

**Learner Autonomy in Skill-Based Language  
Improvement Courses in an Undergraduate ELT  
Program**

**Minou Baghbankarimi**

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

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Prof. Dr. Elvan Yılmaz  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching.

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

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Erozan  
Supervisor

---

Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Ülker Vancı Osam

---

2. Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatoş Erozan

---

3. Asst. Prof. Dr. Javanshir Shibliyev

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed to explore the extent to which the three skill-based language improvement courses in the first semester of the undergraduate English Language Teaching (ELT) program at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) promote learner autonomy as perceived by the students and the course instructors. To achieve this aim, the students' perceptions of learner autonomy in these courses were identified by administering them a questionnaire and the instructors' perceptions were obtained through interviews. Moreover, class observations were conducted to find out whether or not learner autonomy was actually promoted in the above mentioned classes.

This study was a qualitative case study which includes both qualitative and quantitative data. It was also an evaluation study which adopted naturalistic and descriptive inquiry approach. The participants of the study were 87 students taking the three skill-based courses and the four instructors teaching these courses. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered through three parallel student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and class observations.

The results of the study revealed that generally the three skill-based language improvement courses promote learner autonomy, as perceived by the students. However, the instructors' perceptions of learner autonomy in these courses were comparatively less positive. In other words, the teachers stated that they try to promote learner autonomy in their classes through some activities such as strategy training, and giving options in presentation or project topics, but due to

some reasons like students' backgrounds, course materials, etc., they cannot fully foster learner autonomy in these courses. Similarly, the class observations also show that only few class activities were leading to learner autonomy.

In addition, the results of the study included some suggestions from the students and the instructors; they proposed to make some changes in the existing courses in order to make them more effective in terms of promoting learner autonomy.

To conclude, the findings of the present study may have the following implications for teaching and further research: i) The existing materials should be replaced by the materials which include more strategy-training and more activities/tasks promoting autonomy; ii) Various supplementary/self-study activities should be utilized; and, iii) The students should be involved in decision making.

**Keywords:** Autonomy, Learner Autonomy, Decision Making, Strategy Training, Perceptions.

## ÖZ

Bu araştırma, Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi (DAÜ) İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümü (ELT) lisans programının ilk döneminde yer alan üç beceri tabanlı dil geliştirme derslerinin, özerk öğrenmeyi ne derece desteklediğinin öğrenciler ve öğretmenler tarafından nasıl algılandığını araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bu amaca ulaşmak için öncelikle, özerk öğrenmenin öğrenciler tarafından nasıl algılandığı, onlara uygulanan bir anket ile tespit edilmiştir. İkinci olarak, öğretmenlerin algıları görüşme yoluyla elde edilmiştir. Aynı zamanda, sınıf gözlemleriyle özerk öğrenmenin aslında olup olmadığına da bakılmıştır.

Bu nitel durum çalışması, beceri tabanlı dil geliştirme derslerini alan 87 öğrenci ve bu dersleri veren 4 öğretmenden oluşan örnekleme, betimlemeli yöntem içeren değerlendirme çalışmasıdır. Nicel ve nitel veriler öğrenci anketleri, öğretmen görüşmeleri ve sınıf gözlemleri ile toplanmıştır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, genel olarak öğrencilerin algıları üç beceri tabanlı dil geliştirme derslerinin, bağımsız öğrenmeyi teşvik ettiği yönündedir. Ancak, öğretmenlerin algısı öğrencilere göre nispeten daha az olumludur. Diğer bir deyişle, öğretmenler, bazı etkinliklerle özerk öğrenmeyi desteklerken, öğrencilerin özgeçmişleri veya ders materyalleri gibi nedenlerden dolayı özerk öğrenmeyi tam olarak teşvik edemediklerini vurgulamışlardır. Benzer sonuçlar sınıf gözlemlerinde de ortaya çıkmıştır; ancak birkaç sınıf etkinliğinin özerk öğrenmeyi desteklediği görülmüştür.

Buna ek olarak, çalışmanın sonuçları bazı öğrenci ve öğretmenlere ilişkin önerileri kapsamaktadır. Yapılan öneriler, derslerde bazı değişikliklere gidilerek özerk öğrenmenin daha etkin bir şekilde teşvik edilmesi yönündedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları bazı işlevsel ve kuramsal sezdirimleri ortaya koymaktadır : i) Mevcut ders materyalleri daha çok strateji eğitimi ve özerkliği arttıracak etkinlikleri içeren yenileriyle değiştirilmelidir; ii) Çeşitli ek/kendi kendine çalışma faaliyetleri kullanılmalıdır; iii) öğrenciler karar verme sürecine dahil edilmelidirler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler :** Özerklik, Özerk Öğrenme, Karar Verme, Strateji Eğitimi, Algılar

*To My Dear and Beloved Parents,  
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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter encompasses several parts as the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research questions, significance of the study, and definitions of terms.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Learner autonomy with its 30-year-history in the field of teaching and learning has been defined by various scholars from different perspectives. Holec (1981), for instance, who is considered to be one of the pioneers, defines it as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p. 3). Learner autonomy is also defined by Sinclair (1999) as the learner’s capacity to make decisions of his/her own learning. She argues that autonomous learners have rationale for their decisions. Like Holec (1981), Benson (2001) defines learner autonomy as “the capacity to take control over one’s learning” (p. 2). The effectiveness and importance of autonomy in education has been stressed by various scholars. For instance, Littlewood (1999) emphasizes the importance of being autonomous and being able to continue learning after one’s formal education.

According to Little (1995), learner autonomy is basically the acceptance of learner of his/her responsibility for learning. Two implications of this acceptance of responsibility are socio affective and cognitive; this acceptance also entails a positive attitude to learning and helps them consciously control and reflect on the

process of their own learning. Little (2004) states that “learner autonomy entails a variety of self-regulatory behaviors that develop-through practice- as a fully integrated part of the knowledge and skills that are the goal of learning” (p.1).

Benson (1997, p, 25) summarizes autonomy in three different basic definitions as:

- autonomy as the act of learning on one’s own and the technical ability to do so
- autonomy as the internal psychological capacity to self-direct one’s own learning
- autonomy as control over the content and processes of one’s own learning

According to Breen and Mann (1997), an autonomous language learner is in an authentic relation to the target language he/she is learning. She/he has a sincere desire to learn that language. Little (1995) also argues that, it is sometimes possible to mention a positive relation between the present learning and future learning in terms of learner autonomy. He states that when a learner accepts his/her responsibility to achieve a learning target and succeeds in achieving it, she/he is more likely to have a positive tendency to learning in the future time. As he indicates, in case of language learning, the aim of learner autonomy is to help language learners become independent and flexible users of the target language; it means that, learner autonomy has two distinct aspects; pedagogical autonomy and communicative autonomy, the former preceding the latter one. Little (1995) further states that language learners are likely to be independent learners if their education experience has pushed them to autonomous learning and language teachers are likely to be successful in promoting autonomous learners if their own education has involved them in autonomous learning.

For Camilleri (1999), on the other hand, “learner autonomy is a dream to be achieved.” (p.17). Learner autonomy is good due to the fact that it involves the learners’ own experiences in the process of education and it is the way how learning happens, because it is thoughtful and purposeful and does not involve parrot-learning/teaching; thus, the learner has the most prominent role in learner autonomy. In order to reach a progress in learner autonomy, not only must the teachers feel responsible for, but also this process has to be maintained and supported by the national strive of the national curriculum. (Camilleri, 1999).

Little (2004) redefines teacher’s role in learner-centered pedagogies as facilitator, counselor, and manager of learning resources. As he points out, what teachers do in a learner-centered class is a key role to maintain the learning community. He also focuses on teacher’s role as a key to create and support a learning context, and argues that most of the learners will stop learning if teachers stop teaching.

The importance of the role of the teacher in developing learner autonomy cannot be underestimated. As Little (2000, 2007) mentions, the development of learner autonomy is dependent on teacher autonomy. He argues that “it is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner” (Little, 2007, p.27). Moreover, Barfield et al. (2001, cited in Balcikanli, 2010) state that, “the ability to behave autonomously for students is dependent upon their teacher creating a classroom environment where autonomy is accepted” (p. 91). Some other scholars (McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2000; Sert, 2006; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008) also emphasize the important role of the teacher in developing learner autonomy claiming that teachers who are not autonomous learners of language may



negatively affect the development of their students' autonomy. Similarly, according to Little (1995), if teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are interrelated, the promotion of the latter is dependent on the promotion of the former one.

According to Thavenius (1999, cited in Lamb, 2008, p. 278), teacher autonomy can be defined as “the teacher’s ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning.” He adds that “an autonomous teacher is thus a teacher who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous, and who is independent enough to let her learners become independent” (p.278). Little (1995), on the other hand, believes that:

Genuinely successful teachers have been always autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest possible degree of effective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploiting the freedom that this confers (p. 179).

Smith and Erdogan (2008) claim that there is a need for a knowledge base for teacher education for the promotion of learner autonomy and they propose that an experiential approach with teachers learning autonomously themselves is the most effective way of supporting teachers in the development of pedagogy for autonomy.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

As stated by Little (2004), learner autonomy is dependent on teacher autonomy. According to him, we cannot expect a teacher to promote learner autonomy when he or she himself or herself is not autonomous. Little (2004), states the teacher’s

role in an autonomous classroom as engaging his/her learners in regular evaluation of their own progress. Moreover, Smith and Erdogan (2008) emphasize the importance of supporting teachers in the development of pedagogy for autonomy by setting them to learn autonomously themselves.

Therefore, considering the importance of learner autonomy in effective language teaching and learning, and the relationship between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy, it can be concluded that prospective teachers in teacher education programs need to develop autonomy as both learners and future teachers. As a language teacher education program, the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) is also expected to promote autonomous learning as one of its goals. In this way, ELT students can become autonomous learners and improve their English, and at the same time be trained as autonomous teachers who will be able to help their own students become autonomous in the future.

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

Little (1995) believes that teacher trainees must be provided with the skills to develop autonomy in their learners, and to do this they must be equipped with a first-hand experience of learner autonomy in their training. Accordingly, we expect the ELT Department at EMU to prepare and equip its students (prospective teachers) with such skills and experience. Little (1995) also states that, in order to make a big progress in the promotion of learner autonomy, the focus must be on the teacher and the way of organizing and mediating teacher education. Hence, focus of this study is on whether or not the education of teacher trainees in the ELT Department at EMU is organized toward achieving

this goal (i.e. training autonomous teachers with the skills to develop autonomy in their learners.)

The present study aims to explore the extent to which the three skill-based language improvement courses [namely, ELTE 103 (Advanced Reading and Writing I), ELTE 105 (Listening and Pronunciation I), and ELTE 107 (Oral Communication Skills I)] in the first year of the ELT undergraduate program promote learner autonomy from the perspectives of the students and the instructors. To this aim, the study attempts to find out the students' and the instructors' perceptions as regards the following features of the courses: teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures. Overall, this study aims to evaluate the above-mentioned courses in terms of promoting autonomy as perceived by the students and the instructors.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The current study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the three skill-based language improvement courses in the first semester of the ELT undergraduate program promote learner autonomy?

a. How do the students perceive autonomy in these courses as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures?

b. How do the instructors perceive autonomy in these courses as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures?

c. To what extent do class activities (teaching-learning procedures) and tasks used in these courses promote learner autonomy?

2. How can the three skill-based courses be improved in terms of promoting learner autonomy?

a. What do the students suggest in terms of promoting learner autonomy in these courses?

b. What do the instructors suggest in terms of promoting learner autonomy in these courses?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study can be considered as a significant study for a number of reasons. Firstly, the findings of this study can help students and teachers better understand learner autonomy and its importance in the field of language teaching and learning. Secondly, the findings of this study can indicate to what extent and how learner autonomy is applied in the language improvement courses under focus at EMU ELT department. Thirdly, it may increase the awareness of participating instructors and students in the ELT Department of EMU of the importance of autonomy. Lastly, this awareness in participants is expected to lead to an improvement in the teaching and learning process at the department.

## **Chapter 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter presents literature review regarding autonomy, in general, and learner and teacher autonomy specifically. It also reviews literature on the application of learner autonomy in language education. Furthermore, culture and other factors affecting autonomy are focused on. In addition, related studies on autonomy are reviewed.

#### **2.1 Autonomy**

The concept of autonomy entered the field of language teaching through the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, and the establishment of Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues (CRAPEL) as a result of this project. The founder of CRAPEL, Yives Chalon, is considered as the father of autonomy in language learning, and Henry Holec was the leader of CRAPEL, after Chalon (Benson, 2011). As stated by Harding-Esch (1977, cited in Benson 2011), in 1976, a seminar on autonomy and self-directed learning was conducted in Cambridge University, which was a significant event in the field of language teaching and learning. "Holec's (1981) project report to the Council of Europe is a key early document on autonomy in language learning" (Benson, 2011, p. 9).

In the field of foreign language learning, autonomy has played an important role for more than 30 years (Borg and Al-Busaidi, 2012). The concept of autonomy

has been defined by many scholars from different interpretations of the concept.

For instance, Benson (2006) defines autonomy as:

To me autonomy is about people taking more control over their lives - individually and collectively. Autonomy in learning is about people taking more control over their learning in classrooms and outside them and autonomy in language learning about people taking more control over the purposes for which they learn languages and the ways in which they learn them. (p.1)

Ho and Crookall (1995) argue that “being autonomous often requires that students work independently of the teacher and this may entail shared decision making, as well as presenting opinions that differ from those of the teacher” (p. 237).

It is noted by Sinclair (1999) that autonomy is a capacity for potential self-directed learning behaviors. She states that:

Autonomy is a capacity for making informed decisions about one’s own learning, and that this capacity needs to be developed through introspection, reflection, and experimentation in the form of ‘learner training’ or some other kind of intervention by a facilitator, such as a teacher or counselor. Learners may develop this capacity, or knowledge, about their learning, but at times may choose not to be self-directed. (pp. 310-311)

The word autonomy has been used in language education in different ways, five of which are as follows (Benson and Voller, 1997):

- a. Situations (in which the learner studies completely on his/her own)
- b. Skills (which can be learned and applied in self-studying)
- c. Inborn capacity (which institutional education suppresses)
- d. Learner’s responsibility (for his/her learning)
- e. Learner’s right (to specify one’s own learning direction)

According to Wall (2003, cited in Benson 2011), to become autonomous one needs the capacity, independence, self-consciousness, and accessibility to a situation providing him/her valuable options. Referring to his own definition of autonomy, “the capacity to take control over one’s learning” (Benson, 2001, p.2), Benson (2011) claims that it is the most complete definition and there is no need to explain it in detail, because the word “control” is highly open to empirical investigation and having control over one’s learning enables the individual to control his/her learning in any different kinds of contexts and times.

Brookes and Grundy (1988, cited in Benson 2011) state that according to the idea of learner-centeredness, autonomy and individualization are linked to each other. Benson (2011) argues that both individualization and autonomy are overlapped in meeting individual learner’s needs. As an outcome of a self-directed study in form of individualization conducted at CRAPEL, learners determined their needs and acted accordingly.

Nowadays learner autonomy has gained the attention of many researchers and it has been studied in many cultures and areas. For example, as Fumin and Li (2012) claim:

In order to cultivate students’ autonomous learning ability, teachers should offer proper guidance to students in monitoring and regulating their own study and give them explicit instructions on the strategies for learner autonomous, so that they can be responsible for their own study. The best solution to this is to reduce the class size to below 30, if not 20 in English classes. In this way, teachers are able to take into careful consideration students’ individual differences while enhancing their learner autonomy. (p.54)

### **2.1.1 Learner Autonomy**

There are various definitions of the concept of learner autonomy reflecting the views of several different scholars. As defined by Holec (1981), learner autonomy is “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (p.1). To elaborate on his definition of learner autonomy, Holec (1981) states that to take charge of one’s own learning involves responsibility to all aspects of one’s learning including the ability to recognize the goals, to define the progressions, to select techniques, to monitor and to evaluate one’s learning. Dickinson (1987), on the other hand, describes it as a situation in which learners themselves are completely responsible for their own learning; he also defines “full autonomy” as a situation in which learner is fully independent of his/her teacher and others(cited in Benson, 2011). As pointed out by Illes (2012), autonomous learners take responsibility for various stages of their learning, as setting the objectives, determining content, resources, techniques, and monitoring, as well. To Joshi (2011), autonomous learner is a person with a capacity to make choices that govern their actions independently. And this capacity is dependent on two factors including ability and willingness. According to Little (1995), learner autonomy is “capacity to reflect on the content and process of learning with a view to bringing them as far as possible under conscious control” (p.175). Candy (1991) also characterizes autonomous learners as learners who are methodical, analytical, reflective, curious and motivated, flexible, interdependent, responsible, creative, skilled in searching information and learning, and able to evaluate and improve. Furthermore, as stated by Chan (2003) autonomous learner has been viewed as a “decision maker”.



According to Pierson (1996, cited in Chan, 2001), in autonomous learning the locus of responsibility and control is in the hands of each individual learner. Little (1991, cited in Chan, 2001), argues that an autonomous learner prepares a personal agenda for his/her own learning which includes directions in the planning, pacing, monitoring and evaluation of the process of their learning. To be able to make significant decisions about what to learn, how and when to learn, autonomous learners must develop their capacity of initiating and controlling (Dickinson, 1987, cited in Chan, 2001). It is also indicated by Harmer (2007) that autonomous learners “take over their own learning – in other words, to do it without having to be shown how by the teacher” (p. 399).

Regarding autonomy, Benson (2011) defines independence as autonomy and defines dependence as a word opposite to independence. Moreover, he defines interdependence, which means a company work of learners with each other and their teacher, which opposes dependence.

Chan (2001) believes that “when learners cannot learn the way we teach them, we have to help them to find ways of doing their own learning” (p. 505). Holec (1981) suggests that the learners’ willingness and capacity to take responsibility of his/her own learning is not necessarily innate and can be encouraged and also acquired by formal education. Oxford (2003) advocates that “one of the outcomes of autonomy training is therefore the expert learner who can understand and manage their own learning and who possesses particular characteristics, such as high motivation and self-efficacy” (cited in Illes, 2012, p, 507). Hasegawa (2013) points out that “it is widely agreed that learner training is necessary for fostering learner autonomy among students” (p. 22).

Holec (1981) argues that the eminent methodology of training learners should be methodology of discovery; that is, learners should be able to discover their needs, proper techniques and knowledge, both with the assistance of the teacher and without his or her assistance.

Benson (2011) suggests that to find out whether or not the learners are autonomous or to recognize if they have become more autonomous or not, the researchers focus on particular aspects of having control over one's learning and answer questions like the following ones:

- Do learners have learning plans?
- Are they involved in classroom decisions?
- Do they reflect on their own learning?
- Are they initiator in exchanges of target language?

Nunan (2003) points out that, learners who have an active role in their own learning could be called as autonomous. Benson (2006) elaborates on this achievement of the learners and argues that autonomy is taking more control over someone's own learning in and outside the classroom and also taking enough control over their purpose of language learning and the ways in which they learn it. In this regard Campbell (2013) claims that "by taking charge of their own learning and being in control of their own learning and their own learning processes, our students will have the opportunity to master the language they are studying." (p. 20)

According to Ho and Crookall (1995), in order to become autonomous, learners must redefine the roles of teachers and learners, as it is not only the learner who

should try to accept the responsibility to learn, the teacher should also help the learner to realize their own roles as to taking responsibility for their own learning. The teacher can do this by preparing an environment in which teacher responsibilities are shared and learners practice enhancing their responsibilities.

Moreover, Chan (2001) provided detailed information concerning characters of autonomous learners as follows:

- setting their own learning goals and identifying and developing learning strategies to achieve these goals;
- reflecting on their learning which includes identifying problem areas and the means of addressing these problems;
- identifying and selecting relevant resources and necessary support;
- assessing their own progress.

Benson (2006) thinks that, there are some related terms to autonomy which are distinguishable in several ways. He argues that autonomous learning and autonomy do not have the same meaning as self-instruction' 'self-access', 'self-study', 'self-education', 'out-of-class learning' or 'distance learning; they all may have the same meaning of learning by yourself but autonomy refers to attitudes and abilities. Thus, we can say that learning by yourself does not exactly mean you have the ability to be autonomous. He also states that “autonomous learners may well be better than others at learning by themselves (hence the connection), but they do not necessarily have to learn by themselves” (p. 1).

### **2.1.2 Teacher Autonomy**

The term teacher autonomy was first brought into language education by Little (1995) in a paper on the theoretical construct of teacher autonomy (Benson,

2011). Teacher autonomy is defined by Thavenius (1999), as the one “who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous, and who is independent enough to let her learners become independent” (cited in Benson and Huang, 2008, p. 429). Benson and Huang (2008) advocate that “teacher’s willingness to go against the grain of educational systems and struggle to create spaces within their working environments for students to exercise great control over their learning is a crucial aspect of teacher autonomy” (p.430). As pointed out by Little (1995), “if learner autonomy is the capacity, responsibility and freedom of making choices concerning someone’s own learning, thus, teacher autonomy, by analogy, can be the capacity, responsibility and freedom of making choices concerning someone’s own teaching”. Aoki (2000) also describes teacher autonomy as “the capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one’s own teaching” (cited in Smith, 2001, p. 2).

