T. C.
PAMUKKALE ÜNİVERSİTESİ
EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BİLİM DALI
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

LEARNER AUTONOMY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS:

ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND

PRACTICES

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Denizli – 2019

T.R
PAMUKKALE UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING
MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

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Bu çalışma Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı'nda jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yönetim Kurulu'nun 17./07./2019 tarihi ve 30./15.. sayılı kararı ile onaylanmıştır.

Prof. Dr. Mustafa BULUŞ

Enstitü Müdürü

ETİK BEYANNAMESİ

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Hülya KOŞAR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ÖZET

İLKOKULLAR 'DA ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİ: İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN GÖRÜŞLERİ VE UYGULAMALARI

KOŞAR, Hülya
Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
Tez Danışmanı; Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Eda DURUK
Mayıs 2019, 81 sayfa

Öğrenen özerkliği son yıllarda eğitim dünyasının en çok vurgulanan ve araştırılan konusu halini almıştır. İngiliz dili eğitiminde de çokça dile getirilen bu konu ile ilgili çalışma sayısı gün geçtikçe artmaktadır. Nitekim yapılan çalışmalar çoğunlukla yetişkin gruplarını kapsamaktadır. Eğitim sisteminin temelini oluşturan ilkokullarda bu bağlamda yapılmış araştırma sayısı literatürde yok denecek kadar azdır. Lakin öğrencilerin temelden özerk olarak yetiştirilmesi gereği yadsınamaz bir gerçektir. Bu sebeple, ilkokulda görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin öğrenen özerkliğine bakış açılarının araştırıldığı bu çalışma iki aşamalıdır. Öncelikle öğretmenlerin öğrencilerini İngilizce derslerinde ne kadar özerk davranışlar gösterdiği ile ilgili bakış açıları değerlendirilmiştir. Ardından öğretmenlerin öğrencilerini bu bağlamda ne kadar destekledikleri ve öğrencilerini daha özerk kılmak için ne tür öğretim metod ve tekniklerine başvurdukları ve bu konu hakkındaki görüşleri değerlendirilmştir. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenler hem devlet hem de özel ilkokullarda çalışan 82 İngilizce öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma nicel özellik taşımaktadır ve veriler güncel makalelerden ve literatür taramasından faydalanarak araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan bir anket ile toplanmıştır.

Verilerin analizinin ardından, tüm öğretmenlerin genel olarak öğrenen özerkliğine karşı pozitif bir tavırda olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Anketin üçüncü bölümünde öğretmenlerin öğrencilerinin ne derece özerk oldukları hakkındaki görüşleri sorulmuştur. Bu bölümün analizi için sorular beş başlık altında değerlendirilmiştir. Bu beş başlık ders içinde kullanılan metod ve tekniklere karar verme, bireysel çalışma, sınıf yönetimi kararlarını alma, dersin amaçlarna karar verme ve derste kullanılacak kitap ya da materyallere karar vermedir. Sonuçlar değerlendirildiğinde metod ve teknikler hakkında karar verme ve sınıf dışında bireysel çalışma başlıkları altında önemli farklılık ortaya

çıktığı gözlemlenmiştir. Buna konuyla ilgili özel okullarda çalışan öğretmenler öğrencilerinin bu iki kategoride daha özerk olduğu kanısını belirtirken devlet okullarında çalışan öğretmenler bu konuda özel okul öğretmenlerine göre daha olumsuz bir tavır sergilemiştir. Anketin dördüncü bölümündeki sorular da aynı beş başlığın altında toplanmış ve yine yöntem ve metodları belirleme ile okul dışı bireysel çalışma başlıkları hakkında devlet ve özel okul öğretmenleri arasında bir farklılık ortaya çıkmıştır. Özel okul öğretmenleri üçüncü bölümün sonuçları ile örtüşecek şekilde, öğrenen özerkliğini sınıflarında desteklemek için bu tarz yöntem ve metodlara daha fazla yer verdiğini belirtmiştir. Devlet okullarında çalışan öğretmenler ise bu bağlamda özel okul öğretmenlerine göre daha negatif bir tutum sergilemiştir. Bu çalışma bir sormaca aracılığı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bir sonraki çalışmada öğretmenlerin daha detaylı görüşleri alınmak üzere açık uçlu sorular içeren görüşmeler yapılarak ve bu konuda nasıl öğrencilerini desteklerini daha net gözlemlemek için ders içi gözlem sonuçları incelenerek bu çalışmanın sonuçları genişletilebilinir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öğrenen özerkliği, öğretmenlerin öğrenen özerkliği hakkındaki görüşleri, ilkokulda öğrenen özerkliği, öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemek için metod ve yöntemler.

