regarding what to learn, how to learn and how to use it. According to them, they are more motivated and they can learn more effectively. Three other instructors defined autonomous learners as learners who are aware of what their learning styles are and who can choose the right strategies for their learning. In addition, T3 and T6 mentioned that autonomous learners are ready to cooperate, and T5 stated that “guiding them is enough to get them to learn and they do not need to be spoon-fed by the teachers”. Also, T8 pointed out that “they must be problem solvers, they must be people who try to locate the problems, to work on and to solve them on their own”.

When asked “To what extent does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?”, almost all of the instructors stated that L2 learning depends on learner autonomy. For example, T1 and T8 indicated that without autonomy language learners cannot learn a foreign language. According to T5 and T8, on the other hand, learning to learn is

very important and students should understand that they cannot be together with their teacher for all life. In addition, T4 and T6 said that learners who are autonomous will benefit a lot when they try to learn a language. T5 pointed out that “learning is a continuous process and it is not something you learn something and it’s over; learning continuous until we die”. Finally, T3 argued that being autonomous helps a lot but, some teacher guidance is needed.

Responding to the fourth question (“To what extent does learner autonomy contribute to language teacher education?”), all of the instructors agreed that learner autonomy is closely related to language teacher education. Three of them stated that a teacher cannot be expected to promote autonomy in his or her class if this person himself or herself is not autonomous. Also, other three instructors put forward that the prospective teachers should know what learner autonomy is, and they should learn how to create a learner-centered environment in which learner autonomy can be promoted. According to T5 and T6, for example, there is a very close relationship between teacher autonomy and student autonomy, and therefore it is very important to train autonomous teachers in teacher education programs. Additionally, T5 and T8 pointed out that they should not teach their students to be autonomous only; from the very first day they should teach them how to teach their students to be autonomous.

4.3.2 Teacher’s Perceptions about Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department

In this section the instructors’ answers to the six questions in part 2 are given.

To respond to the first question (“To what extent do you think your students in the ELT Department are autonomous? Please explain your answer by giving specific examples”), while three instructors stated that most of the students are not autonomous in the ELT Department, four other instructors argued that they cannot

say that all of them are autonomous or they have the same level of autonomy. The instructors explained that there are certain reasons for this, and five of them pointed out that students are not coming from such an educational background which promotes autonomy: most of the students are from Cyprus, Turkey and Middle East countries, and they come from a traditional educational background where there is so much dependence on the teacher. For instance, T5 and T8 mentioned that in Turkish education system they don't promote autonomy, and added that in Turkish families they enjoy spoon-feeding children. T2 and T6 also believed that their students are not autonomous and they understand this from the questions they ask to them; the students ask answer-oriented questions. However, some instructors (T5, T6 and T8) added that when they compare first year students and last year students, they think they are trying to foster autonomy in their courses. Furthermore, T5 and T8 stated that learner autonomy also depends on the subject matter taught or the focus of the lesson. For example, T5 said "for theoretical part learner autonomy is very limited, but for practical part the share of learner autonomy is very significant".

As to Question 2 ("To what extent do you think you promote learner autonomy in your classes in the ELT Department? If you promote learner autonomy in your classes, please explain how you do this. If you don't promote learner autonomy in your classes, please explain your reason(s)."), all of the instructors said that they try to promote learner autonomy as much as they can. T3 and T5, for instance, mentioned that it depends on the nature of the class and course requirements. More specifically, T3 stated "I just promote learner autonomy in my 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year courses especially in methodology courses". Moreover, four of the instructors pointed out that they try to give students options regarding presentation topics, so they have a chance to decide on their presentation topics. For example, T7 stated "I

give them choices and they have freedom to organize it in the way they like”. Also, T1 and T2 mentioned that they give them some tasks and ask them to check specific concepts and information and come up with a written format, which means they have to do research according to the parameters of research design and come up with a piece of written material on their own. In addition, to promote autonomy T3 and T4 stated that they encourage students to participate in class discussions. T5’ response was: “I try to promote it in my classes but, if you ask me to what extent, I think I still need to do a lot”. She added “we can think of involving students in decision-making, for example, regarding the course content, selecting materials, even the course aims and objectives”.