To Thavenius (1999, cited in Benson 2011) an autonomous teacher is the teacher who is able to reflect on and change her role, and help her students to become autonomous; she is independent and also lets her students become independent as well. Emphasizing awareness as an essential issue of teacher autonomy, Thavenius also claims that the process of becoming more aware of one’s role in promoting learner autonomy requires both recurrent in-service training and a radical change of attitudes into introspections. Moreover, Reinders and Balcikanli (2011) argue that “teacher autonomy is also usually conceived of as including the ability to understand the students’ learning needs and the ability to support them in their development towards autonomy” (pp. 16-17).

Ramos (2006) believes that “autonomous teachers should have good institutional knowledge in order to start to address effectively constraints on teaching and learning; they should also be willing to confront institutional barriers in socially appropriate ways, to turn constraints into opportunities for change. However, they should be aware that neither teacher, nor student autonomy mean freedom from all constraints” (p. 190).

Benson and Huang (2008) argue that language teachers whose educational background has encouraged them to be autonomous are more successful in promoting learner autonomy. Thus, teacher education programs should not only teach prospective teachers about learner autonomy, but also prepare them to be autonomous teacher as a goal. Benson and Huang (2008) also point out that, teacher autonomy is parallel to learner autonomy. They say as autonomous learner controls his/her learning, autonomous teacher controls his/her teaching. They also state that autonomous teacher controls learning how to teach, which an ongoing subject matter is.

Little (2004, p. 1), advocates teachers’ role as indispensable and argues that:

- Learner-centered pedagogies have generated numerous attempts to redefine the teacher’s role: facilitator, counselor, manager of learning resources
- Changing the terms we use to describe what teachers do in no way diminishes their responsibility for making things happen: the teacher’s key role is to create and maintain a learning community; if teachers stop teaching, most learners will stop learning.

As noted by Smith (2001), the concept of teacher autonomy have been used in three different dimensions namely, capacity for self-directed professional action, capacity self-directed professional development, and freedom from control by

others over professional action or development. He argues that it is necessary to be clear which of these dimensions is referred to when the concept of teacher autonomy is used in the field of second language education.

Six characteristics of autonomous teachers are advocated by Smith (2001, p. 5) as follows:

1. Self-directed professional action;
2. Capacity for self-directed professional action;
3. Freedom from control over professional action;
4. Self-directed professional development;
5. Capacity for self-directed professional development;
6. Freedom from control over professional development.

On the other hand, it is argued by DeVries and Kohlberg (1987) that:

The autonomous constructivist teacher knows not only what to do, but why. She has a solid network of convictions that are both practical and theoretical. The autonomous teacher can think about how children are thinking and at the same time think about how to intervene to promote the constructive culture. Autonomous teachers do not just accept uncritically what curriculum specialists give them. They think about whether they agree with what is suggested. They take responsibility for the education they are offering children (cited in Balçıkanlı, 2010, p. 90).

An online discussion was held about the term ‘teacher autonomy’ by a number of language instructors (Barfield, Aswell, Carroll, Collins, Cowie, Critchley, Head, Nix, Obermeier and Robertson) after a conference in 2001 in Japan, and the outcomes were as follows:

Teacher autonomy involves negotiation skills, capacity for reflection on the teaching process and the teaching environment, readiness to engage in lifelong learning to the best of their capacity, commitment to promoting learner autonomy through the creation of a classroom culture where

autonomy is accepted. It should not exclude the presence of the traditional teaching skills. Teacher autonomy seems to be very closely bound up with the notions of the critically reflective teacher, teacher researcher and action research. The basic premise here is that teachers are best placed to develop their own teaching in order to better the learning experiences of their students. Autonomous teachers should have good institutional knowledge in order to start to address effectively constraints on teaching and learning; they should also be willing to confront institutional barriers in socially appropriate ways, to turn constraints into opportunities for change. However, they should be aware that neither teacher, nor student autonomy mean freedom from all constraints (cited in Ramos, 2006, pp. 189-190).

According to Benson (2011), in autonomous learning the role of the teacher is the facilitator, helper, coordinator, counselor, consultant, advisor, knower and resource. Riley (1997) also describes teacher's role in terms of promoting learner autonomy as "a person working with learners but whose role, behavior and objectives differ from those of the traditional teacher" (p. 115); however, her/his roles include being a counselor, knower, facilitator and helper.

Camilleri (1999) argues that one of the very important things which must not be missed is that learner autonomy should be supported by an autonomous teacher, because autonomous teachers can manage it better and be more successful than the teachers who are not autonomous. He also argues that in the process of learner autonomy there must be space for both teacher and learners to take risk, to reflect and to make decision.

Camilleri (1999) states that in promoting learner autonomy the teacher is no longer information giver or source of information; but knowing the links, she is a manager to plan the available paths for students (both individuals and groups) and the consequences to follow those paths. According to Ellis & Sinclair (1989), in order to make students be involved in the process of their learning, the teacher

should negotiate with her learners about the content of the course and the methodology, and encourage them to share their ideas with the class, and their ideas must be respected.

## **2.2 Learner-Teacher Autonomy**

Little (1995) is one of the pioneers discussing teacher education in terms of learner autonomy. Little (2004) states, when a teacher is not autonomous we cannot expect him to promote learner autonomy; Benson and Huang (2008) teachers who are to foster learner autonomy among their learners, they themselves need some degree of autonomy. Furthermore, Benson (2011) argues that teacher education programs should not simply teach student teachers about the idea of learner autonomy, they should also be oriented towards teacher autonomy as a goal. “In the language teaching literature, there is a much greater emphasis on teacher autonomy as a professional attribute and the link between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy” (Benson 2006, p. 30).

Trainee teachers must be provided with the skills to develop autonomy in their learners, and they must also be equipped with a first-hand experience of learners autonomy in their training (Little, 1995). Furthermore, Little (1995) states that:

Prospective teachers can be provided with a sound basis on which to construct arguments demonstrating the importance of learner autonomy. But a capacity to argue the importance of learner autonomy is not the same thing as a capacity to promote learner autonomy in the classroom (p. 180).

Nakata (2011) also claims that:

The concept of teacher autonomy came from the discussion of learner autonomy, that is, how teachers can promote learner autonomy in learners. It is based on the premise that there is a symbiotic relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy, but the promotion of learner autonomy depends on the promotion of teacher autonomy. (p. 901)



According to Smith (2001), “teacher-learner autonomy, by analogy with previous definitions of language learner autonomy, might be defined as the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others” (p. 1). In clarifying the links between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy, different scholars have given different statements. As to Breen and Mann (1997), learner autonomy can be developed in a space that the teacher can leave rooms for learners’ freedom to take a role in their own learning.

Smith (2001) believes that to promote learner autonomy the first thing to do is to make teachers develop autonomy in themselves. Thus, what teacher educators are supposed to do is to adopt pedagogy for teacher-learner autonomy in order to prepare future teachers appropriately to engage in promoting autonomy with their students.

Higgs (1988) indicates that in autonomous learning in which the learners are working independently from their teacher, the teacher should act as the manager and the resource person of the learning program (cited in Fumin and Li, 2012).

Grander and Miller (2002) summarize teachers’ roles in self-access learning as an information provider, counselor, authentic language user, manager, materials writer, assessor, administrator and organizer (cited in Fumin and Li 2012, p. 51).

Further, with regard to promoting learner autonomy, Hua (2001) provided roles of teacher as follows:

In the process of autonomous learning, teachers should assist learners in cultivating their abilities of setting goals, of selecting learning contents, of determining learning paces, of choosing learning methods and skills, of monitoring learning process and of assessing learning effects. Therefore,

teachers should act as a counselor, facilitator and resource person. (cited in Fumin and Li, 2012, p. 51)

According to Balcikanli (2010):

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. On the basis of the findings, it would make sense to offer some suggestions for teacher educators to lift barriers in students' minds concerning learner autonomy. (p. 99).

He stated that teacher educators must encourage their learners to do out of class practices, because learner autonomy can be improved and supported by out of class practices; so, the teacher educators must give their learners some tasks to do out of the class. They are also supposed to put their learners in the process of decision making, as well. Teacher educators should also equip the student teachers with strategy training sessions to encourage them to practice and get used to using them. Balcikanli (2010) also advocates that:

Finally, teacher educators should make use of portfolios in their courses. Thus, the student teachers get more insight into the development of practical knowledge, teaching behavior and thinking processes. Portfolios can serve as a good means of cultivating and exploiting teacher autonomy in many respects (p. 99).

Little (1995) mentions the dependence of learner autonomy on teacher autonomy as follows:

- Teachers cannot be expected to progress autonomy in their learners if they do not know what autonomous learner is;
- Teachers must be able to use their professional skills independently and autonomously in whole their pedagogical experiences.

Regarding the effectiveness of teacher-based approach, Benson (2011) claims that the first step towards changing learners is changing teachers. He argues that professional skills of teachers and their commitment towards autonomy are important factors in fostering learner autonomy. As to him, teaching teachers how to promote learner autonomy will be more effective if “the teachers experience pedagogical strategies for autonomy as students; reflect on these strategies as teachers; and experiment with them in field experience” (p. 196).

According to Little (1995), development of autonomous teacher is a requisite for promoting autonomous learning. This can be a starting point to bring learners accept responsibility for their learning.

### **2.3 Learner Autonomy in Language Teaching and Learning**

As claimed by Benson (2011), “research on autonomy in language learning shares some of its sources with the humanistic, communicative and task-based approaches to language education with which it has been closely allied” (p. 56).

Little (1995), argues that:

Teacher education should be subject to the same processes of negotiations as are required for the promotion of learner autonomy in the language classroom. In the pedagogical process teachers as well as students can learn and students as well as teachers can teach. (p. 180)

As to the roles of teachers in promoting learner autonomy, teachers have very essential role in helping learners to recognize and understand learning strategies and become autonomous. “Teachers who employ the language learning project should hold individual conferences and should respond to students' diaries in order to provide realistic guidance and encouragement” (Yang, 1998, pp.132-133). Yang (1998) explains that, initially in the process, students use learning

strategies with misconceptions; thus the teacher should encourage them to use strategies effectively and promote learner autonomy by informing them through lectures, reading materials, and panel discussions. Such information has to involve explicit strategy training with plenty of opportunities for learners to practice the given strategies. He adds that, for some students who lack self-discipline and need support from others (teacher and other learners) teacher must provide peer support groups, which is more helpful and effective than forcing them to learn.

In terms of learner autonomy, Illes (2012) states 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). Cotterall (2000) states that “language courses which aim to promote learner autonomy will incorporate means of transferring responsibility for aspects of the language learning process (such as setting goals, selecting learning strategies, and evaluating progress) from the teacher to the learner” (p. 110).

In their study, Schinkel, Ruyter and Steutel (2010) point out that “to certain liberal philosophers of education, autonomy matters so much that they advocate compulsory autonomy-promoting education. These philosophers have put forward various variants of three general arguments to back up their case – arguments that are also (supposed to be) strong arguments for the value of autonomy” (p. 271). Due to the argument by Little (1995), the existing interdependence of pedagogical and communicative autonomy helps to bridge the gap between language learning and language use. According to him, the correct and successful practice of autonomy results in the interaction of so called

dimensions (pedagogical and communicative autonomy) from the very beginning steps of learning.

In a study by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), teachers believed that learners' degree of autonomy and motivation are directly related, they state the more autonomous a learners is, the more motivated she/he is, which leads her/him to learn language better. They also report that autonomous learners are happier learners rather than the others, because they know what they are doing and why they are doing that, so they are more willing to reach their goals. They consider autonomous learners as more focused learners, because their goal is clear and they are independent, so they can have enough focus on what they do and what they need to do.

Cotterall (1995), in a study on 'readiness for autonomy', states that learner's beliefs about the class, teacher, learning and themselves are crucial to focus on; she argues that learner's beliefs will affect his/her receptiveness to the activities, tasks and whatever happens in the language class; so, in order to help a learner to put steps towards autonomy we should make them ready by making changes in their beliefs and behavior which autonomy alludes.

To foster learner autonomy, students should be involved in both collaborative tasks (e.g., group work, and project work) and individual activities (e.g., extensive reading). The first one provides students with the opportunities for more negotiation and cooperation and the second one prepares opportunities for individual work, and they both lead to improvement of learner autonomy (Dang, 2012).

Dincer, Yesilyurt, and Goksu (2010) prepare a list of autonomy supportive behaviors, through which language teachers can motivate their learners:

- the teachers should listen carefully to their students;
- they should provide their students opportunities to work on their own;
- they should answer the students' questions;
- they should provide materials and opportunities for students to work actively.

In addition, Reeve (2006), advocates giving the reasons, value, and use of the tasks/activities, accepting learners' negative expressions, focusing on learners' interests, and sense of enjoyment as the significant autonomy-supportive characteristics of a teacher in terms of promoting learner autonomy (cited in Dincer, Yesilyurt, and Goksu, 2010).

Little (2004) also focuses on activities promoting autonomy and suggests "The teacher engages her learners in regular evaluation of their progress as individual learners" (p. 2). On the other hand, Sinclair (1999) argues that:

Autonomy in language learning is principally concerned with providing learners with situations and opportunities for exercising a degree of independence. These might range from activities in class which provide learners with opportunities for choice or decision-making about their learning, to independent study in self-access learning centers, or participation in out-of-class learner-directed project work. In other words, autonomy means being self-directed (p.310).

She believes that learner autonomy can only be enhanced in a learning environment which specifically supports autonomy. According to Bneson (2011), for language teachers, it seems to be easy to theoretically talk about autonomy in language education, but practically it is difficult to implement it.

### **2.3.1 Self-access**

As Illes (2012) states, there are several methods to develop learner autonomy. To her, self-access facilities and also involving students in making decisions in pedagogic issues like selecting topics/content, materials, activities and tasks can lead to this aim. Also, encouraging self and peer-evaluation, and peer and group-work can lead to promoting learner autonomy.

Benson (2011) defines self-access as a facility designed purposefully to provide learning resources easily and directly accessible to learners. As mentioned by him, video, audio, and computer workstations, audio and video tapes and DVDs and CDs, computer and its related materials, and access to the Internet or satellite TV are all included in the category of self-access resources.

“The use of new technologies also leads to convergence among different forms of resource-based learning, which are increasingly identified by situational features, rather than the modes of learning they entail” (Benson, 2011, p. 127). According to him, autonomy is a natural outcome of self-directed learning in which all the goals, progression and evaluation of learning are considered by the learners themselves. A key word in autonomy is referred as self-access resources center at CRAPEL, which considered the accessibility of a rich references to target language materials as an essential opportunity to have experience of self-directed language learning (Benson, 2011). “At CRAPEL self-access was seen as a means of facilitating self-directed or autonomous learning” (Benson, 2011, p. 11).

Finally, Rivers (2001) claims that in order to achieve a self-directed learning, which means proper use of strategies and having control on one’s language

learning, learners should be aware of their needs and objectives and be free to act accordingly. He also concludes that self-directed process of learning is directly dependent on both genuine autonomy and self-assessment, and it does not occur in the absence of either of them (Rivers, 2001).

### **2.3.2 Related Studies on Learner Autonomy in Turkish Context**

In Turkish context, some studies have focused on learner autonomy, which will be discussed in this section. These studies can be listed in two categories. The first category includes the studies focusing on the relationship between the metacognitive strategies and learner autonomy. For example Alyas (2011) conducted a study on the role of metacognitive strategies in fostering learner autonomy in EFL reading, at the ELT Department of Hacettepe and Gazi Universities. The results of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between metacognitive reading strategies and reading autonomy.

The second category includes the studies which focus on the perceptions of the students and the instructors (i.e., students and the future teachers). For instance, Yildirim (2005) carried out a study on Turkish ELT students' perceptions and behavior related to learner autonomy at Anadolu University in Turkey. The aim of this study was to identify Turkish ELT students' perceptions and behaviors regarding learner autonomy both as learners and as future teachers of English. He also aimed at finding out if the education they receive makes any change in their perceptions. Using questionnaires and interviews, the researcher found out that both the first year students and fourth year students have positive views related to learner autonomy, and there is not much difference between the perceptions of the two groups. Durmus (2006), on the other hand, conducted a research on EFL instructors' perceptions on learner autonomy at the same university. The results



of his study showed that in terms of learner autonomy most of the instructors agreed with negotiating with students about the selection of audio-visual aids and realia, pace of the lesson, learning activities and tasks, type of homework tasks, and etc., but they disagreed with book selection, and place and time of the lesson.

In her study, Barlas (2012) focused on ELT learners' views on learner autonomy at Balikesir University in Turkey, and found out that with regard to promoting learner autonomy, the majority of the students' ideas were positive in terms of self-assessment, finding their own learning style, and making their own explanation; but they perceived record keeping and classroom management as not suitable for fostering learner autonomy.

Lastly, in addition to the above explained studies, Baylan (2007) carried out a study on university students' and their teachers' perceptions and expectations of learner autonomy in EFL preparatory classes at Marmara University. She aimed to find out the differences between the perceptions of students and their teachers in terms of learner autonomy. The findings of the study revealed that there was a mismatch between the perceptions of the two groups. According to the findings, the students' perceptions were lower than the teachers' regarding learner autonomy; however, students' expectations were higher than the teachers regarding class activities in terms of learner autonomy.

## **2.4 Autonomy and Culture**

Autonomy may differ from one individual to the other, and for the same individual in different learning contexts. It also varies from culture to culture. Autonomy in language learning is promoted in different countries, including the

U.S., European countries, and other international contexts. Also, nowadays learner autonomy and teacher autonomy became a buzzword in the field of language teaching and learning (Nakata, 2011, pp. 900-901).

A big part of the literature on learner autonomy shows that autonomy may be educational trend of Western context. It was always a question whether a trend established in western contexts can have validity for the learners in eastern contexts (Chan, et al. 2002). Some scholars believe that autonomy is suitable and valid for all language learners no matter what their culture is and where (eastern or western context) they are from; however, there are some other scholars who believe autonomy is valid only for western contexts and has some limited for other cultural contexts (Chan, et al. 2002).

As stated by Sinclair (1999), due to the fact that autonomy has been described differently in different educational contexts all around the world and it discloses the variation in the interpretation in relation to different social, cultural, political and educational context, it can be understood that study of learner autonomy is not a simple matter but a complex one which requires prudent interpretation of the particular cultural, social, political, and educational context in which the study has been done.

According to a study by Balcikanli (2010), culture and environment are very important in the pace and degree of developing learner autonomy. He states that due to the educational system in Turkey, they cannot involve the students in deciding the time and place of their learning process. He believes that in Turkey traditional way of teaching (in which authority is not share) is being carried out

and also student teachers are not trained to be autonomous, so improving learner autonomy in this environment is not simple to carry out.

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter has represented some literature regarding autonomy, learner autonomy, teacher autonomy, and the relationship between the two. Also, it has focused on autonomy in language learning and teaching. Finally, the issue of culture has also been mentioned and some related studies were given.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHOD**

In this chapter, the overall design of the research is presented in the first section. Then, context of the study is explained in the second section. The research questions are given in the third section. The participants are described in the fourth section. Information about the data collection instruments used in the study is presented in the fifth section. Data collection procedures are explained in the sixth section, and information about piloting is given in the seventh section. Finally, the data analysis procedures are clarified in the eighth section.

#### **3.1 Overall Research Design**

This study has been designed as a qualitative case study which includes both qualitative and quantitative data adopting a naturalistic and descriptive inquiry approach. It can also be considered as an evaluation study because it has attempted to evaluate the three skill-based courses in terms of how they promote autonomous learning. This study employs triangulation approach due to the fact that the data have been collected through three different ways including student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. Qualitative research is defined by Salkind (2006) as “social or behavioral science research that explores the processes that underlie human behavior using such exploratory techniques as interviews, surveys, case studies, and other relatively personal techniques” (p.201). 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. Using the technique of triangulation can aid in credibility, transferability, conformability, and dependability in qualitative research” (p.368). As described by Salkind (2006) “a case is a descriptive research method used to study an individual in a unique setting or situation in an intense manner” (p. 305). As to Salkind (2006) “Descriptive research describes the characteristics of an existing phenomenon” (p.11). Finally, “evaluation research can be defined as a type of study that uses standard social research methods for evaluative purposes, as a specific research methodology, and as an assessment process that employs special techniques unique to the evaluation of social programs” (Powell, 2006, p.102).

### **3.2 Context**

The context of the study is English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC).

According to the information on the web page regarding the ELT Department of EMU (<http://fedu.emu.edu.tr/?page=14:34:0:4:english>), this department was established in 1995. The ELT Department had an essential role in establishment of Faculty of Education at EMU in 1999. The ELT Department is assigned to promote and maintain international standards of superiority in teaching and research at undergraduate and graduate levels, to train creative, confident, competent and independent professionals. This department contributes to the improvement of English language learning and teaching in the TRNC as well as to the community at large. The students of the ELT Department are from different countries. Higher Education Council of Turkey has fully accredited all

the degree programs of the department namely Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Master of Arts (M.A.) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degrees in ELT. The B.A. program of the ELT Department has recently been accredited by AQAS (Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programs), an accreditation body located in Germany.