ABSTRACT

LEARNER AUTONOMY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES

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MA Thesis in English Language Teaching
Supervisor; Asst. Prof. Dr. Eda Duruk
May 2019, 81 pages

Learner autonomy is a key concept which has been studied and discussed recently. In English language education this concept has been mentioned a lot and the number of research about autonomy has been increasing day by day. However, these studies mostly address adult learners. The number of the studies about autonomy in the primary schools, which are the base of the educational system, is minute amount. Nevertheless, the importance of promoting autonomy in the classrooms from primary level is an undeniable fact. The present study which aims to explore the perceptions and practices of primary school English language teachers has two parts. First of all, the perceptions of the teachers in accordance with their view of students' degree of autonomy have been identified. Then, their views about the practices to foster autonomy in the classroom and how much they apply them have been assessed. The study is quantitaitive and the data were gathered through a questionnaire which was developed through in depth analysis of current articles and literature review. There were 82 participants working at state or private primary schools.

After the analysis of the data, it has been revealed that all participants are positive towards learner autonomy. In the third part of the questionnaire which is about teachers' perceptions on their students' autonomy level, the questions were divided into five headings. These headings were determining methods and techniques to use, self-study, determining classroom management issues, determining course objectives and materials to use. When the results are considered, significant differences have been found out under 'determining methods and techniques' and 'self-study' headings. Private school teachers have more positive perceptions towards the level of their students' autonomy when compared to those of the state school teachers. The fourth section items were categorised under the same five headings. Private school teachers, in line with the results in the third

section, stated that they apply practices and methods to foster autonomy. The state school teachers were slightly less positive towards the issue compared to the private ones.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFR: Common European Framework

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

*EFL***:** English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

SAS: Student Autonomy Score

TSP: Total Strategy Perception

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this part of the study, general information regarding the subject of the research as well as the research questions and the need for the study will be presented in detail.

1.1. Background to the Study

In the field of education, students are considered as storages which can be filled with very different kinds of information by course books or teachers. Surprisingly, students show higher performance than expected. This situation satisfies most of the teachers and parents. The real point should be considered here. What we really need for the future world should be regarded and our expectation from the students should be considered, too. Do we want dependent and spoon fed knowledge consumers or independent and life-long learning producers? If we do not want to restrain our students with in-class learning or ready-made knowledge, we should promote autonomy in the classrooms to make more responsible of their own learning process to continue the learning process without instruction, out of the classroom and adopt the information to new situations by themselves. This may mean helping them be aware of their abilities, set their own learning objectives and engage them in decision-making processes. At the same time, it does not mean that students should be left own their own and there will be no teacher assistance at all. On the side of this argument mentioned above, the current dissertation aims to be a reference for the researchers or language educators and teachers who are interested in teachers' perceptions and practices about autonomy in foreign language classrooms.

The area of English Language Teaching has developed in accordance with innovations over the last twenty years (Brandl, 2008). Approaches and theories of language teaching and learning in the recent decades have encountered many changes in terms of the ways focusing more on the communicative, functional and individual aspect of language. Among these changes, a great priority has been given to the role of the learners. In this context, the language teachers started to take the learners' needs, abilities and learning styles into consideration by putting them at the center of classroom organization (Henson, 2003). The issue that is important in the current trend is the individual; that's why, the teacher and the learner roles seem to be evolved (Little,1991). Communicative language teaching (CLT) and learner centeredness which have been derived from these reforms have gained importance recently. The emphasis is put on the concept of putting the learner at