Regarding the third question (“How desirable (i.e. ideally) is it to promote learner autonomy in the ELT department?”), most of the instructors thought that it is quite desirable. Five of them stated that the prospective teachers who study in the ELT Department should be informed about this notion very well, they must learn how to learn, and they should know how to promote learner autonomy when they become teachers after their graduation. For example, T4 said “it qualifies the students as prospective language teachers and at least our student teachers are autonomous as learners”. Also, T8 claimed that “our prospective student teachers should be taught how to be autonomous themselves and how to educate their students in future”. He added “the good teacher is the one who helps the students to solve the problems”.

To respond to Question four (“How feasible (i.e. Realistically achievable) is it to promote learner autonomy in the ELT Department?”), four instructors stated that it depends on the nature of the course and to what degree the teacher himself or herself

is autonomous. For instance, T1 mentioned that “in some cases it is really very feasible but in other cases it is not”. She explained:

When it comes to asking students about the content of the course I am not sure, it may not be feasible because the students themselves may not know what they lack and what they need, but we may get the opinions of our learners regarding the nature of tasks or even classroom management, or we can ask them their opinions and give them some options in project for selecting their interesting subject.

On the other hand, T2 and T3 stated that it is very difficult because they have a fix curriculum designed by HEC (Higher Education Council) and they have to follow that. According to them the instructors of the Department may not be that autonomous to make serious changes and promote learner autonomy. However, T4 thought that it can be achievable. She explained that “although some of my colleagues may complain about the standard teaching program required by HEC, I disagree with them because, I believe that what matters is what you do with your materials and your learners in the class, and the teacher can do a lot”.

Regarding the fifth question (“Do you face any challenges in helping your students become more autonomous? Please explain”), five instructors argue that some students are not ready for it, they don’t like it, and they don’t want to take any responsibility for their own learning. According to them, this is a little bit cultural, because they have students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds, and some students from some cultures expect to be spoon-fed by their teachers. T3 gave an example to support this idea: “they even ask you to complete the task for them”. In addition, T4 stated “old habits die hard; the habits of being too much dependent on

the teacher or more successful classmates”. T1 and T3, on the other hand, perceived the curriculum as the biggest challenge. According to T1 “there are so many courses per semester and students may not have time to practice learner autonomy”.

Responding to the last question (“What are your suggestions for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department? What should the instructors do? What should the students do? What should the administration do?”). Three instructors stated that teachers can design their materials, plan and organize their lessons, and prepare their course outlines to foster autonomy. Also, three of them indicated that there should be a consensus among all the instructors within the Department to promote learner autonomy. They believed that cooperation among colleagues, exchanging their experiences can help them do this. Moreover, T1 and T2 said that they have to redesign the curriculum. T5, on the other hand, suggested a self-access center in the Department where students can go and do some self-study. She also mentioned that they can involve students more in the decision-making process like decisions regarding selecting materials. In addition, she stated that they can integrate technology more in their courses by giving students assignments in which they need to search the Internet; so “we push them for self-study”. For example, T6 stated “maybe we can change our assessment. Rather than having those classical exam types maybe we can rely more in project work”.

In response to the second part of the above question (What should the students do ?), five instructors stated that students may not be very familiar with this concept, maybe the instructors can inform them from the first year, about what learner autonomy is, how useful it is for language learning and how important it is for them as future teachers. Also, they should teach them how to learn. In addition, three of

them said that students should be given freedom in some cases to choose the topic, to develop some materials, to participate in some important steps of learning process. According to them, students should feel that they are part of the whole process.

Lastly, as regards what the administration should do, the instructors agreed that the administration should give the teachers a chance to exchange their experiences with others in order to promote learner autonomy. For example, T7 thought that administration should encourage both teachers and students to organize their teaching and learning in such a way that more autonomy is involved.

4.4 Summary

To sum up, this chapter has presented the results obtained from student and teacher questionnaires, as well as teacher interviews. First section has presented the results of the student questionnaire, the second section has given the results obtained from the teacher questionnaire, and the last section has explained the results obtained from teacher interviews. In the next chapter, the results will be discussed in relation to the relevant literature.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter is organized into three sections. In the first section the major findings of the study are discussed. In the second section the study's conclusion is given, and in the last section pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research are explained.