The four-year undergraduate ELT program at EMU includes 58 courses. These courses can be put into four categories as:

- Language improvement courses
- Subject matter courses
- Education courses
- Others

Language improvement courses aim to further develop students' language knowledge and skills in English. These courses focus on language aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, and language skills like reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This study focuses on three skill based courses in the first semester of the program.

### **3.3 Research Questions**

The present study aims to explore the extent to which the three skill-based language improvement courses in the first semester of the undergraduate ELT program at EMU promote learner autonomy from the perspectives of the students and the instructors. To this aim, the study attempts to find out the students' and the instructors' perceptions as regards the following aspects of the courses: teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and

materials, and assessment procedures. Overall, this study aims to evaluate the above-mentioned courses in terms of promoting autonomy as perceived by the students and the instructors. Therefore, the study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the three skill-based language improvement courses in the first semester of the ELT undergraduate program promote learner autonomy?

a. How do the students perceive autonomy in these courses as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures?

b. How do the instructors perceive autonomy in these courses as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures?

c. To what extent do class activities (teaching-learning procedures) and tasks used in these courses promote learner autonomy?

2. How can the three skill-based courses be improved in terms of promoting learner autonomy?

a. What do the students suggest in terms of promoting learner autonomy in these courses?

b. What do the instructors suggest in terms of promoting learner autonomy in these courses?

### **3.4 Participants**

The participants of the study were the first year students taking ELTE 103, ELTE 105 and ELTE 107 courses, and the instructors teaching them. The participants of the study had been chosen based on purposive sampling method. “In a purposive sample, researchers knowingly select individuals based on their knowledge of the

population and in order to elicit data in which they are interested” (Mackey and Gass, 2005, p. 122). The two groups of participants are described in the following subsections.

### **3.4.1 Students**

First semester undergraduate (BA) students of the ELT Department enrolled in ELTE 103, ELTE 105, and ELTE 107 participated in this study. The first year BA students of Translation Department enrolled in ELTE 107 course also participated in this study. The total number of students enrolled in these courses was 114 but only 87 students participated in the study (18 out of 26 students enrolled in ELTE 103, 24 out of 34 students in ELTE 105, and 45 out of 54 students in ELTE 107).

In ELTE 103 course, 38.9% of the students were male and 61.1% of them were female. 44.4% of the students were from TRNC, 38.9% from TR, 5.6% from Cameroon, 5.6% from Pakistan, and 5.6% were from Saudi Arabia and TRNC (bi-nationality). 72.2% of the students had Turkish as their mother tongue, 5.6% English, 5.6% Urdu, 5.6% Turkish and English (bi-lingual), 5.6% Arabic and Turkish (bilingual), and 5.6% French and English (bilingual). The age range of the students was between 17 and 23, with the mean of 19.9.

In ELTE 105 course, 37.5% of the students were male and 62.5% were female. 37.5% of the students were from TRNC, 50% from TR, 4.2% from Cameroon, 4.2% from Pakistan, and 4.2% were from TRNC and England (bi-nationality). Regarding their mother tongue, 79.2% of the students spoke Turkish, 8.3% English, 4.2% Urdu, 4.2% Turkish and English (bilingual), and 4.2% French and



English (bilingual). Their age range was between 17 and 27, and the mean for the age was 20.62.

In ELTE 107 course, 46.7% of the students were male and 53.3% of them were female. 46.7% of the students were from TRNC, 37.8% from TR, 2.2% from Cameroon, 2.2% from Pakistan, 2.2% from England, 2.2% from Turkmenistan, 4.4% from Azerbaijan and 2.2% were from Saudi Arabia and TRNC (bi-nationality). Considering their mother tongue, 80% of the students were native speakers of Turkish, 2.2% English, 2.2% Urdu, 4.4% Azerbaijani, 6.7% Arabic and Turkish (bi-lingual), and 2.2% French and English (bilingual). 53.3% of the students in this course were especially from the ELT Department and 46.7% were from the Translation and Interpretation Department. The age range was between 17 and 25, and the mean for the age was 19.67.

### **3.4.2 Instructors**

In total, four instructors, who were teaching ELTE 103 (Gr.1), ELTE 105 (Gr.1 and Gr.2), and ELTE 107 (Gr.1 and Gr.2) courses, participated in this study. Each group of the courses was taught by a different instructor, but only the instructor of the ELTE 107 was the same instructor teaching ELTE 103). Of the four instructors, one was female and the other three were male. Their ages ranged between 40 and 53. Their years of teaching experience varied between 15 to 28 years. All four instructors were nonnative speakers of English. Three of them were Turkish Cypriots and one was Turkish.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

In the current study multiple sources of data were used: 3 parallel student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and class observations. According to Patton

(1990), studies that use more than one method of data collection have high validity and reliability in contrast to the ones which use only one method.

### **3.5.1 Student Questionnaires**

Three parallel student questionnaires (Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D) were used in this study. The questionnaires were prepared by the researcher by adapting the instruments used by various researchers (Chan, 2001; Tomlinson, 2007; Fumin and Li, 2012). The questionnaires aimed to identify students' perceptions as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course materials, and assessment procedures in each of the three skill-based language improvement courses, to find out to what extent these three courses promote learner autonomy as perceived by the students.

There are two main parts in the questionnaires. Part 1 focuses on background information about students, and aims to find out information about their age, gender, nationality, and mother tongue. Part 2, on the other hand, is the questionnaire itself. Part 2 is comprised of 4 sub-parts: i) Part A- the teacher roles; ii) Part B- the students' roles; iii) part C- course content and materials; and, iv) Part D- assessment procedures. In the following paragraphs, Part 2 of the student questionnaire for each course is explained in detail.

The questionnaire for ELTE 103 (Appendix B) includes four sub-parts. In part A there are 31 closed-items in the form of five points Likert-scale [Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Unsure (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)] and one open-ended question. Part B, focusing on the student roles, contains 25 closed-items and one open-ended item with three sub-items. Part C includes 17 closed-items

and 2 open-ended questions. Part D includes 12 closed-items and 1 open ended question, about the assessment procedures in the course.

The questionnaire for ELTE 105 (Appendix C) includes four sub-Parts. In part A there are 27 closed-items in the form of five points Likert-scale [Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Unsure (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)] and one open-ended question. Part B focusing on the student roles, contains 23 closed-items and one open-ended item with three sub-items. Part C includes 17 closed-items and 2 open-ended questions. Part D includes 13 closed-items and 1 open ended question, about the assessment procedures in the course.

The questionnaire for ELTE 107 (Appendix D) includes four sub-Parts. In part A there are 29 closed-items in the form of five points Likert-scale [Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Unsure (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)] and one open-ended question. Part B, focusing on the student roles, contains 24 closed-items and one open-ended item with three sub-items. Part C includes 17 closed-items and 2 open-ended questions. Part D includes 13 closed-items and 1 open-ended question about the assessment procedures in the course.

### **3.5.2 Teacher Interview**

Teacher interviews were conducted to identify the instructors' perceptions regarding learner autonomy, their evaluations of the courses they were teaching in terms of learner autonomy, and their suggestions for the improvement of these courses as regards learner autonomy. A list of questions was prepared by the researcher in the light of Chan (2001), Fumin and Li (2012), Tomlinson (2007). The type of the interviews employed in this study was semi-structured. Semi-structured interview is defined by Dornyei (2007) as an interview "which offers a

compromise between the two extremes. Although there is a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format is open-ended and the interviewee is encouraged to elaborate on the issues raised in an exploratory manner” (p, 136).

The teacher interview (Appendix E) consists of 4 parts. Part 1 aims to obtain background information about the instructors (i.e., their age, gender, and years of teaching experience, mother tongue and nationality). Part 2 includes 5 questions regarding instructor’s general perceptions about learner autonomy. In part 3, there are 8 questions focusing on teacher’s evaluation of the course in terms of learner autonomy. Finally, the 5 questions in part 4 ask teachers to give suggestions for the improvement of the course in terms of promoting learner autonomy. Overall, there were 18 questions in the interview.

### **3.5.3 Observations**

The classroom observations were conducted to find out to what extent the classroom activities and tasks used in these courses promote learner autonomy. The class observation form (Appendix F) used in this study was prepared by the researcher. The form includes two parts. Part 1 contains the date, the course code and group, the hour/time and the day on which the class was observed. Part 2 includes a table containing duration of each activity (when it started and when finished), the activities or tasks, teacher’s activities and students’ activities in which the researcher wrote each activity/task/exercise conducted in the class, the materials used, and teacher’s and students’ activities regarding their duration (time) during the observation session.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection was conducted during the fall semester of the academic year 2013-2014. The data in this study was collected in several stages. First, the permission from the department was obtained (Appendix A). Second, the student questionnaires were administered to the students in the three skill-based language improvement courses after receiving their written consent (Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D).

Third, classroom observations (Appendix F) were conducted by the researcher in all groups of the three skill-based language improvement courses. In total, there were 5 groups of classes to be observed in this study; one group in ELTE 103, 2 groups in ELTE 105, and 2 groups in ELTE 107. These observations were conducted during 2013-2014 academic year fall semester. Duration of each class observation was 50 minutes, i.e., the whole class time. ELTE 103 was observed for 3 class hours (150 minutes), ELTE 105 were observed for 5 class hours (250 minutes), and ELTE 107 were observed for 6 class hours (300 minutes). In this study, 14 class hours (700 minutes) observations were conducted. During the observations the researcher filled in the form by writing down the activities and their duration in detail.

Finally, the researcher contacted the instructors for appointments for interviews (Appendix E). Then each instructor was interviewed individually by the researcher after getting his/her consent (Appendix G: Teacher Consent). During the interviews, the researcher took down notes as well as audio recording the interviews.

### **3.7 Piloting**

As indicated by Mackey and Gass (2005), “a pilot study is an important means of assessing the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods and making any necessary revisions before they are used with the research participant” (p. 43).

The student questionnaires were piloted prior to administration of them to the students enrolled in ELTE 103, ELTE 105, and ELTE 107 courses. To do piloting, firstly, the researcher gave the questionnaire of each course to the instructor of that course, to confirm that the contents of the questionnaire are relevant to the course. This was done for the validity of the questionnaire. Then, 6 students were asked to help the researcher in piloting the questionnaires. The researcher asked these students to respond to the questionnaire and tell her whatever they couldn't understand. Only in few items, students suggested minor changes regarding wording. For example, one of them wanted to replace ‘*self-monitoring*’ with a synonym to clarify it, thus, we added the synonym ‘*self-checking*’ in parenthesis.

To find out the reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher used ‘reliability analysis’ option in the SPSS 21 program and it was found out that the questionnaires had a reliability value ranging between 94-95.1%: (94.0% for ELTE 103, 94.9% for ELTE 105, and 95.1% for ELTE 107).

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Both quantitative (frequencies and means) and qualitative data were used in the present study. Quantitative data were collected through the closed-items in the

questionnaires, and qualitative data were gathered through the open-ended items in the questionnaires, teacher interviews, and class observations.

For analyzing the quantitative data (Likert-scale items) Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21) was used. Frequencies were found out through descriptive statistics. For each closed-item, the mean (out of 5) was calculated. On the other hand, in order to analyze the data from open-ended questions, the researcher used coding, and then found frequencies. To do this, the researcher first wrote the answers of students to the open-ended questions word by word. She wrote responses of all the students for the same question. Then, by underlining the keywords of each answer the researcher started coding them. Using the coding, she found out the numbers of students who mentioned the specific code in order to respond the question. After that, frequencies of responses to each question were calculated.

To analyze teacher interviews, first of all, the researcher transcribed all the interviews. Then, she put all the answers under the questions. She highlighted the ideas and key answers of each instructor and categorized them after coding. For two courses, each of which included two groups taught by two different instructors, the researcher put the answers of both instructors to differentiate them from each other in order to find out the differences and similarities in their answers.

As for the analysis of data from class observations, the researcher analyzed activities observed in terms of whether or not they promote autonomy. Then,

from the observed activities she mentioned those which promote learner autonomy in presenting the results.

### **3.9 Limitations and Delimitations**

This study had some limitations. First, the study included only the three skill-based language improvement courses offered in the first semester; the continuations of these courses offered in the second semester were not in the scope of the study. Thus, the findings of the study could not be generalized to all the skill-based language improvement courses. Moreover, in the present study systematic evaluation of the materials was not conducted, and therefore, the extent to which the materials contributed to learner autonomy could not be identified. Lastly, the hours of class observations of the present study could be more to gather more information regarding the class activities and teaching-learning procedures.

On the other hand, the study also had some delimitations. The first delimitation is that it included triangulation in data collection. The data were collected through different instruments namely student questionnaires, teacher interviews, and classroom observations. As Patton (1990) argues, studies which use more than one method of data collection have high validity and reliability. The second delimitation is the fact that the questionnaires had a high reliability value ranging between 94-95.1%: 94.0%.

### **3.10 Summary**

To sum up, this chapter has presented the method of the current study. The overall research design of the study and its context have been explained in the first and second sections, respectively. Then, the research questions and the



participants of the study were described in sections 3.3 and 3.4. Information regarding the data collection instruments and procedures has been presented in the fifth and sixth sections, respectively. Afterwards, piloting has been presented in the seventh section. Finally, the data analysis procedures were explained.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESULTS**

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. The first section focuses on students' perceptions. In the second section, teachers' perceptions are explained. Section three includes both teachers' and students' suggestions for promoting learner autonomy further in the courses. Finally, the fourth section presents to what extent the class activities promote learner autonomy.

#### **4.1 Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in the Three Skill-Based Courses**

This section presents the results obtained from the student questionnaires.

##### **4.1.1 ELTE 103 Advanced Reading and Writing I**

In this section, the results related to the students' perceptions of learner autonomy regarding three factors namely, teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures in ELTE 103 course are presented.

As for the teacher roles, the results of the ELTE 103 student questionnaire reveal that generally the students' perceptions of the teacher's activities in terms of promoting learner autonomy were positive because for most of the items in Part A they agreed (SA/A) in high percentages. As shown in Table 4.1, the mean of the items 1-30 (item 31 is an exception here, because unlike the other items, it is against promoting learner autonomy) in part A ranged between 4.67 and 2.89

(out of 5). As can be seen in the table, 100% of the students agreed (SA/A) with item 14 (*The teacher gives us out-of-class writing tasks*), and the mean of this item was 4.67. High percentages of students also agreed (SA/A) with items 1 (*The teacher encourages us to do peer reading activities*), 12 (*The teacher gives us opportunities to do individual writing tasks*), 13 (*The teacher gives us out-of-class reading tasks*), 21 (*The teacher is someone who gives the information*), 22 (*The teacher is someone who guides us to find the information ourselves*), 24 (*The teacher suggests ways of developing our writing strategies*), and 26 (*The teacher encourages us to discover how to study*) with the percentages 88.9%, 88.9%, 88.9%, 88.9%, 88.9%, and 88.9%, respectively. However, comparatively high percentages of students disagreed (D/SD) with items 4 (*The teacher are involved in selecting writing tasks and activities*), 15 (*The teacher makes us read in pairs/small groups in class*) and 16 (*The teacher makes us write in pairs/small groups in class*), 33.4%, 44.4%, and 33.3%, respectively. Similarly, most of the students agreed (SA/A) with item 31 (*The teacher is the authority in the class in decision making*). It is surprising that while most of the students believed that teacher's activities are promoting learner autonomy, they viewed the teacher as the authority in the class. In addition, high percentages of students, 38.9% and 44.4%, were unsure about items 8 (*The teacher encourages us to read English newspapers and magazines after class*) and 16 (*The teacher makes us write in pairs/small groups in class*), correspondingly.

Overall, the results demonstrate that teacher's activities promote learner autonomy as perceived by the students (Average mean=4.05 out of 5).

Table 4.1. Frequencies and Means for Teacher Activities in ELTE 103

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; S D</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	88.9%	0.0%	11.1%	4.28
<b>2</b>	83.3%	11.1%	5.6%	4.28
<b>3</b>	72.3%	22.2%	5.6%	4.22
<b>4</b>	44.5%	22.2%	33.4%	3.22
<b>5</b>	50%	22.2%	27.8%	3.44
<b>6</b>	55.5%	22.2%	22.2%	3.56
<b>7</b>	66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	3.94
<b>8</b>	55.6%	38.9%	5.6%	3.72
<b>9</b>	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	4.22
<b>10</b>	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	4.22
<b>11</b>	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	4.17
<b>12</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.11
<b>13</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.44
<b>14</b>	100%	0.0%	0.0%	4.67
<b>15</b>	27.8%	27.8%	44.4%	2.89
<b>16</b>	22.3%	44.4%	33.3%	2.94
<b>17</b>	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%	4.28
<b>18</b>	77.7%	22.2%	0.0%	4.11
<b>19</b>	83.3%	11.1%	5.6%	4.22
<b>20</b>	77.8%	5.6%	16.7%	4.11
<b>21</b>	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%	4.56
<b>22</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.44
<b>23</b>	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%	4.56
<b>24</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.50
<b>25</b>	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	4.39
<b>26</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.39
<b>27</b>	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	4.39
<b>28</b>	44.5%	50%	5.6%	3.61
<b>29</b>	72.2%	5.6%	22.2%	3.78
<b>30</b>	72.2%	11.1%	16.7%	4
<b>31</b>	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	4.17
<b>Average mean</b>				<b>4.05</b>

With regard to the students' roles, the results of the ELTE 103 student questionnaire show that, as in part A, students' perceptions of the students' activities in terms of fostering learner autonomy were also positive because for most of the items they agreed (SA/A) in high percentages. As indicated in the Table 4.2, the mean of the items 1-25 was variable between 2.67 and 4.33 (out of 5). The highest percentage (88.9%) of students agreed (SA/A) with item 19

(*Students are engaged in self-study*); the mean for this item was 4.11. Similarly, high percentage of students (83.3%) also agreed with item 18 (*Students are responsible for our own learning*); the mean for this items was 4.33. On the other hand, only small percentage (22.3%) of the students agreed (SA/A) with item 13 (*Students keep a diary for our learning*); the lowest mean score (2.67) belongs to this item. On the other hand, about half of the students disagreed (D/SD) with the items 12 (*Students read English story books outside the class*), 13 (*Students keep a diary for our learning*), and 21 (*Students work in pairs/groups*) with 44.5%, 44, 5% and 50%, respectively.

Table 4.2. Frequencies and Means for Students Activities in ELTE 103

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	61.1%	33.3%	5.6%	3.72
<b>2</b>	66.7%	22.2%	11.2%	3.78
<b>3</b>	50%	22.2%	27.8%	3.44
<b>4</b>	38.9%	33.3%	27.8%	3.39
<b>5</b>	44.4%	16.7%	38.9%	3.33
<b>6</b>	50%	11.1%	38.9%	2.94
<b>7</b>	61.1%	16.7%	22.2%	3.50
<b>8</b>	72.3%	11.1%	16.7%	3.67
<b>9</b>	38.9%	27.8%	33.4%	3
<b>10</b>	77.7%	5.6%	16.7%	3.89
<b>11</b>	72.2%	0.0%	27.8%	3.67
<b>12</b>	44.4%	11.1%	44.5%	2.94
<b>13</b>	22.3%	33.3%	44.5%	2.67
<b>14</b>	44.5%	33.3%	22.2%	3.17
<b>15</b>	66.7%	22.2%	11.2%	3.67
<b>16</b>	66.7%	27.8%	5.6%	4
<b>17</b>	55.6%	38.9%	5.6%	3.78
<b>18</b>	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	4.33
<b>19</b>	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%	4.11
<b>20</b>	72.3%	22.2%	5.6%	4.22
<b>21</b>	38.9%	11.1%	50%	3.06
<b>22</b>	44.5%	27.8%	27.8%	3.22
<b>23</b>	61.1%	16.7%	22.2%	3.56
<b>24</b>	55.6%	33.3%	11.1%	4
<b>25</b>	61.2%	27.8%	11.1%	4.6
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>3.59</b>

Overall, according to the results summarized in Table 4.2, students' perceptions of their roles in the course indicate the promotion of learner autonomy in that course. However, their perceptions were less positive (mean=3.59) compared to their perceptions of the teacher's roles (mean=4.05) in this regard.

Regarding the evaluation of the course materials, the results of the ELTE 103 student questionnaire show that students' perceptions of the course materials in terms of fostering learner autonomy were positive, due to the fact that high percentages of students agreed (SA/A) with most of the items in part C. As presented in Table 4.3, the mean of the items 1-17 was 3.90 (out of 5), ranging between 3.39 and 4.28. As shown in the table, above 88% of the students agreed (SA/A) with items 6 (*The materials include some strategies of how to write*), 7 (*The materials provide us some tasks to assess our learning*), and 12 (*The materials encourage us to guess/predict/discover while learning*). Furthermore, very small percentages of students disagreed (D/SD) with these items, and no student disagreed (D/SD) with items 5 (*The materials include some strategies of how to read*), 6 (*The materials include some strategies of how to write*), 9 (*The materials encourage us to do self-study. We can study them on our own outside the classroom*), and 12 (*The materials encourage us to guess/predict/discover while learning*).