5.1 Discussion of Results

In this section, the results will be discussed by answering the research questions.

5.1.1 Research Question 1: What are the ELT students' perceptions regarding learner autonomy?

The results obtained from the student questionnaire reveal that the vast majority of the students in the ELT department were positive towards learner autonomy in language learning and teaching.

Although a large number of students were positive towards learner autonomy, it was surprising to find out that they still expressed feelings of dependence on the teacher as a main source in the classroom. To exemplify, item 21 (*A lot of learning can be done without a teacher*) in section 2 had the lowest mean (3.41). Such findings are reinforced by other studies, such as Chan (2001), where the researcher found that “the teacher was seen as the resource person, the instructor and the facilitator” for students in the classroom (p.510). Similarly, in another study, Joshi (2011) found out that the students defined the role of the teacher “as an important component of their

learning” (p.24). Additionally, Balçıkanlı (2010) concluded that students defined the role of the teacher as the “authority rather than the facilitator” (p.99).

In the present study, students were also asked about the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy in the ELT Department. It was found out that most of the students had the desire to be involved in decision making process concerning their learning. More specifically, they wanted to be involved in decisions about the kinds of tasks and activities they do, the homework tasks, the topic discussed, the material used, the teaching method used, the choice of learning tasks, and how learning is assessed. Also, they wanted to take part in decisions regarding the speed of the lesson. While articulating these aspirations, the majority of the students believed that their involvement in decisions in the Department is limited. In other words, the students felt that the Department did not invite them frequently enough to be involved in decisions about their course objectives, the teaching methods used, the content of the course, and classroom management, nor did the Department give them the chance to decide the time and place of their lessons. Similarly, in a study by Balçıkanlı (2008), it was obtained that in order to foster autonomy in the language classroom, it is very important to involve students in decision making regarding their learning. In addition, in another study by Balçıkanlı (2010), it was found out that prospective teachers favored the promotion of learner autonomy in their classrooms, and they believed students should be encouraged to make more decisions on their learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Concerning the ability to learn independently, a very high percentage of the students had positive views as regards this issue. They felt it is ideal and at the same time realistically achievable for them to learn independently in the ELT Department.

According to them the ELT students have the necessary abilities to learn cooperatively, recognize their own needs, identify their own strengths and weaknesses, learn independently, and finding out learning procedures by themselves. Chan (2001), likewise, argued that learners “should be actively involved in the setting of goals, defining content, and working out evaluation mechanism for assessing achievement and progress” (p.504). Cotterall (1995) also stated that, autonomous learners can take responsibility in identifying their own goals, planning practice opportunities, or evaluating their progress.

According to the students’ responses, 33.3% of the students, who do not know what ‘learner autonomy’ is, are first year students. By their third and fourth years, however, 46.3% of the students are able to define this concept. Again, despite their familiarity with this idea, 14.4% of these students continued to have dependence on their teacher as an authority figure. Similarly, in a study by Chan (2001), it was found out that while the students demonstrated tremendous capacity to be autonomous learners, they still expressed heavy dependence on their teachers to guide them towards such autonomy. Additionally, Koçak (2003) in his study identified that while students used metacognitive strategies such as self-monitoring and self-evaluation, they still considered the teacher as more responsible for their learning than themselves.

The researcher also found out that most of the students prefer to learn through pair work activities rather than individual work. With regard to the importance of group work activities, Dang (2012) claimed that group work activities help students become more autonomous learners. however, generally the vast majority of students felt that the ELT Department did not give them the opportunity to take control of

their own learning. They thought that because of the current syllabus in the ELT Department, their classes are always teacher-centered and the instructors only give them opportunities to take control of their learning in a limited number of projects and tasks.

5.1.2 Research Question 2: What are the ELT instructors' perceptions regarding learner autonomy?

The results obtained from the teacher questionnaire reveal that the ELT instructors are aware of the concept of learner autonomy, and they have positive attitudes toward fostering learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. The instructors made clear that by encouraging learners to be involved in making decisions about what they learn and in choosing different kinds of activities and projects, they can promote learner autonomy in their lessons. Most of the instructors had similar definitions of 'learner autonomy' that essentially meant being a decision-maker in one's own learning and having the self-motivation to work inside and outside the classroom. Interestingly, the instructors also highlighted a close relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy. They suggested that training autonomous student teachers will let them promote autonomy in their own classes in future. Similarly, in a study by Balçıkanlı, (2010), it was pointed out that the teachers needed to experience such autonomous learning in their own training as teachers in order to promote it among their students. In addition, according to Çakır and Balçıkanlı (2012), the earlier language teachers are exposed to the concepts of learner autonomy, the more readily they may be able to incorporate this approach in their future teaching.

In general, The ELT instructors have positive attitudes toward developing learner autonomy in language learning. Furthermore, the instructors pointed out that teachers

play an important role in teaching students ‘how to learn’ as a key component of fostering learner autonomy. Most of them indicated that learner autonomy cannot be developed without the help and guidance of the teacher. The important role of the teacher in promoting learner autonomy was also emphasized by Al Asmari (2013), who argued that the teacher plays a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy by creating a learning environment that is conducive to this approach.

Concerning the instructors’ perceptions regarding the desirability of learner autonomy, generally most of the ELT instructors feel it is *quite* or *very desirable* to involve students in decision making and that the students should ideally have the listed abilities. Most of the instructors expressed positive views about involving students in decisions about the topic discussed, the kinds of tasks and activities they do, homework tasks, the materials used, and how language is assessed. Their views are supported by what the literature says on the issue. For instance, Balçıkanlı (2010) conducted a study and found out that students tremendously benefited from taking on greater decision-making authority in the classroom, and also the ELT instructors in the study felt that learners have the ability to recognize their own needs, weaknesses and strengths. They believed that, prospective teachers must learn how to learn and how to promote learner autonomy. Development of autonomy in language teacher education programs has also been recommended in some other studies (Balçıkanlı, 2009; Çakır & Balçıkanlı, 2012; Hacker & Barkhuizen 2008; Riley, 1997; Shahsavari 2014; Smith & Erdoğan 2008, and Smith 2001).

While having favorable views about the desirability of learner autonomy, instructors’ perceptions about the feasibility of it in the ELT Department at EMU were less positive. More specifically, it was obtained that the instructors’ ideas depend on the

type of decisions they want students to be involved in. The instructors indicated that the ELT curriculum, which was proposed by HEC does not allow the instructors to be flexible and to foster autonomy among their students. Similarly, in the study by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012a), it was found out that teachers had favorable views of learner autonomy, but they saw fixed curricula and a lack of enthusiasm and understanding about independence in the classroom among students as the greatest barriers to encouraging such autonomy.

Moreover, most of the instructors felt that involving the students in decisions about classroom management, the teaching methods used and the time and place of the lesson is *slightly feasible* or *unfeasible*. However, they stated that they want students to be involved in decisions about the topics discussed, the pace of the lesson, the homework tasks, the choice of learning tasks, and how learning is assessed. At the same, the majority of the instructors believed that their students have the potential to learn cooperatively, independently, and they have the ability to identify their own needs, strengths and weaknesses. However, only three of the instructors believed the ELT students have the ability to assess themselves rather than be tested.

In addition, according to the instructors' responses to the interview questions, some of the ELT students are autonomous, some of them are not. The instructors stated that this discrepancy can be accounted for the fact that the students are coming from a wide range of cultural and educational backgrounds. In fact, the instructors pointed out that a large number of students are from Cyprus, Turkey and Middle Eastern countries, where the education system is traditional and that they did it does not promote learner autonomy. Accordingly, these students are much more dependent on the teacher.

In spite of the educational background of the students, almost all of the instructors stated that they seek to foster learner autonomy as much as they can, but they added that the degree to which autonomy can be promoted depends on the nature of the course. Accordingly, they said that they can better promote learner autonomy in the second, third, and fourth year courses. Most of the instructors articulated that encouraging students to participate in classroom activities, teaching them learn how to learn, giving them options in projects, and asking them to choose their own topics are effective strategies for fostering learner autonomy in the classroom.

5.1.3 Research Question 3: What are the differences between students' perceptions and instructors' perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department?