In general, the results show that course materials highly promote learner autonomy in ELTE 103 course, as perceived by the students.

Table 4.3. Frequencies and Means for Course Materials in ELTE 103

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	66.7%	11.1%	22.2%	3.83
<b>2</b>	61.1%	16.7%	22.2%	3.72
<b>3</b>	50%	22.2%	27.8%	3.39
<b>4</b>	61.1%	16.7%	22.3%	3.67
<b>5</b>	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	4.28
<b>6</b>	88.8%	11.1%	0.0%	4.33
<b>7</b>	88.9%	5.6%	5.6%	4.11
<b>8</b>	66.7%	27.8%	5.6%	3.89
<b>9</b>	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	3.83
<b>10</b>	66.7%	27.8%	5.6%	3.72
<b>11</b>	83.4%	11.1%	5.6%	4.06
<b>12</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.28
<b>13</b>	72.2%	22.2%	5.6%	3.94
<b>14</b>	72.2%	11.1%	16.7%	3.94
<b>15</b>	61.1%	33.3%	5.6%	3.83
<b>16</b>	66.7%	27.8%	5.6%	3.72
<b>17</b>	72.3%	22.2%	5.6%	3.83
<b>Average Mean</b>				3.90

Regarding the assessment procedures in the course, the results of the ELTE 103 student questionnaire reveal that high percentages of students generally perceived the assessment procedures positively because high percentages of the students agreed (SA/A) with most of the items except for items 1 (*Only the teacher corrects writing mistakes*) and 2 (*Only the teacher corrects reading mistakes.*), which are opposite of promoting learner autonomy. As presented in Table 4.4 the mean for items 3-12 was 4.19 (out of 5) and it varied between 3.44 and 4.44 for each individual item. According to the Table 4.1.4, 94.4% of the students agreed (SA/A) with item 7 (*The teacher encourages us for self-correction*). Also, above 80% of the students agreed (SA/A) with the items 3 (*The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in writing*), 5 (*The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in writing*), and 10 (*We correct each other's mistakes in reading activities*); 88.9%, 83.3%, and 83.4% respectively. Moreover, none of the

students disagreed (D/SD) with the items 3 (*The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in writing*), 5 (*The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in writing*), 7 (*The teacher encourages us for self-correction*), and 8 (*The teacher encourages us for peer correction*). On the other hand, 44.5% and 38.9% of the students disagreed (D/SD) with items 1 (*Only the teacher corrects writing mistakes*) and 2 (*Only the teacher corrects reading mistakes*), respectively. The means for these two items were 2.83 and 2.94, correspondingly. Thus, the results show that assessment procedures also promote learner autonomy as perceived by the students.

Table 4.4. Frequencies and Means for Assessment Procedures in ELTE 103

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp;SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	38.9%	16.7%	44.5%	2.83
<b>2</b>	38.9%	22.2%	38.9%	2.94
<b>3</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.56
<b>4</b>	83.4%	11.1%	5.5%	4.44
<b>5</b>	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	4.44
<b>6</b>	77.8%	16.7%	5.6%	4.28
<b>7</b>	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%	4.44
<b>8</b>	72.2%	27.8%	0.0%	4.06
<b>9</b>	77.7%	11.1%	11.1%	4.11
<b>10</b>	83.4%	11.1%	5.6%	4.33
<b>11</b>	72.2%	11.1%	16.7%	3.83
<b>12</b>	55.6%	22.2%	22.3%	3.44
<b>Average Mean</b>				4.19

#### **4.1.2 ELTE 105 Listening and Pronunciation I**

This section presents the results related to the students' perceptions of learner autonomy with regard to three factors namely, teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures in ELTE 105 course.



Regarding the teacher roles, the results of the ELTE 105 student questionnaire show that generally the students had positive perceptions of the teacher's activities in terms of learner autonomy because high percentages of students agreed (SA/A) with most of the items in part A. As shown in Table 4.5, the mean of the items 1-26 (item 27 is an exception here, because unlike the other items it contradicts with promoting learner autonomy) in part A ranged between 3.42 and 4.54 (out of 5).

Table 4.5. Frequencies and Means for Teacher Activities in ELTE 105

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	79.1%	4.2%	16.7%	3.96
<b>2</b>	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	4.21
<b>3</b>	66.6%	12.5%	20.8%	3.79
<b>4</b>	70.8%	20.8%	8.3%	4.13
<b>5</b>	91.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.42
<b>6</b>	91.7%	8.3%	0.0%	4.54
<b>7</b>	91.6%	8.3%	0.0%	4.38
<b>8</b>	75%	25%	0.0%	4.08
<b>9</b>	75%	16.7%	8.4%	3.96
<b>10</b>	58.4%	12.5%	29.1%	3.50
<b>11</b>	70.9%	16.7%	12.5%	3.83
<b>12</b>	45.9%	33.3%	20.8%	3.42
<b>13</b>	87.5%	8.3%	4.2%	4.29
<b>14</b>	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	4.42
<b>15</b>	79.2%	20.8%	0.0%	4.08
<b>16</b>	79.1%	20.8%	0.0%	4.13
<b>17</b>	83.3%	16.7%	0.0%	4.29
<b>18</b>	75%	16.7%	8.3%	4
<b>19</b>	91.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.29
<b>20</b>	83.3%	12.5%	4.2%	4.25
<b>21</b>	87.5%	8.3%	4.2%	4.25
<b>22</b>	91.6%	8.3%	0.0%	4.50
<b>23</b>	83.4%	16.7%	0.0%	4.38
<b>24</b>	79.2%	16.7%	4.2%	3.96
<b>25</b>	75%	12.5%	12.5%	4.13
<b>26</b>	70.8%	25%	4.2%	4.13
<b>27</b>	75%	12.5%	12.5%	3.96
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>4.13</b>

As can be seen in Table 4.5, above 91% of the students agreed (SA/A) with items 5 (The teacher teaches us different strategies of how to listen), 6 (The teacher teaches us different strategies of how to pronounce), 7 (The teacher encourages us to reflect on (think about) our learning), 19 (The teacher suggests ways of developing our listening strategies), and 22 (The teacher encourages us to discover how to study). On the other hand, high percentages of students also agreed (SA/A) with item 27 (The teacher is the authority in the class), which is against the idea of fostering learner autonomy. As in ELTE 103 course, the interesting point is that although most of the students perceived the teacher's activities as promoting learner autonomy, their image of the teacher was as the authority of the class.

Overall, the results demonstrate that as in ELTE 103, according to students' perceptions, teacher's activities in ELTE 105 foster learner autonomy.

With regard to students' roles, the results of the ELTE 105 student questionnaire indicate that, students' perceptions of the students' roles and activities in terms of promoting learner autonomy in the course show variations. In other words, while the students agreed (SA/A) with some of the items in part B in high percentages, they were unsure or they disagreed (D/SD) with some others. As can be seen in Table 4.6, the mean of the items 1-23 ranged between 2.96 and 4.42 (out of 5). Only items 22 [*Students use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet, etc.) to improve our listening skills*] and 23 [*Students use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet, etc.) to improve our pronunciation*] were agreed (SA/A) by high percentages of the students, 91.7% and 95.9% respectively. However, only 50% of students agreed (SA/A) with item 6 [*Students are given options for homework*

*listening tasks*) and 37.5% disagreed (D/SD) with it. Item 11 (*Students keep a diary for our learning*), as shown in the table, received the lowest mean (2.96). Moreover, 41.7% of the students disagreed (D/SD) with item 5 (*Students are involved in decisions on the time and place of the lesson*). Overall, according to the results, students' roles and activities, unlike the teacher's roles and activities, were perceived to be promoting learner autonomy comparatively less by the students.

Table 4.6. Frequencies and Means for Students Activities in ELTE 105

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	54.1%	25%	20.9%	3.50
<b>2</b>	58.3%	12.5%	29.2%	3.46
<b>3</b>	58.4%	37.5%	4.2%	3.83
<b>4</b>	54.1%	20.8%	25%	3.50
<b>5</b>	45.8%	12.5%	41.7%	3.25
<b>6</b>	50%	12.5%	37.5%	3.21
<b>7</b>	54.1%	16.7%	29.1%	3.38
<b>8</b>	66.7%	25%	8.4%	3.96
<b>9</b>	79.1%	12.5%	8.4%	4.13
<b>10</b>	66.6%	25%	8.4%	3.75
<b>11</b>	33.3%	29.2%	37.5%	2.96
<b>12</b>	54.2%	25%	20.9%	3.42
<b>13</b>	62.5%	20.8%	16.7%	3.75
<b>14</b>	58.3%	33.3%	8.3%	3.71
<b>15</b>	58.3%	29.2%	12.5%	3.71
<b>16</b>	75%	20.8%	4.2%	4.25
<b>17</b>	62.5%	25%	12.5%	3.88
<b>18</b>	70.8%	16.7%	12.5%	3.92
<b>19</b>	54.2%	25%	20.9%	3.54
<b>20</b>	54.2%	25%	20.9%	3.54
<b>21</b>	54.2%	20.8%	25%	3.46
<b>22</b>	91.7%	4.2%	4.2%	4.25
<b>23</b>	95.9%	0.0%	4.2%	4.42
<b>Average Mean</b>				3.69

Regarding the course materials, the results of the ELTE 105 student questionnaire show that most of the items in part C, are agreed (SA /A) with varying percentages. Moreover, important percentage of students was unsure

about some of the items. For instance, 41.7% of the students were unsure about item 10 (*The materials gives us out-of-class listening tasks*). Also, 33.3% were unsure about items 3 (*The materials include some listening tasks to do in small groups*), 8 (*The materials get us to be a decision maker rather than a receiver of information*), 9 (*The materials encourage us to do self-study.*), 11 (*The materials involve us in doing various activities*), and 12 (*The materials encourage us to guess/predict/discover while learning*). Moreover, 16.7% of the students disagreed (D/SD) with items 9 (*The materials gives us opportunities to do individual pronunciation tasks*) and 16 (*The materials lets us find our own mistakes in pronunciation*).

Overall, according to the results concerning the students' perceptions of the course materials, it is obvious that while the course materials promote learner autonomy in some aspects, they do not do this in other aspects.

Table 4.7. Frequencies and Means for Course Materials in ELTE 105

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	66.6%	20.8%	12.5%	3.88
<b>2</b>	70.8%	16.7%	12.5%	3.83
<b>3</b>	50%	33.3%	16.6%	3.33
<b>4</b>	66.6%	20.8%	12.5%	3.54
<b>5</b>	70.8%	16.7%	12.5%	3.92
<b>6</b>	79.2%	12.5%	8.3%	4
<b>7</b>	62.5%	29.2%	8.3%	3.83
<b>8</b>	54.2%	33.3%	12.5%	3.54
<b>9</b>	50%	33.3%	16.7%	3.46
<b>10</b>	54.1%	41.7%	4.2%	3.71
<b>11</b>	62.5%	33.3%	4.2%	3.88
<b>12</b>	62.5%	33.3%	4.2%	3.79
<b>13</b>	75%	16.7%	8.3%	3.96
<b>14</b>	62.5%	25%	12.5%	3.71
<b>15</b>	70.8%	25%	4.2%	3.92
<b>16</b>	58.3%	25%	16.7%	3.63
<b>17</b>	70.9%	25%	4.2%	3.83
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>3.75</b>

Regarding the assessment procedures in ELTE 105, the results of the student questionnaire reveal that generally assessment procedures in the course promote learner autonomy because high percentages of the students agreed (SA/A) with the items in part D.

As presented in Table 4.8, the mean of the items 3-13 (items 1 and 2 are not involved because they are opposed to promoting learner autonomy) in part D varied between 3.63 and 4.42 (out of 5). According to the table, 95.8% of the students agreed (SA/A) with item 4 (*The teacher teaches us how to find our pronunciation mistakes*) with the mean of 4.42 (the highest mean). 87.5% and 79.2% of the students agreed (SA/A) with the items 3 (*The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in listening*) and 6 (*The teacher encourages us to correct our own pronunciation mistakes in pronunciation*), respectively. As shown in the table, 29.2% of the students were unsure about item 8 (*The teacher encourages us for peer correction*). Also, no student disagreed (D/SD) with items 3 (*The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in listening*) and 4 (*The teacher teaches us how to find our pronunciation mistakes*). Unlike other items in part D, items 1 (*Only the teacher corrects mistakes made in listening activities.*) and 2 (*Only the teacher corrects pronunciation mistakes*) are practices against promoting learner autonomy; however, 70.9% and 66.7% of the students agreed SA/A) with them, respectively. While students' perceptions about most of the items in part D are positive, results for items 1 and 2 indicate the opposite.

Table 4.8. Frequencies and Means for Assessment Procedures in ELTE 105

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	70.9%	12.5%	16.7%	3.96
<b>2</b>	66.7%	20.8%	12.5%	3.79
<b>3</b>	87.5%	12.5%	0.0%	4.25

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>4</b>	95.8%	4.2%	0.0%	4.42
<b>5</b>	75%	20.8%	4.2%	4.17
<b>6</b>	79.2%	12.5%	8.3%	4.08
<b>7</b>	75%	20.8%	4.2%	4.13
<b>8</b>	66.7%	29.2%	4.2%	3.92
<b>9</b>	70.8%	25%	4.2%	3.88
<b>10</b>	66.6%	16.7%	16.6%	3.63
<b>11</b>	70.9%	12.5%	16.6%	3.75
<b>12</b>	62.5%	25%	12.5%	3.92
<b>13</b>	66.7%	25%	8.3%	3.88
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>4</b>

However, in general, the assessment procedures tend to promote learner autonomy, as perceived by the students.

#### **4.1.3 ELTE 107 Oral Communication Skills I**

The results related to the students' perceptions of learner autonomy in terms of teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures in the ELTE 107 course are presented in this section.

The results of the student questionnaire reveal that the teacher's roles and activities highly promote learner autonomy because high percentages of the students agreed (SA/A) with most of the items. As shown in Table 4.9, the mean for the items 1-28 was 4.03 (out of 5). For instance, above 91% of the students agreed (SA/A) with items 19 (*The teacher is someone who guides us to find the information ourselves*) and 24 (*The teacher encourages us to guess/predict/discover while learning*). Students also agreed (SA/A) with items 1 (*The teacher involves us in choosing the speaking topics*), 8 (*The teacher gives us opportunities to do individual speaking tasks in the class*), 18 (*The teacher is someone who gives the information*), and 21 (*The teacher suggests ways of*

*developing our listening strategies*) in high percentages; 84.5%, 88.9%, 88.9%, and 84.4% respectively. On the other hand, 33.3% of the students were unsure about items 4 (*The teacher gives us some choices in listening activities*) and 15 (*The teacher offers a variety of listening activities*). As presented in the table, 24.5% of the students disagreed (D/SD) with item 11 (*The teacher gives us out-of-class listening tasks*). On the other hand, none of the students disagreed (D/SD) with items 8 (*The teacher gives us opportunities to do individual speaking tasks in the class*), 20 (*The teacher suggests ways of developing our speaking strategies*), and 24 (*The teacher encourages us to guess/predict/discover while learning*). However, as in the other two courses, students' perceptions of the teacher's roles and activities in terms of promoting learner autonomy are positive, but their image of the teacher is as the authority.

Overall, according to the results given in Table 4.9, teacher's activities promote learner autonomy in ELTE 107 course, as perceived by the students.

Table 4.9. Frequencies and Means for Teacher activities in ELTE 107

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	84.5%	4.4%	11.1%	4.09
<b>2</b>	68.9%	20%	11.1%	3.76
<b>3</b>	80%	15.6%	4.4%	4.18
<b>4</b>	57.8%	33.3%	8.9%	3.71
<b>5</b>	82.2%	13.3%	4.4%	4.09
<b>6</b>	82.2%	13.3%	4.4%	4.16
<b>7</b>	80%	15.6%	4.4%	4.24
<b>8</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.29
<b>9</b>	66.6%	26.7%	6.6%	3.91
<b>10</b>	53.3%	26.7%	20%	3.51
<b>11</b>	51.1%	24.4%	24.5%	3.42
<b>12</b>	82.2%	8.9%	8.9%	4.04
<b>13</b>	73.4%	20%	6.7%	4.02
<b>14</b>	75.5%	15.6%	8.9%	4
<b>15</b>	62.3%	33.3%	4.4%	3.84
<b>16</b>	71.2%	17.8%	11.1%	3.93
<b>17</b>	75.6%	13.3%	11.1%	3.93

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>18</b>	88.9%	8.9%	2.2%	4.44
<b>19</b>	91.1%	6.7%	2.2%	4.38
<b>20</b>	86.7%	13.3%	0.0%	4.36
<b>21</b>	84.4%	11.1%	4.4%	4.20
<b>22</b>	82.2%	13.3%	4.4%	4.09
<b>23</b>	71.1%	17.8%	11.1%	3.91
<b>24</b>	91.2%	8.9%	0.0%	4.47
<b>25</b>	75.6%	15.6%	8.8%	3.98
<b>26</b>	73.3%	17.8%	8.9%	3.93
<b>27</b>	64.5%	28.9%	6.7%	3.87
<b>28</b>	77.8%	17.8%	4.4%	4.11
<b>29</b>	95.6%	2.2%	2.2%	4.42
<b>Average Mean</b>				4.03

Concerning students' roles, the results of the ELTE 107 student questionnaire show that the students' perceptions of their roles and activities are generally positive because most of the students expressed agreement (SA/A) with most of the items in part B; however, the percentages are not very high for all items. As shown in Table 4.10, the mean of the items 1-24 was 3.95 (out of 5). According to the table, above 80% of the students agreed (SA/A) with items 17 (*Students are responsible for our own learning*), 18 (*Students are engaged in self-study*), and 23 (*Students use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet) to improve listening skills*). However, 28.9% of the students were unsure about the items 8 (*Students are given options for homework listening tasks*), 9 (*Students listen to/watch English news, films, programs, etc. outside the class*), and 21 (*Students work with limited assistance of the teacher*). On the other hand, 15.6% of the students disagreed (D/SD) with the items 12 (*Students keep a diary for our learning*) and 21 (*Students work with limited assistance of the teacher*).



Overall, based on the results of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that students' perceptions of their activities in the course seem to be promoting learner autonomy.

Table 4.10. Frequencies and Means for Students Activities in ELTE 107

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	86.7%	6.7%	6.7%	4.20
<b>2</b>	80%	11.1%	8.9%	4.02
<b>3</b>	73.3%	15.6%	11.1%	3.93
<b>4</b>	64.5%	24.4%	11.1%	3.78
<b>5</b>	66.6%	20%	13.3%	3.71
<b>6</b>	68.9%	11.1%	20%	3.80
<b>7</b>	66.7%	20%	13.3%	3.71
<b>8</b>	48.9%	28.9%	22.2%	3.56
<b>9</b>	64.4%	28.9%	6.6%	3.87
<b>10</b>	84.5%	8.9%	6.6%	4.11
<b>11</b>	66.7%	26.7%	6.7%	3.98
<b>12</b>	60%	24.4%	15.6%	3.67
<b>13</b>	66.6%	22.2%	11.1%	3.89
<b>14</b>	71.1%	22.2%	6.7%	3.98
<b>15</b>	73.3%	15.6%	11.1%	4.02
<b>16</b>	68.9%	26.7%	4.4%	4
<b>17</b>	86.7%	8.9%	4.4%	4.27
<b>18</b>	82.2%	15.6%	2.2%	4.18
<b>19</b>	75.6%	20%	4.4%	4.18
<b>20</b>	68.9%	22.2%	8.9%	3.91
<b>21</b>	55.5%	28.9%	15.6%	3.56
<b>22</b>	71.1%	15.6%	13.3%	3.87
<b>23</b>	82.2%	13.3%	4.4%	4.31
<b>24</b>	77.8%	15.6%	6.7%	4.22
<b>Average Mean</b>				3.95

Regarding the students' evaluation of the course materials, the results of the questionnaire show that students' perceptions of the course materials in terms of fostering learner autonomy were positive due to the fact that high percentages of the students agreed (SA/A) with most of the items. As presented in Table 4.11, the means of the items 1-17 ranged between 3.56 and 4.31 (out of 5). According to the table, 86.6%, 88.9% and 82.2% of the students agreed (SA/A) with items 1

(The materials include some pair work speaking activities), 6 (include some strategies of how to listen), and 14 (The materials give us information about various listening strategies), correspondingly. Also, 71.1-77.8% of the students agreed with items 8 (The materials get us to be a decision maker rather than a receiver of information), 13 (The materials give us information about various speaking strategies), 16 [(The materials allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our speaking)], and 17 [(The materials allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our listening)]; but 22.2-24.4 percent of them were unsure about these items. However, none of the students disagreed (D/SD) with items 13 (The materials give us information about various speaking strategies) and 16 [(The materials allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our speaking)]. In general, according to the results given in Table 4.11 the course materials seem to be promoting learner autonomy as perceived by the students.

Table 4.11. Frequencies and Means for the Course Materials in ELTE 107

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	86.6%	11.1%	2.2%	4.29
<b>2</b>	80%	17.8%	2.2%	4.13
<b>3</b>	80%	11.1%	8.9%	4.04
<b>4</b>	80%	15.6%	4.4%	4.07
<b>5</b>	77.8%	17.8%	4.4%	4.13
<b>6</b>	88.9%	8.9%	2.2%	4.24
<b>7</b>	77.8%	17.8%	4.4%	4.18
<b>8</b>	71.1%	22.2%	6.7%	3.91
<b>9</b>	73.4%	17.8%	6.7%	4
<b>10</b>	73.4%	20%	6.6%	4
<b>11</b>	68.9%	20%	11.1%	3.96
<b>12</b>	73.4%	20%	6.7%	4.04
<b>13</b>	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	4.13
<b>14</b>	82.2%	15.6%	2.2%	4.22
<b>15</b>	75.5%	20%	4.4%	4.04
<b>16</b>	77.8%	22.2%	0.0%	4.20
<b>17</b>	73.4%	24.4%	2.2%	4.18
<b>Average Mean</b>				4.10

Similarly, as to the assessment procedures in ELTE 107, the results of the questionnaire show that students' perceptions were positive since most of the students agreed (SA/A) with the items in part D.

Table 4.12. Frequencies and Means for Assessment Procedures in ELTE 107

<b>Items</b>	<b>SA &amp; A</b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>D &amp; SD</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>1</b>	62.3%	17.8%	20%	3.67
<b>2</b>	73.3%	15.6%	11.1%	3.84
<b>3</b>	80%	17.8%	2.2%	4.20
<b>4</b>	88.9%	11.1%	0.0%	4.36
<b>5</b>	82.2%	15.6%	2.2%	4.11
<b>6</b>	82.3%	15.6%	2.2%	4.13
<b>7</b>	77.8%	13.3%	8.9%	4.07
<b>8</b>	71.2%	26.7%	2.2%	4.02
<b>9</b>	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	3.80
<b>10</b>	68.9%	24.4%	6.6%	3.93
<b>11</b>	71.2%	24.4%	4.4%	4.02
<b>12</b>	71.1%	17.8%	11.1%	3.89
<b>13</b>	68.9%	24.4%	6.6%	3.91
<b>Average Mean</b>				<b>4.04</b>

As indicated in Table 4.12, the mean of the items 3-13 (items 1 and 2 are exception because they are against the idea of promoting learner autonomy) was 4.04 (out of 5). 88.9% of the students agreed (SA/A) with item 4 (The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in listening), and 82.2% and 82.3% agreed (SA/A) with items 5 (The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in speaking) and 6 (The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in listening), respectively. Also 24.4% of the students were unsure about items 10 (We correct each other's mistakes in listening activities), 11 (We correct each other's mistakes in speaking activities), and 13 (We are given options for how we want to be assessed). However, while items 1 (Only the teacher corrects speaking mistakes) and 2 (Only the teacher corrects mistakes made in listening activities/tasks) are against promoting learner autonomy, 62.3% and 73.3% agreed

(SA/A) with them, correspondingly. Overall, the students' perceptions regarding the items in part D (the assessment procedures) were positive, indicating the promotion of learner autonomy. However, item 1 (Only the teacher corrects speaking mistakes) and 2 (Only the teacher corrects mistakes made in listening activities/tasks) were exceptions.

## **4.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in the Three Skill-Based Courses**

Teachers' general perceptions about learner autonomy and their evaluations of the courses in terms of learner autonomy were gathered through the teacher interviews.

### **4.2.1 ELTE 103 Advanced Reading and Writing I**

Regarding the first question (*"What does 'learner autonomy' mean to you?"*), the instructor of this course defined learner autonomy as learners' doing something by themselves and not being dependent on their teacher.

When asked *"Who are autonomous learners? What are their characteristics? What do they do?"*, the instructor emphasized autonomous learners' eagerness to learn. He also mentioned that they keep asking questions, they are not satisfied with what their teacher gives to them and they want to learn more and more; they also want more sources from teacher in order to guide them to find more about the topic.

As for the third question (*"Do you think learner autonomy plays a crucial role in language learning? Why? Why not?"*), the instructor agreed that learner autonomy plays a crucial role in language learning. He believed that autonomous

learners are ready to learn and can investigate things by themselves and search for more things on their own; thus, the result of learning will be positive.

To respond to the fourth question (*“How can language teachers promote learner autonomy in their classes? What role(s) do you think teachers have in promoting learner autonomy?”*), the instructor stated that the teachers should give up the traditional way of teaching, and should teach students the ways how to learn necessary information. According to him, the teachers should stop spoon-feeding and just show students the ways of learning on their own.

When asked *“What can be the obstacles to promoting learner autonomy in language classes?”*, the instructor pointed to the education system as an obstacle to promoting learner autonomy. He explained his answer by mentioning his students who are from Turkey and have experienced Turkish education system, a system which is teacher-centered. He said because these students are used to such an education system, although they try their best to find answers on their own, their fixed idea that teacher knows better is not changed. Moreover, he added that his students coming from England are much more independent.

Responding to the sixth question (*“Do you think you promote learner autonomy in this course? If no, why? If yes, what do you do to promote learner autonomy in this course? What tasks/activities do you use?”*), the instructor stated that he is encouraging his students to learn things on themselves. He said that he sometimes does not give them the right answer on purpose and pretends that he does not know the answer in order to push them learn things by themselves. He also added that he encourages them to visit the library. And, sometimes he

encourages his students to do some group tasks and projects. Moreover, when his students ask him if they should do this way or that way, he says “you are the boss, whatever you think is good, is correct, so, go ahead”.

As to question seven (*“What do you think about the course book(s) and/or materials you use in terms of promoting learner autonomy?”*), the instructor responded that he cannot judge or evaluate the course book. To him, even if the book does not promote learner autonomy, the teacher is the one who manages its tasks and uses it in such a way to develop learner autonomy. He explained that the teacher can ask students to do the task outside the class, with very simple guidelines. He stated that he had done it before and it really worked. He said his students enjoyed a lot, they went to different people to get their ideas and found plenty of information. Overall, he said that the book sometimes imposes its idea on you and sometimes gives you certain tasks which you can develop on your own.

Regarding the eighth question (*“Do you take autonomous learning into consideration while preparing your own materials? If no, why? If yes, how?”*), the instructor’s response was ‘yes’. He said he does consider learner autonomy but not in a very structured manner. He explained that when he gives students some tasks to do, he tells them to search on the Internet or ask people. He believed that it is a huge gain.

When asked *“How do you assess your students in this course? Are your students involved in the assessment process? If yes, how? If no, why?”*, the instructor answered that their assessment is mostly teacher-based; but he added that he

encourages students to do writing tasks in class and asks them to give feedback to their friends and be critical while doing this. He said that by doing this he aims at getting students to assess themselves as well and know what sort of things to study more and be more careful about. He claimed that assessment wise they do not involve students much in the assessment process.

To respond to the question *“To what extent do you think your students are autonomous? What is your perception of your students’ autonomy?”*, the instructor said that it is difficult to generalize, but there are some students who are really autonomous and some students who are much more dependent. He also added that, to be dependent or independent has to be with *“the way they have been grown up, the family background plus their education background”*.

Regarding question eleven (*“Do you talk to your students about autonomy and its value in this course?”*), the instructor responded that rather than talking about autonomy, he tells his students that investigating by themselves and learning by themselves are very important. He tells them not to depend on their teacher, because their teacher’s knowledge can be limited especially in ICT (Information Communication Technology). He said he also recommends them to listen to their teachers but not to limit themselves with what their teachers give to them.

When asked *“Do you involve your students in decisions on what is to be learned? If yes how? If no, why?”*, the instructor replied:

In general we (the teachers) decide on what to be learned, regarding the aim of the course and everything. And, most probably, again, it is to do with the system because the department requires us to identify those; but, of course, we are not that rigid, and we are a little bit flexible sometimes, depending on the students’ levels, interests and needs. The students would

be involved a little bit but in general, mainly, we (the teachers) are the ones who are deciding what to be learned.

Regarding the question “*Do the materials promote learner autonomy in this course? How? Is it working?*”, the instructor answered that rather than the materials themselves the way they are used is important in helping students to be autonomous. He added that “I would not put the blame on the materials but rather I would put the blame on myself.” Finally, he claimed that the materials in ELTE 103 course promote learner autonomy.

#### **4.2.2 ELTE 105 Listening and Pronunciation I**

As two different instructors were teaching the two groups of the course, both instructors were interviewed to identify their perceptions of learner autonomy and how they evaluate the course in terms of promoting learner autonomy.

When asked “*What does ‘learner autonomy’ mean to you?*”, instructor A defined learner autonomy as learners’ having ‘a choice’; that is, learners’ choosing tasks or activities themselves. However, instructor B defined learner autonomy as having a certain level of independence and freedom, taking initiatives, decision taking as regards what to learn and what to revise, reflecting on one’s learning, and taking an action for self-improvement. He also added that “by definition it looks easy but in practice or in reality it may not be that easy”.

In response to the second question (“*Who are autonomous learners? What are their characteristics? What do they do?*”), both instructors mentioned ‘being independent’ as the main characteristic of autonomous learners. Moreover, according to instructor A, autonomous learners “can learn outside class; they can find different learning materials by themselves, they also can reach information



by themselves.” For instructor B, on the other hand, autonomous learners take initiatives, they have self-awareness regarding their strengths and weaknesses, and they are proactive in taking actions.

Regarding the third question (*“Do you think learner autonomy plays a crucial role in language learning? Why? Why not?”*), both instructors definitely agreed with the importance of learner autonomy in language learning. Instructor A explained that students have limited time in class, and therefore, they need to do something outside the class on their own in order to compensate class time limitation. He believes that autonomous learners “can function outside the class, too” and this is why learner autonomy is very important in language learning. Instructor B, on the other hand, explained his answer by stating that it is the learners who judge the best way and for what purposes they study. They know better which aspects of language to focus more on, which skills of language they need to emphasize more, etc. In addition, autonomous learners have self-awareness, so they can compensate their weaknesses and develop themselves. Overall, he said, language is something dynamic and autonomous learners who are aware of themselves are needed.

To answer the fourth question (*“How can language teachers promote learner autonomy in their classes? What role(s) do you think teachers have in promoting learner autonomy?”*), instructor A stated that first of all learner autonomy should be promoted not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom. He added that in the classroom, teachers should encourage students to work in pairs or groups, to take part in projects where they have a choice of topic, and to do tasks that they choose from a given list of tasks. According to him, the teacher should

also encourage the students to do different things such as using the Internet, or visiting the library. Instructor B's answer to this question is as follows:

Teachers have an important role. First of all, they should not have that authoritative role; I mean in that role it's not possible to leave room for students for autonomy. Teachers should consider their role as a teacher first of all, putting on a role as a facilitator, listening to their students' needs and their interests, etc., and guiding them in that direction. So, teachers need to know the definition of a teacher and how he/she should be, as a central authority in the class or as a facilitator or a tool guide listening to their learners' needs, interests and etc.

When asked about the obstacles to promoting learner autonomy in language classes (Question 5), instructor A mentioned the syllabus and materials as the major obstacles to promoting learner autonomy. He believed that when the syllabus is a set one and accordingly the materials are decided by the teacher, then students have no say about it, and learner autonomy cannot be promoted. Likewise, for instructor B, one of the main obstacles to promoting learner autonomy is the set syllabus. For him the second obstacle is time limitation. He explained his answer as follows:

Yes, there are several obstacles; we all know that we should promote learner autonomy and we all know that learner autonomy is important in language learning but in practice, in reality, there are some obstacles to put it into the application. One thing is time, for example, in one semester you have to cover the objectives in the course outline. And, learner autonomy requires careful planning, time investment, energy, thinking and lots of reflections; so, in practice it takes a little bit too much burden on teachers; doing so may run the risk of not covering the intended material in a course outline, and teachers want to be on the safe side instead of leaving the decisions to learners or discussing their needs, interests, and schedule in their course; so, accordingly they rely on a predesigned course outline and objectives, and they cover them week by week to make sure that they cover everything by the end of the semester. Time-wise our schedule is not flexible, there are too much requirements to cover in one course ... so, we have to cover them in one semester, I mean in 16 weeks, so, it is not very possible to promote learner autonomy.

When asked “*Do you think you promote learner autonomy in this course? If no, why? If yes, what do you do to promote learner autonomy in this course? What tasks/activities do you use?*”, instructor A responded that they have a set course outline for this course, but as learner autonomy is concerned, he tries to promote learner autonomy in different ways such as by giving students different tasks or activities to choose from. As he said, he also gives them a project which they have to do outside the class by choosing words from the podcast on their own.

Instructor B’s response to this question reveals that he also tries to promote learner autonomy, but due to the existing obstacles explained above, he cannot fully do it. Like instructor A, instructor B also mentioned about the term project as a way of promoting learner autonomy. He explained it as:

I should encourage my students to be autonomous learners and I do that to some extent; for example by giving them the project task. Our semester project requires learners to find a BBC podcast, a radio program, or a pre-recorded radio program on the Internet and download it. It’s a 30-minute program and students are supposed to select a three-minute section, listen to it for transcribing it and then work on the phonetic transcription of the words appearing in that. Through that task, I try to encourage my learners to take initiative.

He also added that he usually tells students that they should take initiative to try to find the sources, to test sources and ask him for help when necessary. In that way, he said, he adopts the role of a facilitator.

Responding to the seventh question (“*What do you think about the course book(s) and/or materials you use in terms of promoting learner autonomy?*”), instructor A stated that the course pack is not flexible; he added that their course pack does not promote learner autonomy much but they use additional materials,

tasks and activities to compensate that weakness. Instructor B gave a similar response to the question and said that despite the fact that the course pack is a collection of materials from different textbooks, it does not highlight or promote learner autonomy. He also emphasized the teacher's important role as the person who exploits the book.

Upon the question *“Do you take autonomous learning into consideration while preparing your own materials? If no, why? If yes, how?”*, instructor A said that he usually does not, but he tries to compensate this by giving extra materials, activities/tasks or projects in order to promote learner autonomy. However, instructor B's answer was 'yes' to this question. He explained that in the course book there are many materials with the full URLs, there are sets of materials downloaded from a Canadian website, a university's website which offers brilliant materials on improving pronunciation. The full URLs are put in the photocopied material, and they do one material in the class as an example, but the teacher suggests students to go to the website, and enjoy the full units in their free times. Teacher B gave detailed information about these units as:

There are like more than 15 units, each practicing certain aspect of pronunciation with the material in pdf form. They can download the audio files, they can download the answer key, and on their own pace they can listen, they can enjoy the materials. ... So, my answer to your question is “yes, I take learner autonomy into consideration while preparing my materials.

Regarding the ninth question (*“How do you assess your students in this course? Are your students involved in the assessment process? If yes, how? If no, why?”*), instructor A responded that not in quiz, midterm and final examinations, but in the podcast project as mentioned before, students have a kind of choice and it can

be said that to some extent they are involved in the assessment process, but not fully. Yet, instructor B's answer to this question is negative.

When asked "*To what extent do you think your students are autonomous?*" "*What is your perception of your students' autonomy?*", instructor A stated that some students are more autonomous than others and some are more dependent. He explained this by saying that when he asks them to do some out-of-class tasks, some students come back with some feedback but the rest do not do anything. Moreover, when he teaches some strategies, some of the students apply them and say whether it was useful or not for them, but other students don't even use those strategies.

Instructor B claimed that learner autonomy is a matter of awareness, education and training, and it is largely dependent on educational background. He explained that most of the students in his class do not come from an education system promoting autonomy and, therefore, they are not autonomous. More specifically, he said:

I mean it's a matter of awareness, education, training, I mean some students may be autonomous by nature, but I think it's largely to do with educational background. When you look at our students especially, they do not come from an autonomous education, because our Turkish education system is not flexible, it doesn't encourage learner autonomy much. It's a top-down process with the pre-set materials and syllabuses. The teacher's role is to teach them, the learners are passive; they listen and get the information. So, when you have that background, it's not easy to ... By large they are not autonomous, but there may be some exceptions. So, my perception of my students' learner autonomy is not at the expected/ the desired level.

To respond to the question "*Do you talk to your students about autonomy and its value in this course?*", instructor A said he definitely does this, and moreover, he teaches them different kinds of strategies in supporting them to be more

autonomous. He added that he encourages them to do some out-of-class activities like listening to English programs and English songs in order to improve their autonomy, and he encourages them to do things outside class by themselves. Similarly, instructor B also claimed that he does it. He said that what they can do during class hours is limited and therefore, students need more investment of time to work and practice on their own; so, he offers students the very resources to use. He tells them to evaluate these resources, and if they like them, to continue; but if they don't like them, to look for another source. In that way, he believes that he not only talks about autonomy and its benefits, but also helps students to develop their autonomy by giving them guidance and extra sources.

Regarding question twelve (*“Do you involve your students in decisions on what is to be learned? If yes how? If no, why?”*), instructor A responded that in terms of decision on what is to be learned, students may have a little say, but in choosing the materials, tasks and activities they have more say. Instructor B responded that he would like to do so, but because of the obstacles (time and pre-set syllabus), he is not able to do this at the moment.

When asked *“Do the materials promote learner autonomy in this course? How? Is it working?”*, instructor A replied as “to some extent yes”. He explained that the extra materials promote learner autonomy, but considering the course pack alone he did not have the same idea, and said that it does not promote learner autonomy that much. Instructor B gave the same answer. He claimed that the course book sections do not foster learner autonomy, but the other materials included in the pack promote learner autonomy. He further explained that feedback from students regarding the websites given in the pack is positive. For

example, the students come back to him and say “I tried this web, it is good, etc.” Instructor B claimed that as the websites involve further links, all the students would know many resources, and thus it promotes learner autonomy.

#### **4.2.3 ELTE 107 Oral Communication Skills I**

In response to the first question (“*What does ‘learner autonomy’ mean to you?*”), instructor A defined learner autonomy as learners’ independence from teacher and their attempts to learn by themselves by using certain facilities. However, instructor B’s response was as follows: “For me, learner autonomy means students having the control or responsibility of their own learning.” She added that the main responsibility is decision making, so learners are the decision makers in their own learning; they decide what to learn and how to learn, so they take auto-control of their learning.

Regarding the second question (“*Who are autonomous learners? What are their characteristics? What do they do?*”), instructor A believed that autonomous learners can do certain things by themselves; they are not dependent; they are eager to learn and make fullest use of the facilities around them. He also said that autonomous learners try to achieve things by themselves. To instructor B, however, autonomous learners are learners who are ready to take responsibility of their learning, they can take some decisions, and they are aware of their learning styles. Instructor B further explained that autonomous learners know how they can learn the best; they know different strategies and apply them successfully. Also, they have other characteristics of good learners such as being risk takers and being open to communication or interaction with others. Overall, she claimed that taking responsibility is the most important characteristic of autonomous learners.

When asked *“Do you think learner autonomy plays a crucial role in language learning? Why? Why not?”*, both instructors expressed that they definitely agree with the importance of learner autonomy in language learning. Instructor A argued that since autonomous learners can take initiative, they are motivated to start things, and as a result to learn the language by themselves. Instructor B, on the other hand, elaborated on her answer as:

If learning is an ongoing process (because when we are born we start learning and this continues until we die), learner autonomy is very important, because in school you have the teacher but after school you must know about how to learn; so, developing autonomy is very important because if you know how you can learn, you can continue to learn, so it's really very important.

As to the fourth question (*“How can language teachers promote learner autonomy in their classes? What role(s) do you think teachers have in promoting learner autonomy?”*), instructor A claimed that teachers try to transmit their knowledge to their students, but giving every piece of information is not a good way. He said that teachers should initially avoid giving students the right information directly and pretend as if they don't know the answer or don't have time, and push students to try to learn by themselves. Instructor B, on the other hand, mentioned involving students in decision making and stated that teachers have a crucial role in promoting learner autonomy, and they firstly should let their students take decisions. She added that teachers should be ready to share this responsibility with their students by giving options to them in doing homework for example, and they should not insist on one way of doing homework; they should let them choose whichever way they would like. She also said that teachers should help students be aware of their learning styles by giving them a questionnaire related to learning styles, and should teach students different learning strategies.



When answering the fifth question (*“What can be the obstacles to promoting learner autonomy in language classes?”*), instructor A mentioned the learners’ feeling of being wrong or believing that teacher knows better, their continuous attempts to get approval of their teacher, and their lack of confidence as the major obstacles for developing learner autonomy. However, for instructor B, the main obstacles are students, their culture and their educational background. She responded to this question as:

Of course, there can be many different obstacles to promoting learning autonomy. The first one I can say is the students themselves, students’ cultural or educational backgrounds, because in some cultures, like eastern cultures, students are not used to the concept of autonomy, which starts in the family. Families in eastern cultures don’t like giving autonomy to their kids. So, students’ culture, and their educational backgrounds are important obstacles. When they come to school, all of a sudden, they’re faced with this ‘autonomy’ thing, and they cannot accept it. Another obstacle may be the teachers. They don’t know much about autonomy; so, if the teacher has no idea about what autonomy is, its importance, of course we cannot expect the teacher to promote it. Or, maybe the teacher himself or herself does not believe in the usefulness of autonomy.