The results obtained from the study show that the students' and instructors' perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the ELT Department were generally positive. By contrast, in a study by Al Asmari (2013) it was obtained that both students and teachers in their study lacked knowledge about learner autonomy. Also, the results of the study by Phan (2012) revealed that the participants in the study were highly unfamiliar with the concept of autonomy. In addition to having a greater understanding of the concept, both instructors and students in the ELT Department believed that teachers have an important role in facilitating and fostering autonomous learning. Moreover, both instructors and students believed that the ELT students have the ability (and potential) to become autonomous learners, and they felt that students should be involved in decisions regarding their own learning more. Despite their positive views on desirability of learner autonomy, in reality, both the students and instructors were less optimistic about the feasibility of learner autonomy in the Department. In other words, the students felt that their involvement in decisions in

the ELT Department is limited, and the instructors felt they were not able to involve students in every decision, such as the ones about classroom management, the teaching methods used, and the time and place of the lesson. Additionally, the instructors felt that they were not able to promote such autonomy as much as they would like due to the constraints from the university. A significant number of the students and teachers pointed out that the biggest challenge in the ELT Department is the current syllabus, which is not flexible.

The findings in this study greatly corresponded to the research findings of others in this field, including Shahsavari (2014). In her study, she also found out that both students' and teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy were positive. However, in reality, teachers and students were less positive about the feasibility of learner autonomy. Similarly in the study by Borg and Al- Busaidi (2012b), the researchers obtained that "in all cases teachers were more positive about the desirability of student involvement than they were about its feasibility" (p.286).

5.1.4 Research Question 4: What are the instructors' suggestions for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department?

The results concerning the instructors' suggestions for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department can be summarized as follows:

- Redesigning the curriculum
- Establishing a center for students to do some self-study
- Giving students assignments in which they need to search the Internet and use more technology
- Changing the assessment methods by replacing paper-based exams with more projects and other assignments.

- Introducing the concept of learner autonomy and its benefits to the students from the first year
- Teaching students how to learn
- Giving freedom to students to choose their topics for projects and assignments
- Involving the students more in the decision-making process inside and outside the classroom

Launching a self-access center for students, has also been suggested by McDevitt (1997) and Benson (2011). Moreover, giving freedom to students for more effective promotion of learner autonomy has also be recommended by Trebbi (2008) and La Ganza (2008).

5.2 Conclusion

The major findings of this study reveal that both the students and instructors in the ELT Department have positive views towards learner autonomy in language teaching and learning. Concerning the desirability of learner autonomy in the ELT Department, the results show that both groups believed that it is desirable to involve students in decisions about their learning and that students have the ability to become autonomous learners. However, they think that it is slightly feasible or unfeasible to involve students in every decision. In other words, the instructors' ideas showed differences depending on the type of decisions they want students to be involved in. For example, they believed that involving students in decisions about management of the classroom, the teaching methods used, and the time and place of the lesson is *slightly feasible* or *unfeasible*. However, involving students in decision about the topics discussed, the speed of the lesson, and the choice of learning tasks was

considered *quite feasible* or *very feasible* by the instructors. Finally, the current ELT syllabus was found out to be an impediment to fostering greater learner autonomy in the Department. The teachers, stated that it restricts their ability to further encourage and support learner autonomy among their students.

For more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department, the instructors gave useful suggestions. They thought that from the first year, the students should be informed about the concept of learner autonomy and its benefits. They also suggested redesigning the current syllabus to allow greater flexibility. Furthermore, the instructors recommended that they should not only teach their students to be autonomous as learners, but also train them as autonomous teachers so that they learn how to be autonomous. Finally, the teachers suggested that students be allowed to be more involved in classroom activities and be given choices when it comes to project work.

5.3 Implications of the Study

This section presents pedagogical and theoretical implications of the present study. First pedagogical implications are presented, and then suggestions for future research are explained.