In addition to students and teachers, instructor B indicated that facilities available in schools as the third obstacle to promoting autonomy. She argued that technology plays an important role in promoting learner autonomy, and if teachers want students to do self-study, they should send them to self-access centers or language labs. Finally, she added that if none of these facilities is available or if students have no technological facilities at home, teachers cannot expect them to do a lot.

When asked *“Do you think you promote learner autonomy in this course? If no, why? If yes, what do you do to promote learner autonomy in this course? What tasks/activities do you use?”*, instructor A responded that he tries to encourage his students to listen to BBC, World NEWS, and other channels and to listen to

different English accents in order to get used to different accents. He also encourages his students to speak whoever foreigner they find in the street and not to worry about making any mistakes. Instructor B, on the other hand, responded as “I wish I promoted learner autonomy”, explaining that she believes in learner autonomy and tries to promote it but she cannot do that fully because of some obstacles. She mentioned that the students do not have their own CD (of the course book) and this prevents them to practice at home on their own. On the other hand, she added that she does promote learner autonomy in the speaking part of the course by giving students a list of topics to choose the presentation topic they are interested in. Also, if they have a better idea they can come to her and tell her about a topic they have in their mind. However, she also said:

I don't involve them in the selection of the course materials, I chose the course materials, and they had no say regarding the materials. Also, I did not ask them how they would like to be evaluated. We, teachers, decided about how we were going to evaluate them. So, students are not very much involved in decisions; they just choose their topics for presentation. ... The course is very weak in terms of out-of-class activities like self-study activities. ...

Finally, instructor B focused on the lack of sufficient strategy training in the listening part of the course. She explained this as:

Only once at the very beginning, we listened to a listening text together and we took down notes; I tried to show them what kind of strategies they should use when they 're taking down notes. I tried to teach them how to take down notes while they are listening, but in my opinion, only doing it once or twice is not enough. Maybe, more structured or organized strategy training should be done.

Regarding the question “*What do you think about the course book(s) and/or materials you use in terms of promoting learner autonomy?*” instructor A responded that he wouldn't put blame on the books by themselves. He said that similar activities that they do in the book can be done as well outside the

classroom. Overall, he believes that the books are not problem with regard to promoting learner autonomy. Instructor B mentioned about two different course books; one for speaking, and one for listening and note taking. Regarding the speaking course book, she said that it informs students about how to prepare a presentation, how to organize it and how to deliver it, so it teaches how to give a presentation. Therefore, it can be said that it contains some strategy training. Similarly, according to her, the listening book also guides students about how to take down notes while listening. She claimed that the pre-listening activities make students ready for the listening tasks. She said the materials are good, but the listening book does not give students a chance to do self-study; it does not contain any CD, so students have nothing to study on their own.

To respond to the question *“Do you take autonomous learning into consideration while preparing your own materials? If no, why? If yes, how?”*, instructor A stated that they don’t have the chance to prepare their own listening materials and tasks, so they almost rely on the book. Instructor B’s answer was also negative regarding this question. She said that she unfortunately doesn’t prepare her own materials, but she tries to compensate it by giving her students options in choosing topics of their presentation.

As for the ninth question (*“How do you assess your students in this course? Are your students involved in the assessment process? If yes, how? If no, why?”*), instructor A definitely stated that they don’t involve their students in the assessment. He believed that it requires a bit of expertise, so it is not possible to involve students in the assessment process. Instructor B also had the same answer. She said that although they have different tools for assessing their

students, the students are not involved in decisions regarding how to be evaluated. To exemplify, she added that in the final exam (an oral exam) students are not given options.

When asked *“To what extent do you think your students are autonomous?”* *“What is your perception of your students’ autonomy?”*, instructor A responded that he does have autonomous learners in his class but he would not say that they are one hundred percent autonomous, but they have freedom of doing things in their own way. He also said that at the same time he has students who are much dependent, but he believes as they grow up they start to be autonomous. However, instructor B responded that her students are not autonomous, she explained her answer as:

Unfortunately they are not autonomous. I don't want to blame them because I am not doing what I have to do; so, I don't have the right to expect them to be fully autonomous. They are not autonomous and they are not ready for autonomy. They are happy with what we are doing. For example, even though I give them 50 topics, and a chance to choose their own topic, some students keep coming and asking me to give them a topic.

Instructor B also claimed that most of the students are not aware of their learning styles, and they cannot develop necessary strategies for note taking. Instructor B added: *“They enjoy being dependent, they like to be spoon-fed, maybe this is cultural.”* She stated that students want her notes (power point slides) to study and they even don't want to read the book themselves. According to instructor B, they want to be presented everything ready. She explained these by giving an example: *“Sometimes I ask them to go and search about a topic for the next lesson, but only one or two students do it”*.

When instructors were asked if they talk to their students about autonomy and its value in this course (Question 11), instructor A said he always tries to encourage them to learn things by themselves and not to be dependent on their teacher, and to use the Internet and all facilities to develop themselves. Instructor B, on the other hand, stated that unfortunately she does not talk about autonomy in this course but she should do it. She added that first year students should be informed about learner autonomy and study skills maybe in an orientation program.

To respond to the question “*Do you involve your students in decisions on what is to be learned? If yes how? If no, why?*”, instructor A said “regarding the content of the book, as you see, we are very much dependent on the book, but sometimes we might bring some tasks (which are not from the book) into the classroom and in that case students’ preference might be taken into consideration, but mostly we’re dependent on the book.” Teacher B’s answer was also ‘no’. She stated that teachers prepare everything before they come to the course. She said she only gives students options for topics or presentations. She believed that maybe it is easier for teachers not to involve students; involving students in decision making may be so complicated for teachers, and this may be the reason for not involving students in decision making.

Regarding question thirteen (“*Do the materials promote learner autonomy in this course? How? Is it working?*”), instructor A responded that some students who are autonomous enough to study on their own can use the materials and do things by themselves, and it can be said that in a way the materials are promoting learner autonomy. However, instructor B’s answer was ‘no’. She explained that there is very little strategy training in the listening book and there is also no

variety; the focus is just on note taking. She claimed that they don't teach students any communication strategies such as turn taking. Overall, according to instructor B, the materials are problematic and they include no extra materials for self-study.

### **4.3 Suggestions for Promoting Learner Autonomy in the Three Skill-Based Courses**

This section presents the results concerning students' and teachers' suggestions for promoting learner autonomy obtained from the student questionnaires and teacher interviews. Students' suggestions were gathered through open-ended questions in the questionnaires, and teachers' suggestions were identified through the last five questions (14-18) in the teacher interview.

#### **4.3.1 ELTE 103 Advanced Writing and Reading I**

##### **4.3.1.1 Students' Suggestions**

In response to question 32 in part A (*"What do you expect from your teacher in this course?"*), 38.88% of the students expressed their satisfaction with the teacher. On the other hand, 38.33% of the students expected more practice (e.g. writing and reading), and 22.22% wanted more variety of examples and activities. Moreover, 16.67% expected the teacher to improve their reading and writing skills in English. Also, 11.11% wanted empathy from the teacher. More specifically, they stated that they want the teacher to be fair and to establish better relationship with students. 5.55% percent did not want writing activities, and the same percentage (5.55%) expected more use of technology in the classroom.

Regarding their roles in ELTE 103 courses, 44.44% of the students argued that they should have a right to be decision makers in the course (e.g. deciding on reading topics, lesson hours, etc.); this may be the indication that they want to be autonomous. In addition, 16.67% of the students focused on their right to have technology-based self-study elements (e.g. computer, tablet, and internet) in this course. Also, 11.11% wanted to write and speak freely, which can be considered as a request to have a right to be autonomous. 11.11% expected to be able to use extra material/supplementary materials. Students also emphasized their right to be allowed to ask questions for clarification (5.55%) and be involved in out - of - class activities for self-study (5.55%). Finally, the same percentage (5.55% ) of the students gave irrelevant answers to question 26 a in part B.

In response to the question concerning what they should be allowed to do in ELTE103 course, the students argued that they should be allowed to use technology 22.22% as well as to be free to express their ideas (22.22%). Also, 5.55% thought that they should be allowed to be able to do micro-teaching. Moreover, 16.66 percent wanted to be decision makers in choosing reading topics and books, 11.11% asked for being allowed to be active in the class, 5.55% wanted to learn more strategies and 11.11% expected to use extra materials such as newspapers and story books.

For being successful in this course, 50% of the students believed that they should do more practice (e.g. reading a lot, writing a lot). 22.22% of them, on the other hand, thought that being attentive in the class helps them to be more successful. Furthermore, 11.11% emphasized the necessity of using extra materials and texts for being successful. Moreover, 5.55% believed having high motivation is

something which helps to be more successful. While, 5.55% stated that out-side class activities make them more successful (e.g. doing homework), 5.55% of the students believed that group-work can help them become more successful.

Regarding question 18 in part C (*“What do you think about the course book/materials used in this course?”*), 77.78% of the students expressed their satisfaction with the course book, whereas 11.11% wanted more interesting materials. 5.55% expected more activities from the course book, and another 5.55% asked for technical materials. Finally, 5.55% stated that “materials should be cheaper because they are expensive”.

To answer question 19 in part C (*“How can the course book/materials be improved (made better) in this course? What are your suggestions?”*), 27.78% wanted extra materials (e.g. the Internet, visual aids and magazines), and 22.22% wanted more practice activities in reading and writing. Also, 16.66% argued that the course materials should give more information and examples, while 16.67% said they should be more interesting. On the other hand, 11.11% of the students had no suggestions, which may show their satisfaction with the materials and 11.11% had no idea; one of the answers is “I don’t have any idea about it. Our teacher knows better than me.” which can be interpreted as dependence on the teacher. Additionally, 5.55% argued that the materials should give feedback; it may show they want to study by themselves and do self-study. And 5.55% expected to be given novel reading tasks.

Regarding question 14 in part D (*“How should the feedback and assessment be in this course? What are your suggestions?”*), 22.22 percent expressed their



satisfaction with the feedback and assessment, but 16.67% of the students had no idea. One answered as: “I don’t really know how it should be since I am not the teacher.” Also, 16.67% answered this question irrelevantly. On the other hand, 11.11% emphasized the importance of teacher feedback, while 11/11% mentioned peer correction, and another 5.55% self-assessment.

#### **4.3.1.2 Teachers’ Suggestions**

When asked to give suggestions as regards how to promote learner autonomy further (question 14), the course instructor answered as:

Maybe, we can design certain things, for example certain units, I mean after students get used to the first and second unit, for instance we can ask them to redesign the third unit, following the structure of their book but according to their own interest. In this case we should leave them free to change this unit and redesign it in the way they like. But when it comes to assessment, you have to give them certain guidelines, certain criteria and still control them. ... Therefore, if you are planning to do so, you should be prepared for this very well, otherwise you run the risk of harming the students; and, for the sake of learner autonomy, we should not harm the students and we should not lose their confidence. ... maybe the teacher and students should cooperate together and therefore students learn how they can be objective; or, the teacher should speak and explain to students, so the students feel responsibility for what they do. ... If they don’t share this responsibility, then they run the risk of harming the students. ... So learner autonomy is really good but when it comes to assessment I have my doubts, because I’m scared of harming the students. ...

When asked “*How should be the materials in this course so that they promote autonomy?*” the instructor suggested that materials be flexible and adaptable. To him, the format of the book should not be that rigid in order to let the teacher play with it freely.

Regarding the question “*Should the students be involved in selecting textbooks/materials? If no, why? If yes, how?*”, the instructor stated that if he was

in a European context, his answer to this question would be 'yes' because of the system of education. He explained that in our education system the Ministry of Education controls everything so the system does not help teachers very much to get students involved in these kinds of things like choosing textbook. In this regard, the Ministry of Education, in coordination with teachers and schools, should plan all this and then try to put in into practice. The course instructor concluded saying "an individual teacher by himself/herself I believe cannot do this".

As to the students' involvement in decisions (question 17), the instructor responded that depending on the atmosphere of the class and the type of tasks, students should be given the right to be involved in decisions on individual/pair/group work. He also said that depending on the activity and the mood of students, students should be in the center and they should be given that chance. Concerning the position of chairs, he responded that depending on the activity/task and the mobility of desks students should have the right to decide on that. About discipline matters, he responded as: "well I don't have that traditional and conventional understanding that if there is too much noise in the classroom there is no discipline or vice versa". He added that "especially in language learning classrooms, obviously students talk to each other, move here and there, so there will be noise". For him, teachers should not be very strict about having silence all the time, because language learning requires a little bit of noise, but teachers should not let students do whatever they want without any structure, without any plan as well. He concluded by saying that: "discipline is neither giving the full freedom to students nor putting too much pressure on the students, so that they can't even utter a word".

In response to the question “*How should be the assessment in this course so that learner autonomy is promoted?*” the course instructor suggested that students be taught to assess their own work or their friends’ work in an objective manner. He elaborated on this idea by adding that students should be encouraged to do objective assessment, so that they avoid favoritism. Also, when they do the things objectively and fairly they should be given extra credit. In this way, students can be involved in the assessment process.

### **4.3.2 ELTE 105 Listening and Pronunciation I**

#### **4.3.2.1 Students’ Suggestions**

To respond to question 28 in part A (“*What do you expect from your teacher in this course?*”), 37.5% of the students expressed their satisfaction with the teacher by saying “he is perfect.”, “Everything is ok for me.”, etc. However, 16.67% of the students stated that they expect effective teaching from the teacher (e.g. to play listening materials slowly, and to teach learning strategies). 16.67% expected the teacher to help them improve their pronunciation (e.g. teach IPA effectively). Moreover, 8.33% of the students expected the teacher to make the lesson more interesting for students, and again 8.33% asked for more practice and activities. On the other hand, some students mentioned expectations regarding assessment, for example more homework to get more points (4.17%). However, 4.17% answered the question regarding the teacher’s management, in other words, more authority is expected from the teacher in class. This point is very eye catching, because it is something in contradiction to autonomy; the student who expects this from the teacher may not be considered autonomous as s/he is dependent on the teacher and expects everything from him/her. Lastly,

4.17% focused on the teacher-student relationship by expressing their expectation from the teacher to give students more self-confidence.

Question 24 in part B (*“What should be your roles in this course?”*) contains three sub-questions. In response to the first sub-question (*“We should have a right to:”*), 37.5% of the students said they want to be involved in decision making (e.g. choosing the topics, content, selecting podcasts, deciding on assignment deadline, etc.), while, 20.83% of the students wanted the right to do more practice (e.g. listening, and pronunciation). Also, 12.5% thought that they should have a right to use technology (e.g. the Internet), and 8.33% demanded to have a chance to take active part in class activities. Moreover, 4.17% wanted to have a right to do micro teaching, and similarly, 4.17% expected to have the right to feel free in the class. Same percent (4.17%) of students expected to be allowed to repeat words with the teacher, and again 4.17% wanted to have a right to express their ideas freely.

As regards what they should be allowed to do in ELTE 105 course, the students focused on the following issues:

- to be involved in decisions about assignments, listening tasks, and class activities (29.17%)
- to do more out-of-class activities, self-study (16.67%)
- to use technology in class (8.33%)
- to listen to varieties of listening texts in the classroom (8.33%)
- to be exposed to more teaching (4.17%)
- to bring their own listening materials to class (4.17%)

- to be given responsibility (4.17%)
- to express their thoughts freely (4.17%)
- to do self-assessment (4.17%)
- to do more listening practice (4.17%)
- to leave the class whenever they want (4.17%)

For the third sub-question (“*For being successful in this course, we should :*”) the students mentioned about the following points that should be done to reach success:

- studying hard and doing more practice (62.5%)
- doing out of class activities (25%)
- using extra materials and resources such as English NEWS, movies, videos, and music (25%)
- working in groups (16.67%)
- attending classes (12.5%)
- having high motivation and responsibility (4.17%)
- being exposed to varieties of examples of listening and pronunciation
- using dictionary for pronunciation (4.17%)

When asked what they think about the course book/materials used in the course (question 18 in Part C), 50% of the expressed their satisfaction with the course book/materials, by giving answers like “The book is very useful for us”; “Very good and useful”; “It is good and helpful”; and, “I think the course book is just perfect, it contains all the things I need”. However, 41.67% of the students believed that the course book is limited and stated that it could be improved and

be much better. (e.g. more activities, more examples, more details, clear information, supplemented with CD and DVD and tests) , and 8.33% of them believed that the course book is boring; They responded as “The book is so boring because some of the tasks are the same, for example”.

To respond to question 19 in part C (*“How can the course book/materials be improved (made better) in this course? What are your suggestions?”*), while 16.67% of the students focused on the need for extra materials (e.g. internet web pages, videos, movies), the other 16.67% did not suggest any improvements saying that they have no idea. On the other hand, some students wanted more practice and activities in the course book (12.5%); some expected to be given more information and examples such as for pronunciation (12.5%); and some others suggested that CDs and DVDs be included in the course book for more practice (12.5%). Moreover, students put forward the following suggestions:

- variety in the examples of the course book (4.17%)
- activities on strategy training (4.17%)
- group work activities in the course book (4.17%)
- revision tests (4.17%)

Finally, while 8.33 % of the students expressed their satisfaction with the course book and the materials in the course, 4.17% of them gave irrelevant answers to this question.

To respond to question 14 in part D (*“How should the feedback and assessment be in this course? What are your suggestions?”*), 29.17% of students expressed their satisfaction with the feedback and assessment procedures in the course. One responded as: “I think everything is excellent about feedback. We can easily take

feedback in this course”, and another one answered as: “Everything is Ok. There is no problem.” However, 20.83% answered this question irrelevantly and 16.67% stated that they have no idea about how feedback and assessment should be. One answered as: “The teacher is the only one to decide on this, so I have no suggestion”. On the other hand, some students gave suggestions concerning this issue. For example, 12.5% wanted more examination to get more points, 4.17% expected to do self-assessment. One of the students wrote: “We should test ourselves and correct our own mistakes”. Moreover, 8.33% answered this question by referring to the content of the exam; they wanted the listening part to be played two times, and also slowly. 4.17% demanded more pre-exam practice in order to be more ready for the exam. 4.17% of the students, however, answered this question by focusing on the exam environment. They believed that the context of the exam should be a relaxing one to get students to feel no stress. Finally, 4.17% wanted the teacher to be more helpful and supportive in assessment and feedback by encouraging them.

#### **4.3.2.2 Teachers’ Suggestions**

When asked to give suggestions for promoting learner autonomy further in ELTE105 course (question 14), instructor A stated that teachers should give learners a choice and encourage them to do things independently. For instructor A, when designing materials, teachers should provide students with a list of tasks to choose from. Moreover, students should experiment with the language and try to use different strategies, and should not wait for the teacher to supply everything. On the other hand, teacher B’s suggestions regarding the further promotion of learner autonomy in the course are as follows:

- The teacher's role should not be central, authoritative but facilitator, guiding role; "so the teachers should change their roles first of all."
- Students need to be guided or trained in order to be aware of the learner importance of learner autonomy.

Regarding the question "*How should be the materials in this course so that they promote autonomy?*" instructor A argued that the course materials should have variety. More specifically, he said: "Materials should have variety. I mean there should be a variety of activities which will promote choice, making decisions, and therefore, learner autonomy." He also suggested having mini projects or self-discovery projects, where students can reach information by themselves, and answer questions or realize the project based on that information.

On the other hand, instructor B's suggestions were as follows:

Maybe the pack could be more flexible ... with more materials for students to choose from. Maybe more self-study materials instead of one concise pack. So, you can negotiate with your students, which materials to focus on more, and then which materials they can take home and study by themselves.

Therefore, instructor B suggested including wide variety materials, different types of tasks and more listening, practice in the course materials in order to promote learner autonomy.

When asked "*Should the students be involved in selecting textbooks/materials? If no, why? If yes, how?*" instructor A responded as:

To be able to involve students in selecting text books or materials, they should be aware of some criteria; they should know which textbook is designed for which purpose or purposes, and whether the text book matches with the learning outcomes. This seems to be a complex issue, but with supplementary materials, they might have a say. You may ask the students



to order the supplementary materials in terms of their interest, in terms of difficulty level, and topic and so on.

Instructor B, on the other hand, focused on the age factor, and argued that it is early for his students to select the text book materials because it is their first year of study. Moreover, regarding this question, he said that for listening, students can be allowed to decide on the materials, but due to the fact that pronunciation is a little technical issue, he believed that teachers need to follow a syllabus. However, he added that if that was a second semester course (i.e. ELTE 106), students could be given some options to choose from.

Regarding the students' involvement in decisions (question 17), instructor A stated that students should have freedom as regards deciding on individual/pair/group work, and the type of classroom activity (but with guidance). Concerning the position of chairs, he said that students should have freedom as well, but depending on the kind of activity, degree of freedom may be changed. For discipline matters, he also had the same answer and he agreed on having students be involved in such decisions, and he added that it does not matter for him. Similarly, instructor B said that he involves students in decisions on whether to work individually or in pairs or groups. As to decisions on the type of activities, he said his students are free. Regarding the decisions on the position of desks, he said that it might be a problem because the seats are heavy and for a 50 minute class it is a disadvantage to move them and lose time. But, he added that if they had wheels or if they were light, it wouldn't be a problem. For part d, he answered saying that depending on the type of course students can be left free room to work alone or in groups for example.

When asked “*How should be the assessment in this course so that learner autonomy is promoted?*”, instructor A responded by giving an example of what they do in the course. He said they assess the podcast activities. But, he added that there should be more of such tasks and projects. He also suggested involving students in the assessment, so that they themselves can reflect on what they have done, and why it is right or wrong; for example, peer assessment or self-assessment can be used. Instructor B’s suggestions for assessment in this course were as follows:

“Yes, there should be definitely peer evaluation, I mean peer feedback, even peer assessment”. He argued that students should gain this awareness of judging their friends' work, evaluating their performance, so that they can develop autonomy. Overall, according to instructor B, peer evaluation and peer feedback should be included in the assessment procedures of ELTE 105 course so that learner autonomy can be promoted.

### **4.3.3 ELTE 107 Oral Communication Skills I**

#### **4.3.3.1 Students’ Suggestions**

In response to question 30 in part A (“*What do you expect from your teacher in this course?*”), while 20% of the students expressed their satisfaction with their teachers by giving answers like “That's enough, I expect nothing”, 24.44% of them stated that they expect the teacher to improve their English; more specially their vocabulary and communication, presentation, speaking and listening skills. Also, 20% of the students’ expectations were concerned with the teacher’s method/way of teaching. They expected the teacher to teach new things, to teach speaking strategies, to teach communication, to teach well, and to clarify unclear points. One of the students commented as: “To teach us to transfer what we learn

in class to real life”. In addition to these, the students also wanted to be involved in group work, and to speak more. 17.77% of them expressed their expectations from the teacher as regards more practice in listening and speaking, and 17.77% regarding feedback and assessment, (i.e. they expected their teacher to be generous in scoring, to be fair, to show them their papers after scoring, to prepare easier examination questions). 15.55% of the students' expectations were about teacher-student relationship/emotional issues; they expected the teacher to help them gain self-confidence, to motivate them, to create an effective atmosphere of learning and having fun together, to have empathy with students, and also to be more serious. Lastly, while 4.44% expected their teacher to ask for more tasks to do out of class (e.g. more projects), 2.22% said they have no idea and 2.22% gave irrelevant answers.

As regards their roles in this course (Question 25 in part B), 46.67% of the students thought that they should have a right be involved in decisions (e.g. choosing listening and speaking topics, choosing activities and tasks), 15.55% of the students wanted to have a right to have more practice (e.g. listening, speaking and discussion), 11.11% mentioned about their right to express their thoughts freely and one of the students answered as “we should have a right to give suggestions”. 6.67% had expectations in terms of teaching aids and materials. They wanted to have a right to have a white board, dictionary and variety of materials in the classroom. On the other hand, 6.67% of the students reported having no expectations (e.g. two of them answered as ‘Nothing’ and the other one as ‘Okay’). Also, 4.44% expected to have a right to learn strategies and skills of listening and speaking, and 2.22% asked for a right to be free to attend the

class or not. Lastly, while 4.44% of the students responded irrelevantly, 2.22% did not answer this question at all.

Students' responses to part b of question 25 in part B (*“What should be your roles in this course? Part b: We should be allowed to :”*), were as follows:

We should be allowed to:

- have more practice and do more activities, such as speaking, listening, and discussion activities (22.22%)
- use technology like the Internet, tablets, mobile phones etc. in this course (13.33%)
- do more out-of-class tasks, such as more homework projects, field trips, self-study on listening, using English in daily life, etc. (11.11%)
- be involved in choosing the topics, assignment topics, content, listening activities, materials (11.11%)
- express their thoughts freely (6.67%)
- use dictionary in the exam (6.67%)
- have a better teacher-student interaction (4.44%)
- do more group work (2.22%)
- listen to extra materials (2.22%)
- use L1 sometimes (2.22%)

When asked what they should do in order to be successful in this course (part c of question 25 in part B), 53.33% of the students wrote that they should do more practice and study hard, 24.44% answered this question by mentioning self-study (e.g. to listen to news, to speak English outside the class, etc.), and 20% of the

students expressed that being active in the class (e.g. to be attentive, to follow the lesson carefully, to participate in all the activities, to listen to the teacher) lead them to be more successful. Moreover, 6.67% saw group work (e.g. to communicate with each other, to find foreigner friends) as a way to be more successful. In addition, 2.22% answered that they should do homework regularly; 2.22% expressed that choosing the topics themselves helps them to be more successful; and, 4.44% mentioned learning listening and speaking can help them to succeed more. However, 2.22% left the question unanswered.

Regarding question 18 in part C (*“What do you think about the course book/materials used in this course?”*), 57.78% of the students expressed that they are pleased, giving answers such as “it is very good.”, I think the course book and the materials help to improve our oral communication.” ; “it’s very good. It taught me a lot”, and one answered as “it is perfect”; However, 20% of the students found the book limited. For example, one of them answered as” I think the materials are good to learn something in this course but the book is not enough.” Furthermore, 6.67% of the students thought that the materials/course book should include more practice activities and more examples. For 2.22% of the students the course book is useless, and for 2.22% it is expensive. 4.44% did not comment on the materials saying “I don’t know”.

To respond to question 19 in part C (*“How can the course book/materials be improved (made better) in this course? What are your suggestions?”*), 31.11% of the students expressed their satisfaction with the course book/materials, as one stated “It is enough for us”, and another one answered like “I think it is fine; we don’t need to improve it”. 20% of the students suggested having variety in the

materials, namely variety of examples, explanations, speaking materials, listening materials, supplementary materials, and tasks. 15.55% suggested materials be more interesting (e.g. interesting topics). Also, 13.33% suggested the integration of technology into the course materials. 6.67% suggested that students be given CDs in order to be able to do self-study, and 4.44% wanted more speaking activities to be included in the course book/materials. Lastly, 4.44% had no idea and one explained it giving this reason: “I am not a teacher yet”. Some other suggestions were as follows:

- better quality recordings (2.22%)
- a cheaper book (2.22%)
- students' involvement in materials selection (2.22%)
- focus on strategy training in the course book (2.22%)
- totally changing the course materials (2.22%)

Regarding question 14 in part D (*“How should the feedback and assessment be in this course? What are your suggestions?”*), 33.33% of the students gave suggestions regarding the content of assessment, (e.g. including more speaking, less writing and listening; involving students in what and how to be assessed; and having multiple-choice items in the listening part), and 15.55% of the students expected immediate feedback (e.g. clarifying students’ mistake after correction). While 24.44% expressed their satisfaction with the existing assessment and feedback procedures, 20% gave irrelevant responses, and 8.88% said they have no idea. One of the students who had no idea explained: “Teacher has a right to decide, not students”; and the other one answered like “It is all decided by the instructor since I am a student”.

Some other suggestions were as:

- fairness in assessment; for instances, the teacher should be fair in correcting the papers and scoring, and the scores should be kept private (6.67%)
- doing self-correction (2.22%)
- easy exams (2.22%)

#### **4.3.3.2 Teachers' Suggestions**

When instructors were asked about their suggestions for fostering learner autonomy further (question 14), instructor A answered as: "Maybe we can ask students to prepare their own listening tasks/activities by following the book". For him, students can be more creative regarding gaining those skills in listening and note taking. Thus, he suggested giving students chance to prepare their own tasks, exercises, and language activities to help them become autonomous.

However, instructor B suggested redesigning the course to have a chance to involve students in decisions concerning the learning process. She said that they could also have a process syllabus so that students could have a say in the course. She also added that they may need new course books, new materials, which include tasks on strategy training. Moreover, she said that they should provide their students with sufficient self-study materials and opportunities. She added: "I think we teachers should be ready for autonomous learning as well. We should be ready to share this responsibility or to share this control with our students, but usually we don't want to let them be free, take their own decisions". Instructor B, also suggested that teachers need to make students aware of the usefulness and

the advantages of learner autonomy; so, they should do something to get them ready for autonomous learning. She said:

We should train them to be autonomous. The biggest role is the teacher's, because it's the teacher who creates the learning environment in the classroom. So it's not fair to expect students to be autonomous all of a sudden, without doing anything ourselves as teachers.

Responding to question fifteen (*"How should be the materials in this course so that they promote autonomy?"*), instructor A mentioned the tasks and exercises of the course books, and said that if the course books would include flexible tasks which are not that rigid, students would like to work on them, and this would lead to learner autonomy. Instructor B, however, stated that the materials should include strategy instruction (e.g. listening strategies and communication strategies). She added that the materials should also be suitable for self-study, they should include CDs, answer keys, etc.

As to the sixteenth question (*"Should the students be involved in selecting textbooks/materials? If no, why? If yes, how?"*), instructor A's answer is 'no'. He stated that he is skeptical about this. He did not think that students are in a position to choose the book. He said he does not mean students are not able to do so, and mentioned about the educational background and said that students' culture and whole educational system don't help them in this regard.

Instructor B's response to this question was as follows:

Ideally yes, but practically, maybe you will need 2 or 3 weeks to learn about students' ideas and to get them to choose the materials. But, what we can do is, maybe in the previous semester, before the course starts, we can conduct needs assessments to involve students in this selection process to some extent.



When instructors were asked about learners' involvement in decisions (Question 17), instructor A responded that students should be free regarding how they want to work, i.e. individually, or in pairs/groups, and the type of classroom activities. Regarding the position of desks, he also said according to the type of activity, students should be allowed to move the desks if the desks are not fixed. About the discipline matters, he said he is not that much rigid in that regard and letting students move and make some noise does not create a big problem if they learn at the end of the day. Instructor B also agreed on involving students in decisions on individual, pair/group work and the type of classroom activities. She said teachers can give students options of activities, so they can be involved in decision taking. Regarding the position of desks she said it is not a problem. And, about the discipline matters, she responded as follows:

If you are going to have some classroom rules, why don't you decide about rules together with students? At the very beginning of the semester, you can take some decisions about classroom rules together with your students; for example, whether to eat and drink something in the classroom, or maybe regarding mobile phones. You can say 'I don't want you to use mobiles in the classroom', but they say 'oh hocam' (hocam in Turkish means my teacher) if something urgent happens, and you say 'oh yes'; so, you can negotiate all these things.

Overall she stated that students can be involved in all these decisions and it does not create any problems for teachers.

Regarding the question *"How should be the assessment in this course so that learner autonomy is promoted?"* instructor A suggested giving 10% of assessment to self- assessment but he added that teachers should be very careful so that they do not lose the credibility. He also explained that they should start with 10% and as students get used to this system and be objective, this percentage can be increased. Instructor B, on the other hand responded as "To be

honest with you, I don't know. I think it's very difficult to integrate autonomy or autonomous learning into the assessment, because when you give them a lot of options, the issue of reliability can be a problem; so we have to think about this very carefully". She added that something can be done about this by for example giving students six questions in the exam and asking them to answer only four. However, she said:

While one student is giving a presentation, you cannot ask the other to write an essay in a speaking class; this can't be done. But, regarding the questions or the tasks maybe you can give them limited options, not a lot of options; because, then the reliability becomes a problem". She concluded saying that teachers should think about this issue.

#### **4.4 Classroom Activities**

This section presents the results obtained through class observations. In this study, five classes in three different courses, namely ELTE 103, ELTE 105, and ELTE 107, have been observed to find out to what extent the activities conducted in these classes promote learner autonomy.

##### **4.4.1 ELTE 103 Advanced Reading and Writing I**

Observing the ELTE 103 class for three hours (150 minutes) revealed that around only one third of the classroom activities seemed to be promoting learner autonomy.

From all the activities implemented in the class the following activities are the ones which seem to promote learner autonomy:

- indirectly encouraging students to use technology (the Internet)
- asking students to type their assignments and e-mail them to him and giving New Year presents to the students who had emailed their assignments to him on time. (encouragement to use technology)

- some strategy training in this lesson in which both the instructor and the students were reviewing the strategies of better writing in an interactive way
- encouraging students to work in pairs and get their friends' ideas in an analysis task
- engaging students in peer-correction
- explaining students the aim of a task before doing the task and giving them clear instructions on how to do it (awareness giving)

#### **4.4.2 ELTE 105 Listening and Pronunciation I**

Through 5 hour (250 minutes) of observation of ELTE 105 classes, the researcher realized that the following activities observed in these classes may promote learner autonomy:

##### ***The activities observed in ELTE 105 (01):***

- asking the students to read the questions carefully before they listen to the recording and explaining them how to listen and find the correct answers
- explaining why the answers are right or wrong while checking the answers (raising students' awareness)
- asking students to voluntarily go to the board to write the correct phonetic transcriptions of words
- performing self-evaluation and self-correction of an exam
- giving students an out-of-class task
- asking students to use a dictionary while doing a task (using extra materials)
- reviewing the strategies of writing the complete phonetic transcription of a word (strategy training)

***The activities observed in ELTE 105 (02):***

- asking students to voluntarily answer the questions on the board
- reviewing the strategies of how to write the phonetic transcription of a word (strategy training)
- giving students an out-of-class activity

**4.4.3 ELTE 107 Oral Communication Skills I**

The two groups of ELTE 107 course were observed for 6 class hours in total, and during these observations it was found out that the following activities conducted in these classes seemed to be promoting learner autonomy:

***The activities of ELTE 107 (01):***

- talking about different ways or styles of learning to students, emphasizing that it differs from person to person, and helping students find out their own style or way of learning (helping students to gain self-awareness as regards their learning styles)
- teaching listening strategies (strategy training)
- explaining answers of questions while checking the answers (awareness raising)

***The activities of ELTE 107 (02):***

- helping students to find out the main idea of a listening text by explaining them the strategies and also telling students how to use their notes to find the answers (strategy training)
- asking students for reasons when they were giving answers to the questions (awareness raising)
- explaining answers of the questions while checking the answers (awareness raising)

In general, the observations reveal that in all the courses learner autonomy is being promoted to some extent.

#### **4.5 Summary**

In this chapter, the results of the current study were represented. First section included the results related to students' perceptions of learner autonomy in the three skill-based courses. Second section focused on teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy in these three courses. The third section explained suggestions given by the teachers and the students for better promoting learner autonomy in the three courses. Finally, the fourth section included the results of the observations conducted in the three courses.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter includes discussion of the results and implications of the study. First, it discusses the major findings of the study by answering the research questions. Then, implications for teaching and learning English and further research are explained after the conclusion.

#### 5.1 Discussion of Results

In this section, the results of the study re discussed in relation to the research questions.

##### **5.1.1 Research question 1: To what extent do the three skill-based language improvement courses in the first semester of the ELT undergraduate program promote learner autonomy?**

This research question is made up of three sub-questions, which are answered and discussed separately below.

##### **(a) How do the students perceive autonomy in these courses as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures?**

The results obtained through the analysis of student questionnaires reveal that generally the students' perceptions of the teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures in

terms of fostering learner autonomy were positive. Their perceptions indicate that they think the three skill-based courses promote learner autonomy.

More specifically, the results related to teacher's activities show that in all the three courses very high percentages of the students perceive the activities of the teacher as promoting learner autonomy. The means for three courses ranged between 4.03-4.13 (4.03 for ELTE 107, 4.05 for ELTE 103, and 4.13 for ELTE 105). However, at the same time, the students viewed their teacher as the authority in the classroom. This can be due to the students' cultural backgrounds since in eastern or traditional cultures teacher is seen as authority who teaches the students. Similarly, in a study by Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002) it is found out that "the students have definite views about the teachers' roles and their own responsibilities. The teacher is seen as someone having a very important role to play in the language learning process" (p, 13). In another study, Chan (2001) obtained that the students perceived the teacher's role in the language learning process as a predominant one. As in the present study, the students' perceptions in Chan's (2001) study "corresponded to the traditional authoritarian view of the teacher's role in the local classroom" (p.510).

As to the students' roles, the perceptions of the students were also found out to be positive. The students' responses indicate that what they do in these courses get them to develop autonomy. However, when students' perceptions of teacher activities are compared with those of student activities, it can be seen that students' of student activities are comparatively less positive (the means ranged between 3.59 and 3.95).

Regarding course content and the materials, in general the students perceived all the materials to be promoting learner autonomy. However, it should be added that the results obtained for ELTE 105 (mean=3.75) course in this regard were a little bit lower compared to the findings obtained for ELTE 103 (mean=3.90) and ELTE 107 (mean=4.10) courses.

Concerning the assessment procedures, all three courses were perceived to be fostering learner autonomy. The means for ELTE 103, ELTE 105 and ELTE 107 were 4.19, 4, and 4.04, respectively. To sum up, it can be concluded that students also perceived assessment procedures in these courses as promoting autonomy.

Overall, majority of the students evaluated the three-skill based courses positively in terms of promoting learner autonomy as can be seen in Table 5.1 below. These findings are in line with the findings of a study conducted by Yildirim (2005), in which it was found out that both the first year students and fourth year students have positive views related to learner autonomy.

Table 5.1. Means for Three Skill-Based Courses

<b>Course</b>	<b>Teacher Activities</b>	<b>Student Activities</b>	<b>Content and Materials</b>	<b>Assessment Procedures</b>
<b>ELTE 103</b>	4.05	3.59	3.90	4.19
<b>ELTE 105</b>	4.13	3.69	3.75	4.00
<b>ELTE 107</b>	4.03	3.95	4.10	4.04



**(b) How do the instructors perceive autonomy in these courses as regards teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures?**

The results concerning the teachers' perceptions about teacher and student roles (teaching-learning activities), course content and materials, and assessment procedures regarding promoting learner autonomy in the three courses were both positive and negative. In other words, while they perceived some aspects of the course as fostering autonomy, they at the same time suggested some changes in other aspects which they believed lack the promotion of autonomy.

For instance, the instructors claimed that they tried to promote autonomy with the following activities: encouraging students to visit the library and use the Internet, providing students with various resources or options, encouraging them to work in pairs/groups, assigning them some out-of-class self-study tasks/activities, and including strategy training in their classes. Furthermore, they claimed that they tried to act as a facilitator and guide their students rather than spoon-feeding them. This finding can be considered parallel to the findings of the study conducted by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012). They found out that 79.6% of the teachers felt they promoted learner autonomy with their students while 10.2% thought they didn't, and 10.2% were unsure.

Regarding the students' activities, the teachers stated that students are not very much involved in decision making like choosing the books or the content to be learned. In this respect, they thought that the courses did not promote autonomy because students had 'little say' and sometimes 'no say' in decision making. However, as mentioned, they had the chance to work in pairs/groups, do self-

study, search on the Internet, use the library and do out-of-class activities. In other words, the courses promote learner autonomy to some extent as perceived by the instructors. With regard to student involvement in decision making, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) identified that “student involvement in decision making was seen to be most feasible in relation to materials, topics, and activities and least feasible (and indeed not particularly desirable) in relation to choices about objectives and assessment” (p, 286).

As for the course materials, teachers’ perceptions were again both positive and negative. For instance, they claimed that the course materials for ELTE 103 were sometimes flexible but sometimes very rigid. Related to course materials in ELTE 105, the instructors stated that the materials are not that flexible and are not that much promoting learner autonomy, but they said that the extra materials (supplementary books) are promoting learner autonomy because they include websites and further links. For ELTE 107 course materials, the instructors argued that the books may promote learner autonomy because they include strategy training and pre-listening activities. Yet, the lack of extra and self-study materials (CDs for example) was perceived to be a barrier to fostering autonomy.

The instructors’ perceptions about the assessment procedures regarding the learner autonomy were not much positive. They pointed out that the assessment is mostly teacher-based and the students have no say. For example, in ELTE 107 final exam the students are given only one topic to talk about and they don’t have any other option to choose from. However, in-class assessments like writing and presentations include options and also peer-correction which can be considered promoting learner autonomy. All in all, the instructors don’t have a positive

perception of the assessment procedures regarding learner autonomy. This finding can be supported by the findings of Borg and Al-Busaidi's (2012) study, in which the teachers viewed student involvement in decisions concerning objectives and assessment not very feasible and desirable.

**(c) To what extent do class activities (teaching-learning procedures) and tasks used in these courses promote learner autonomy?**

The results obtained through the class observations demonstrated that only some class activities could promote learner autonomy. For instance, in all the classes observed there were activities like strategy training, clarification of the answers, and awareness raising. Pair-work and group work were also observed. Moreover, students were asked to do some projects or tasks out of the class. It was also observed in one of the classes that the instructor was helping his students to become aware of their learning styles, which is one of the most effective steps in developing learner autonomy.

With regard to pair/group work, Dang (2012) argues that students should be involved in collaborative tasks and debate activities to foster learner autonomy, explaining that the first one provides students with the opportunities for more negotiation and cooperation, and the second one prepares opportunities for individual work, and they both lead to improvement of learner autonomy. Nunan (2003) also points out that getting learners to be active in their own learning could help them be autonomous.