5.3.1 Pedagogical Implications

The following is a list of suggestions derived from the findings of this study. In other words, the implications of the present study for promoting learner autonomy in the ELT Department are as follows:

1. Students should be involved more directly in decisions about the kinds of the tasks and projects they will be assessed by.
2. Students should be involved in decisions as regards classroom management

3. Students should be involved in decisions about the topics discussed
4. Students should be involved in decisions about the teaching methods used
5. Paper-based exams should be replaced with more projects and assignments
6. First year students should be informed about the concept of learner autonomy and its benefits
7. The current curriculum should be adapted to achieve greater teacher flexibility
8. Students should be trained on how to learn (i.e. learning to learn)

5.3.2 Suggestions for Further Research

One of the limitations of the present study is the small number of undergraduate students who participated in the study. Future studies may try to replicate the same procedures using a larger sample size of participants, which includes both undergraduate and graduate students. Moreover, in the present study, the data were collected through only student questionnaire, teacher questionnaire, and teacher interviews. In other words, another limitation was the lack of observations. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies employ other data collection instruments, such as student interviews, classroom observations and document analysis (i.e. materials evaluation, analysis of course policy sheets) to obtain more comprehensive results. Lastly, the same study can be conducted in different contexts such as English preparatory schools at universities, and secondary and/or high schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission Letter

May 12, 2014

Dear Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gülşen Musayeva Vefalı,
Chair of the ELT Department

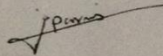
As part of my MA thesis study titled "Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department at Eastern Mediterranean University", I need to carry out research at Eastern Mediterranean University, Faculty of Education *English Language Teaching Department*. More specifically, I would like to:

- a) administer a questionnaire to ELT students;
- b) administer a questionnaire to ELT instructors;
- c) conduct interviews with ELT instructors

Therefore, I would kindly like to ask for permission to conduct my research in the ELT Department.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Parnis Farahi
(St. No. 125156)
Tel: 0533 8586715
E-mail: parnis61@yahoo.com

Attachments:
Student and teacher questionnaires
Teacher interview questions

Approved
provided all participants
grant their consent.
gmv
12.5.2014

Appendix B: Student Questionnaire

Dear students,

As a part of my MA studies, I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. This questionnaire aims to investigate your perceptions regarding learner autonomy in language learning and teaching. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the questionnaire. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Parmis Farahi

MA student

Faculty of Education

English Language Teaching Department

parmis61@yahoo.com

CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the purpose of this study and how my responses will be used. Therefore, I agree to participate in this study.

Name - Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 1: Background Information

Please mark (X) as appropriate.

1. Your gender: Male Female
2. Your age: _____ (please specify)
3. Your nationality: TRNC TR Other _____ (please specify)
4. Your mother tongue: Turkish English Other _____ (please specify)
5. Your class: 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year

Section 2: Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

Please read the following statements and put a cross (X) as appropriate:

(5): Strongly agree, (4): Agree, (3): Unsure, (2): Disagree, (1): Strongly disagree

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Students should make decisions and set goals of their learning.					
2	Students should make good use of their free time in studying English.					
3	Students should make notes and summaries of their lessons.					
4	Students should practice English outside the class such as: record their own voice; speak to other people in English.					
5	Students should use library to improve their English.					
6	Students should note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.					
7	Besides the contents of the course, students should read extra materials in advance.					
8	When students make progress in learning, they should reward themselves such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.					
9	Students should use the Internet and computers to study and improve English.					
10	Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of language learning.					
11	Students should use self- study materials to learn English.					

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12	Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.					
13	Students should have a right to be involved in selecting the course content.					
14	Students should be involved in selecting learning tasks and activities.					
15	Students should be responsible for their own learning.					
16	Students should assess their own progress.					
17	Students should plan their time while learning English.					
18	Students should look for better ways to learn English.					
19	Students should exchange ideas with their friends and /or teachers on how to learn English.					
20	Students (rather than the teacher) should be responsible for evaluating how much they have learnt.					
21	A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.					
22	Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand language.					
23	Teachers should point out the students' errors.					
24	Teachers not only have to teach 'what' English is but should also teach 'how' to learn English.					
25	Teacher should let students find their own mistakes.					
26	Teachers should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals.					
27	The teacher is an authority figure in the classroom.					
28	Knowledge is something to be 'transmitted' by teachers rather than 'discovered' by learners themselves.					

Section 3: Desirability of Learner Autonomy

Please read the following statements and put a cross (X) as appropriate for you:

<i>I want to be involved in decisions about:</i>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
The objectives of a course					
The materials used					
The kinds of tasks and activities I do					
The topics discussed					
How learning is assessed					
The teaching methods used					
Classroom management					
The course content					
The choice of learning tasks					
The time and place of the lesson					
The speed of the lesson					
The homework tasks					

<i>I have the ability to:</i>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Identify my own needs					
Identify my own strengths					
Identify my own weaknesses					
Monitor my progress					
Evaluate my own learning					
Learn co-operatively (together)					
Learn independently					
Assess myself, rather than be tested					
Find out learning procedures by myself					

Section 4: Learner Autonomy in the ELT Department at EMU

Please read the following statements and put a cross (X) as appropriate to say how feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) they are for **you** in the **ELT Department at EMU**.

<i>In our Department, students are involved in decisions about:</i>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
The objectives of a course					
The materials used					
The kinds of tasks and activities they do					
The topics discussed					
How learning is assessed					
The teaching methods used					
Classroom management					
The course content					
The choice of learning tasks					
The time and place of the lesson					
The speed of the lesson					
The homework tasks					

<i>In our Department, students have the ability to:</i>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Identify their own needs					
Identify their own strengths					
Identify their own weaknesses					
Monitor their progress					
Evaluate their own learning					
Learn co-operatively (together)					
Learn independently					
Assess themselves, rather than be tested					
Find out learning procedures by themselves					

Section 5: Your Perception and Experience of Learner Autonomy

Please answer the following questions to express your perception of learner autonomy, and comment more specifically on your learning experience at the ELT Department at EMU.

1. What is 'learner autonomy'?

2. Are you an autonomous learner? Please explain.

3. Which methods, ways, or techniques do you use when you are learning? Please explain.

4. Do the instructors in the ELT Department give you opportunities to take control of your own learning? Please explain.

End of the questionnaire

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire

Appendix C: Teacher Questionnaire

Dear Instructor,

As a part of my MA studies, I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. This questionnaire aims to investigate your beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general, and your perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) specifically. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the questionnaire. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Parmis Farahi

MA student

Faculty of Education

English Language Teaching Department

parmis61@yahoo.com

CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the purpose of this questionnaire and how my responses will be used. Therefore, I agree to participate in this study.

Name - Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Section 1: Background Information

Please mark (X) as appropriate.

1. Your gender: Male Female
2. Your age: _____ (please specify)
3. Your nationality: TRNC TR Other _____ (please specify)
4. Your mother tongue: Turkish English Other _____ (please specify)
5. Years of teaching experience:

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25+
6. Years of experience as an instructor in the ELT Department at EMU:

0-4 5-9 10-14 15-19 20-24 25+
7. Your academic title:

Instructor Senior Instructor Dr. Asst.Prof.Dr. Assoc.Prof.Dr. Prof. Dr.

Section 2: Learner Autonomy in Language Learning and Teaching

You are given some statements about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching below. Please give your opinion about these statements by ticking ONE answer for each.

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Language learners of all ages can develop learner autonomy.					
2	Independent study in the library is an activity which develops learner autonomy.					
3	Learner autonomy is promoted through regular opportunities for learners to complete tasks alone.					
4	Autonomy means that learners can make choices about how they learn.					
5	Individuals who lack autonomy are not likely to be effective language learners.					
6	Autonomy can develop most effectively through learning outside the classroom.					
7	Involving learners in decisions about what to learn promotes learner autonomy.					
8	Learner autonomy means learning without a teacher.					
9	It is harder to promote learner autonomy with proficient language learners than it is with beginners.					

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10	It is possible to promote learner autonomy with both young language learners and with adults.					
11	Confident language learners are more likely to develop autonomy than those who lack confidence.					
12	Learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more effectively than they otherwise would.					
13	Learner autonomy can be achieved by learners of all cultural backgrounds.					
14	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners have some choice in the kinds of activities they do.					
15	Learner autonomy cannot be promoted in teacher-centred classrooms.					
16	Learner autonomy is promoted through activities which give learners opportunities to learn from each other.					
17	Learner autonomy implies a rejection of traditional teacher-led ways of teaching.					
18	Learner autonomy cannot develop without the help of the teacher.					
19	Learner autonomy is promoted by activities that encourage learners to work together.					
20	Learner autonomy is only possible with adult learners.					
21	Learner autonomy is promoted by independent work in a self-access centre.					
22	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners are free to decide how their learning will be assessed.					
23	Learner autonomy is a concept which is not suited to non-Western learners.					
24	Learner autonomy requires the learner to be totally independent of the teacher.					
25	Co-operative group work activities support the development of learner autonomy.					
26	Promoting autonomy is easier with beginning language learners than with more proficient learners.					
27	Learner autonomy is promoted when learners can choose their own learning materials.					
28	Learner-centred classrooms provide ideal conditions for developing learner autonomy.					