To conclude, the class observations showed that only few class activities such as strategy training, giving options in presentation or project topics, and raising

students' awareness though clarifying answers in feedback sessions were leading to learner autonomy. In the present study the teachers argued that they try to promote learner autonomy in their classes but because of some reasons like students' backgrounds, they cannot fully achieve this. Similar finding can be observed in Nakata's (2011) study. It was found out that although many Japanese EFL high school teachers understand the importance of autonomy, they are not completely ready for promoting it in their students.

### **5.1.2 Research Question 2: How can the three skill-based courses be improved in terms of promoting learner autonomy?**

Similar to the first research question, the discussion of this question will be presented under the two sub-questions.

#### **(a) What do the students suggest in terms of promoting learner autonomy in these courses?**

The results concerning students' suggestions for the improvement of the courses in terms of promoting learner autonomy reveal that the majority of the students suggested including more practice in the courses, and using technology since it is an important and effective factor in the process of learning. The students also stated that there should be more strategy training both in the books and the class activities. Moreover, they asked for being involved in taking decisions like choosing the course content, materials, topics and also the time of the lesson.

In addition to the above-mentioned suggestions, the students proposed the following improvements as well:

- More practice; extra activities (because they believed that more practice results in better learning)
- More out-of-class activities
- More group/pair work activities
- Self-assessment and peer-correction
- Being free to express thoughts and ideas
- Extra and more interesting materials

On the whole, although students had some suggestions concerning teaching/learning procedures and the course materials, they did not propose many changes in the assessment. This may be because they were first year students and they didn't have much information about how assessment should be (i.e. effective ways of assessing students), and as a result, they could not suggest much in this regard.

The above-mentioned suggestions for promoting learner autonomy can be identified in some related studies on autonomy in language education. For instance, Chan (2001) argued that students view being hardworking as an important characteristic of autonomous learners. Being hardworking can be considered as being involved in more practice activities. Joshi (2011), on the other hand, found out that a high percentage of the students perform out of class activities like using library to develop autonomy; the students in the present study also suggested doing more out-of-class activities. Moreover, Chan (2001) focused on the importance of group and pair work, and Little (2004) stated that in an autonomous class "The teacher engages her learners in regular evaluation of

their progress as individual learners and as a class” (p, 2), all of which are in line with the above-explained findings (regarding students’ suggestions) of this study.

**(b) What do the instructors suggest in terms of promoting learner autonomy in these courses?**

The instructors participating in the study gave a number of suggestions for making the courses better in terms of promoting learner autonomy. These suggestions can be summarized as follows:

- Involving students in decisions about materials and activities
- Giving students options (of topics, tasks) to choose from; having a wide variety of topics and activities
- Teacher’s adopting the role of facilitator and guiding students to be autonomous
- Using materials which are flexible and suitable for self-study
- Involving peer feedback/evaluation in the assessment procedures
- Getting students to prepare their own tasks/activities
- Conducting needs assessment to involve students more in the materials selection process
- Encouraging students to do things independently
- Training students about and getting them to use different strategies
- Involving students more in decisions concerning classroom management (e.g., individual/pair/group work, the type of classroom activities, the position of desks, discipline matters)

Involving students in decision making on objectives and content of the lesson has also be recommended by Urun, Demir, and Akar (2014). Furthermore, in Chan's (2001) study the students viewed the teacher as the facilitator and the resource person, as suggested in the present study.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results of the present study reveal that both the students' and the instructors' perceptions of the three skill-based courses in terms of promoting learner autonomy were generally positive. In other words, their perceptions indicate that learner autonomy is developed in these courses. However, it should be added that students' perceptions were comparatively more positive than those of the instructors, because the instructors expressed that the courses encourage students to be autonomous to *some extent*. The instructors stated that they try to promote learner autonomy through some activities but because of some factors such as students' backgrounds and the materials they cannot fully do so.

In spite of their positive perceptions, both groups gave useful suggestions for enhancing the courses in terms of developing autonomy in learners. Involving students in decision making, giving them options in tasks, using more out-of-class activities, and involving self and peer feedback in the assessment procedures are some of the suggestions put forward by both the students and the instructors.

## **5.3 Implications of the Study**

This study has some implications for future skill-based language courses and research.

### **5.3.1 Practical Implications (Implications for ELT)**

On the basis of the results of this study, the following implications can be drawn for teaching skill-based language improvement courses to promote learner autonomy:

1. Needs assessment can be conducted before the courses start to identify students' needs, interests and expectations, so that the students could have a say in the content of the course and the materials.
2. Replacing the materials with the ones which include strategy-training and autonomous tasks and activities, and which are suitable for self-study (which include CDs, DVDs, and tests with the answers).
3. There can be a process syllabus; it can be negotiated with the students.
4. Instructors can inform their students about the usefulness and advantages of learner autonomy.
5. Instructors can decide on the class rules together with their students at the very beginning of the semester, for example about eating/drinking something in the class; or about using mobile phones in the class.
6. The instructors can involve students in decisions regarding the assessment process by giving them options in writing and speaking exams (for instance they can give 6 questions and ask students to randomly choose 4 of them to answer).
7. Instructors can teach some strategies and encourage their students to use them.
8. Students can be involved in preparing tasks.
9. Instructors can share responsibility and control with their students.
10. Students can be given a chance to do self and peer evaluation, and they should be guided by the teacher in doing this.



11. Students can be given a list of supplementary books to choose from for self-study.

12. Students can be involved in decisions regarding classroom management issues, such as discipline matters.

13. The teacher's role should be changed from an authority to a facilitator or a guide.

### **5.3.2 Implications for Further Research**

Using a variety of data collection instruments (triangulation) can be considered as the strength of the present study. These instruments can also be adapted and used to evaluate language courses in different contexts to find out students' and instructors' perceptions of learner autonomy in the courses.

However, lack of evaluation of the materials/textbooks by the researcher in this study can be considered as a limitation. Therefore, in future studies materials and text books can be evaluated in a systematic way to identify whether or not they promote autonomy. Also, future studies can involve all six skill-based language improvement courses in the first year of the undergraduate ELT program.

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## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A: Permission Letter

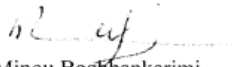
December 17, 2013

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

As part of my MA thesis study titled "Learner Autonomy in Skill-based Language Improvement Courses in an Undergraduate ELT Program", I need to carry out research at Eastern Mediterranean University, Faculty of Education *English Language Teaching Department*. More specifically, I would like to administer a questionnaire to the students registered in ELTE 103 (Advanced Reading and Writing I), ELTE 105 (Listening and Pronunciation I), and ELTE 107 (Oral Communication Skills I) courses, conduct interviews with the instructors teaching these courses, and carry out observations (three hours in each class) in the above-mentioned classes, as well as analyzing the course materials. Therefore, I would kindly like to ask for permission to conduct my research in the ELT Department.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

  
Minou Baghbakarimi  
(St. No. 115649)  
Tel: 0533 844 94 32  
e-mail: [minou\\_karimi@yahoo.com](mailto:minou_karimi@yahoo.com)

Attachments:  
A sample questionnaire  
Teacher interview questions

*Approved  
provided ELT instructors  
and students  
give their consent  
GDV  
18/12/13*

*159 17/12/2013*

## Appendix B: Student Questionnaire for ELTE 103

Dear Students,

I am a master student and I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. This questionnaire aims to identify your perceptions about different aspects of **Advanced Reading and Writing I** course. It is very important that you express your opinion sincerely. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Minou Baghbankarimi

MA student

Faculty of Education

English Language Teaching Department

[Minou\\_karimi@yahoo.com](mailto:Minou_karimi@yahoo.com)

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### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 1 - Background Information

1. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your gender: Male  Female
3. Your nationality: TRNC  TR  Other  \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)
4. Your mother tongue: Turkish  English  Other  \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

## PART 2 – Questionnaire

Please put a cross (X) as appropriate:

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

**Part A: In this course (Advanced Reading and Writing I), the teacher:**

	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					
26					
27					

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
28	encourages us to take risks while learning.					
29	motivates us to read after the class (to do self-study).					
30	motivates us to write after the class (to do self-study).					
31	is the authority in the class in decision making.					

32. What do you expect from your teacher in this course? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part B: In this course (Advanced Reading and Writing I), we (students):**

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	are involved in selection of writing topics.					
2	are involved in selection of reading topics/texts.					
3	are involved in selecting reading tasks and activities.					
4	are involved in selecting writing tasks and activities.					
5	are involved in decisions on the course content.					
6	are involved in decisions on the time and place of the lesson.					
7	are given options for homework reading tasks.					
8	are given options for homework writing tasks.					
9	read English newspapers outside the class.					
10	read English sources on the Internet.					
11	study in the library.					
12	read English story books outside the class.					
13	keep a diary for our learning.					
14	are motivated to write after the class.					
15	are motivated to read after the class.					
16	assess our own progress in writing. (We do self-assessment.)					
17	assess our own progress in reading. (We do self-assessment.)					
18	are responsible for our own learning.					
19	are engaged in self-study.(We study outside the classroom)					
20	are aware of our learning strategies.					
21	work in pairs/groups.					
22	work with limited assistance of the teacher.					
23	have high motivation.					
24	use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet, etc.) to improve our reading skills.					
25	use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet, etc.) to improve our writing skills.					

26. What should be your roles in this course?

- a) We should have a right to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) We should be allowed to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) For being (successful) in this course, we should: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Part C: In this course (Advanced Reading and Writing I), the materials:**

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	include some pair work reading activities.					
2	include some pair work writing activities.					
3	include some reading tasks to do in small groups.					
4	include some writing tasks to do in small groups.					
5	include some strategies of how to read.					
6	include some strategies of how to write.					
7	provide us some tasks to assess our learning.					
8	get us to be a decision maker rather than a receiver of information.					
9	encourage us to do self-study. (We can study them on our own outside the classroom)					
10	give us opportunities to make choices among different activities/tasks.					
11	involve us in doing various activities.					
12	encourage us to guess/predict/discover while learning.					
13	give us information about various reading strategies.					
14	give us information about various writing strategies.					
15	encourage us to evaluate our learning.					
16	allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our reading.					
17	allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our writing.					

18. What do you think about the course book/materials used in this course? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. How can the course book/materials be improved (made better) in this course? What are your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part D: Feedback and Assessment in this course (Advanced Reading and Writing I):**

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Only the teacher corrects writing mistakes.					
2	Only the teacher corrects reading mistakes.					
3	The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in writing.					
4	The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in reading.					
5	The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in writing.					
6	The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in reading.					
7	The teacher encourages us for self-correction.					
8	The teacher encourages us for peer correction.					
9	We give feedback to our peer's written work.					
10	We correct each other's mistakes in reading activities.					
11	We are involved in decisions on how we are assessed.					
12	We are given options for how we want to be assessed.					

13. How should the feedback and assessment be in this course? What are your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**End of the questionnaire**

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire



## Appendix C: Student Questionnaire for ELTE 105

Dear Students,

I am a master student and I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. This questionnaire aims to identify your perceptions about different aspects of **Listening and Pronunciation I** course. It is very important that you express your opinion sincerely. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Minou Baghbankarimi

MA student

Faculty of Education

English Language Teaching Department

[Minou\\_karimi@yahoo.com](mailto:Minou_karimi@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: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 1 - Background Information**

1. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your gender:    Male       Female
3. Your nationality:    TRNC       TR       Other  \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)
4. Your mother tongue: Turkish       English       Other  \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

**PART 2 – Questionnaire**

Please put a cross (X) as appropriate:

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

**Part A: In this course (Listening and Pronunciation I), the teacher:**

	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1					
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26					
27					

28. What do you expect from your teacher in this course? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Part B: In this course (Listening and Pronunciation I), we (students):**

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	are involved in selection of listening topics/texts.					
2	are involved in selecting listening tasks and activities.					
3	are involved in selecting pronunciation tasks and activities.					
4	are involved in decisions on the course content.					
5	are involved in decisions on the time and place of the lesson.					
6	are given options for homework listening tasks.					
7	are given options for homework pronunciation tasks.					
8	listen to English news, programs, films, etc. outside the class.					
9	listen to English sources on the Internet.					
10	practice pronunciation outside the class					
11	keep a diary for our learning.					
12	are motivated to listen after the class.					
13	are motivated to practice pronunciation after the class.					
14	assess our own progress in listening. (We do self-assessment.)					
15	assess our own progress in pronunciation. (We do self-assessment.)					
16	are responsible for our own learning.					
17	are engaged in self-study. (We study outside the classroom)					
18	are aware of our learning strategies.					
19	work in pairs/groups.					
20	work with limited assistance of the teacher.					
21	have high motivation.					
22	use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet, etc.) to improve our listening skills.					
23	use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet, etc.) to improve our pronunciation.					

24. What should be your roles in this course?

- a) We should have a right to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) We should be allowed to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) For being (successful) in this course, we should: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Part C:** In this course (Listening and Pronunciation I), **the materials:**

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	include some pair work listening activities.					
2	include some pair work pronunciation activities.					
3	include some listening tasks to do in small groups.					
4	include some pronunciation tasks to do in small groups.					
5	include some strategies of how to listen.					
6	include some strategies of how to pronounce.					
7	provide us some tasks to assess our learning.					
8	get us to be a decision maker rather than a receiver of information.					
9	encourage us to do self-study. (We can study them on our own outside the classroom)					
10	give us opportunities to make choices among different activities/tasks.					
11	involve us in doing various activities.					
12	encourage us to guess/predict/discover while learning.					
13	give us information about various listening strategies.					
14	give us information about various pronunciation strategies.					
15	encourage us to evaluate our learning.					
16	allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our listening.					
17	allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our pronunciation.					

18. What do you think about the course book/materials used in this course? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. How can the course book/materials be improved (made better) in this course? What are your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part D: Feedback and Assessment** in this course (Listening and Pronunciation I):

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Only the teacher corrects mistakes made in listening activities.					
2	Only the teacher corrects pronunciation mistakes.					
3	The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in listening.					
4	The teacher teaches us how to find our pronunciation mistakes.					
5	The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in listening.					
6	The teacher encourages us to correct our own pronunciation mistakes in pronunciation.					
7	The teacher encourages us for self-correction.					
8	The teacher encourages us for peer correction.					
9	We give feedback to our peer's pronunciation.					
10	We correct each other's mistakes in listening activities.					
11	We correct each other's pronunciation mistakes.					
12	We are involved in decisions on how we are assessed.					
13	We are given options for how we want to be assessed.					

14. How should the feedback and assessment be in this course? What are your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**End of the questionnaire**

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire

## Appendix D: Student Questionnaire for ELTE 107

Dear Students,

I am a master student and I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. This questionnaire aims to identify your perceptions about different aspects of **Oral Communication Skills I** course. It is very important that you express your opinion sincerely. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Minou Baghbankarimi

MA student

Faculty of Education

English Language Teaching Department

[Minou\\_karimi@yahoo.com](mailto:Minou_karimi@yahoo.com)

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### 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: \_\_\_\_\_

### PART 1 - Background Information

1. Your age: \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Your department: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Your gender: Male  Female
4. Your nationality: TRNC  TR  Other  \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)
5. Your mother tongue: Turkish  English  Other  \_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

### PART 2 – Questionnaire

Please put a cross (X) as appropriate:

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

**Part A: In this course (Oral Communication Skills I), the teacher:**

	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					
21					
22					
23					
24					
25					

	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly agree	agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26	motivates us to practice speaking after class (to do self-study).				
27	motivates us to practice listening after class (to do self-study).				
28	encourages us to listen to/watch English news, programs, films, etc. after the class.				
29	is the authority in the class.				

30. What do you expect from your teacher in this course? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part B: In this course (Oral Communication Skills I), we (students):**

	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	are involved in selection of speaking topics.				
2	are involved in selection of listening topics/texts.				
3	are involved in selecting speaking tasks and activities.				
4	are involved in selecting listening tasks and activities.				
5	are involved in decisions on the course content.				
6	are involved in decisions on the time and place of the lesson.				
7	are given options for homework speaking tasks.				
8	are given options for homework listening tasks.				
9	listen to/watch English news, films, programs, etc. outside the class.				
10	listen to/watch English sources on the Internet.				
11	speak in English outside the class				
12	keep a diary for our learning.				
13	are motivated to speak (in English) after the class.				
14	are motivated to listen to English sources after the class.				
15	assess our own progress in listening. (We do self-assessment.)				
16	assess our own progress in speaking. (We do self-assessment.)				
17	are responsible for our own learning.				
18	are engaged in self-study. (We study outside the classroom.)				
19	are aware of our learning strategies.				
20	work in pairs/groups.				
21	work with limited assistance of the teacher.				
22	have high motivation.				
23	use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet) to improve listening skills.				
24	use technology (e.g. computer, the Internet) to improve speaking skills.				



25. What should be your roles in this course?

- a) We should have a right to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- b) We should be allowed to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- c) For being (successful) in this course, we should: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Part C: In this course (Oral Communication Skills I), the materials:**

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	include some pair work speaking activities.					
2	include some pair work listening activities.					
3	include some speaking tasks to do in small groups.					
4	include some listening tasks to do in small groups.					
5	include some strategies of how to speak.					
6	include some strategies of how to listen.					
7	provide us some tasks to assess our learning.					
8	get us to be a decision maker rather than a receiver of information.					
9	encourage us to do self-study. (We can study them on our own outside the classroom)					
10	give us opportunities to make choices among different activities/tasks.					
11	involve us in doing various activities.					
12	encourage us to guess/predict/discover while learning.					
13	give us information about various speaking strategies.					
14	give us information about various listening strategies.					
15	encourage us to evaluate our learning.					
16	allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our speaking.					
17	allow self-monitoring (self-checking) and feedback on our listening.					

18. What do you think about the course book/materials used in this course? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

19. How can the course book/materials be improved (made better) in this course? What are your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Part D: Feedback and Assessment** in this course (Oral Communication

Skills I):

		5	4	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Only the teacher corrects speaking mistakes.					
2	Only the teacher corrects mistakes made in listening activities/tasks.					
3	The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in speaking.					
4	The teacher teaches us how to find our mistakes in listening.					
5	The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in speaking.					
6	The teacher encourages us to correct our own mistakes in listening.					
7	The teacher encourages us for self-correction.					
8	The teacher encourages us for peer correction.					
9	We give feedback to our peer's speaking performance.					
10	We correct each other's mistakes in listening activities.					
11	We correct each other's mistakes in speaking activities.					
12	We are involved in decisions on how we are assessed.					
13	We are given options for how we want to be assessed.					

14. How should the feedback and assessment be in this course? What are your suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**End of the questionnaire**

Thank you for filling in the questionnaire

## Appendix E: Teacher Interview

### Teacher Interview Questions

#### Part 1. Background information about the teacher

Age: ..... Gender: .....

Years of teaching experience: .....

Mother tongue: ..... Nationality: .....

#### Part 2. The teacher's general perceptions about learner autonomy:

1. What does 'learner autonomy' mean to you?
2. Who are autonomous learners? What are their characteristics? What do they do?
3. Do you think learner autonomy plays a crucial role in language learning? Why? Why not?
4. How can language teachers promote learner autonomy in their classes? What role(s) do you think teachers have in promoting learner autonomy?
5. What can be the obstacles to promoting learner autonomy in language classes?

#### Part 3. The teacher's evaluation of the course in terms of learner autonomy:

6. Do you think you promote learner autonomy in this course? If no, why? If yes, what do you do to promote learner autonomy in this course? What tasks/activities do you use?
7. What do you think about the course book(s) and/or materials you use in terms of promoting learner autonomy?
8. Do you take autonomous learning into consideration while preparing your own materials? If no, why? If yes, how?
9. How do you assess your students in this course? Are your students involved in the assessment process? If yes, how? If no, why?
10. To what extent do you think your students are autonomous? (What is your perception of your students' autonomy?) Explain your answer.
11. Do you talk to your students about autonomy and its value in this course?
12. Do you involve your students in decisions on what is to be learned? If yes how? If no, why?
13. Do the materials promote learner autonomy in this course? How? Is it working?

**Part 4. The teacher's suggestions for the improvement of the course in terms of learner autonomy:**

14. What can be done in this course to promote learner autonomy further? What are your suggestions?
  - a) What should be the teacher's (your) role (s)? (What should you do?)
  - b) What should be the students' role(s)? (What should your students do?)
15. How should be the materials in this course so that they promote autonomy?
16. Should the students be involved in selecting textbooks/materials? If no, why? If yes, how?
17. How much should your students be involved in decisions on a) individual/pair/group work  
b) the type of classroom activities c) the position of desks d) discipline matters?
18. How should be the assessment in this course so that learner autonomy is promoted?

## Appendix F: Observation Form

### Observation Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Course/group: \_\_\_\_\_ time: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_

time	Activity/Task/ Exercise	Materials used	What does the teacher do?	What do the students do?

## Appendix G: Teacher Consent

Dear Course Instructor,

I am a master student and I am currently doing my thesis on learner autonomy. As part of my thesis research, this interview aims to identify your perceptions of learner autonomy and its application in your ELTE 103 classes. Your identity and individual responses will be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Minou Baghbankarimi

MA student

Faculty of Education

English Language Teaching Department

Minou\_karimi@yahoo.com

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### 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: \_\_\_\_\_