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
29	Learning how to learn is key to developing learner autonomy.					
30	Learning to work alone is central to the development of learner autonomy.					
31	Out-of-class tasks which require learners to use the internet promote learner autonomy.					
32	The ability to monitor one's learning is central to learner autonomy.					
33	Motivated language learners are more likely to develop learner autonomy than learners who are not motivated.					
34	The proficiency of a language learner does not affect their ability to develop autonomy.					
35	The teacher has an important role to play in supporting learner autonomy.					
36	Learner autonomy has a positive effect on success as a language learner.					
37	To become autonomous, learners need to develop the ability to evaluate their own learning.					

Section 3: Desirability and Feasibility of Learner Autonomy

Below there are two sets of statements. The first gives examples of decisions **LEARNERS** might be involved in; the second lists abilities that learners might have. For each statement:

- First say how **desirable** (i.e. ideally), you feel it is.
- Then say how **feasible** (i.e. realistically achievable) you think it is for *the learners you currently teach in the ELT Department*.

You should mark (X) **TWO** boxes for each statement – one for *desirability* and one for *feasibility*.

	Desirability				Feasibility			
	Undesirable	Slightly desirable	Quite desirable	Very desirable	Unfeasible	Slightly feasible	Quite feasible	Very feasible
<i>Learners are involved in decisions about:</i>								
The objectives of a course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Desirability				Feasibility			
	Undesirable	Slightly desirable	Quite desirable	Very desirable	Unfeasible	Slightly feasible	Quite feasible	Very feasible
<i>Learners are involved in decisions about:</i>								
The kinds of tasks and activities they do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The topics discussed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How learning is assessed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The teaching methods used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The course content	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The choice of learning tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The time and place of the lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The pace of the lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The homework tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Learners have the ability to:</i>								
Identify their own needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify their own strengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify their own weaknesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitor their progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate their own learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learn co-operatively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learn independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assess themselves, rather than be tested	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Find out learning procedures by themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix D: Teacher Interview

Dear Instructor,

As a part of my MA studies, I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. This interview aims to investigate your beliefs about learner autonomy in language learning and teaching in general, and your perceptions regarding learner autonomy in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) specifically. Please express your opinion sincerely when responding to the questions. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Parmis Farahi

MA student

Faculty of Education

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parmis61@yahoo.com

CONSENT FORM

I have read and understood the purpose of this interview and how my responses will be used. Therefore, I agree to participate in this study.

Name - Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Teacher Interview Questions

Part 1: The teacher's overall perceptions about learner autonomy

- 1-How do you define 'learner autonomy'?
- 2- What are the characteristics of autonomous language learners?
- 3- To what extent does learner autonomy contribute to L2 learning?
- 4 - To what extent does learner autonomy contribute to language teacher education?

Part 2: The teacher's perceptions about learner autonomy in the ELT Department

- 1- To what extent do you think your students in the ELT Department are autonomous? Please explain your answer by giving specific examples.
- 2- To what extent do you think you promote learner autonomy in your classes in the ELT Department? If you promote learner autonomy in your classes, please explain how you do this. If you don't promote learner autonomy in your classes, please explain your reason(s).
- 3- How desirable (i.e. ideally) is it to promote learner autonomy in the ELT department?
- 4- How feasible (i.e. realistically achievable) is it to promote learner autonomy in the ELT Department?
- 5-Do you face any challenges in helping your students become more autonomous? Please explain.
- 6- What are your suggestions for more effective promotion of learner autonomy in the ELT Department? What should the instructors do? What should the students do? What should the administration do?