center of teaching and learning process. A major motive to develop the learner-centered language teaching evolved from the CLT, which is a combination of approaches rather than a single methodology (Nunan, 1988). Communicative language teaching emphasizes the issue "learners must learn not only to make grammatically correct, propositional statements about the experiential world, but must also develop the ability to use language to get things done" (Nunan, 1988, p. 25). This new and innovative approach illuminated the term communicative competence, which is the ability to use language in everyday situations (Littlewood, 1981). As a consequence, cooperative and collaborative teaching and learning has gained importance. Most of all, this big change towards learner-centeredness has conducted towards the rising of the concept of learner autonomy, which has important contributions to the evolution of learner-centered education in language classrooms. Most academicians and scholars concur that autonomy should be taken into consideration as an educational goal so as to help students master the new language (Dickinson 1987). In this regard, there are many conceptions and definitions proposed by many educators to define and explain learner autonomy. It has been defined by the Holec (1981) as the 'ability to take charge of one's own learning' (p.3). Little (1991) also portrays the learner autonomy together with the learners' psychological relation to the process and content of learning, critical reflection, decision-making and independent action. Furthermore, Littlewood (1981) identifies it as "learners' ability and willingness to make choices independently". Camilleri (1999) claims that autonomy prepares learners for a lifelong learning via the ability to organize and direct their own learning in and out of the school and it should be the major issue in language learning and teaching. He discusses that it is impossible to supply students with all the information that they will need in their whole life only through a school or a programme. Field (2007) claims that learners' independent learning outside the classroom helps their learning process proceed and they take charge for their own learning.

In conclusion, learner autonomy is a crucial concept in language learning and classroom. So as to foster autonomy, teachers should supply the learners with an appropriate environment where they have the opportunities to develop language-learning skills, improve their motivation, take charge of their own learning and make use of the activities and materials outside the classroom.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In many respects, learning autonomy, which has gained importance increasingly in recent times, is a concept that needs to be placed in the education world. When considered

from the philosophical point of view, according to Dewey (1916) the most significant educational aim of a democratic society is to prepare individuals to play an active role in both social and political lives via providing them the circumstances in which they can gain the skills and attitudes they need for democratic and social involvement. Constructivism claims that the students in a learning context build their knowledge and meaning on their former learnings and experiences. In terms of Candy's statements (1991) constructivism is the approach which claims that the knowledge cannot be taught to the learners, they rather construct it by themselves as knowledge is something that is built up by learners. In order to raise individuals who take active part in social and democratic lives, have their own perspective and build their knowledge about world. For that reason, learner autonomy needs to be considered as the preliminary part of educational system.

When the autonomy is dealt with a psychological perspective, Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can be considered as in child development, the purpose of developmental learning is connected to child's autonomy and ZPD can help a child develop independent problem solving skills. Hence, with regard to social psychology, Deci (1995) claims that people's happiness relies on their senses of competence, relatedness and autonomy. Moreover, as it was stated by Little (2004: 1), encouraging learner autonomy is "a matter of making explicit what might otherwise remain unconscious in the contexts of formal learning." That is to say, children need their own spaces and autonomy in order to be healthy, social and self- efficient adults.

From the pedagogical view, when teachers encourage autonomy in their classes, they can take the advantage of constructive teaching since it allows learners to take active parts in learning processes. Student centered methods and autonomy are significant since the individualized assistance for each student may not be supplied to learners all the time (Cotteral, 1995). She further points out that leading learners to consider different perspectives of learning and spend more effort and time on particular language activities will encourage and inspire them. Furthermore, via this emphasis on learner choice, self-efficacy and self-confidence of learners are developed, and their intrinsic motivation is promoted, which can arrive at the conclusion of more long-lasting self-directed learning. When the teachers share responsibility and power with their learners, a traditional classroom turns into a learning community.

Furthermore, a classroom environment which gives the students the feeling that they have been controlled regularly prevents learners to develop learner autonomy, and thereby, must be avoided (Yıldırım, 2014). Little (2004: 2) states that learner autonomy is

crucially significant and closely associated with teacher autonomy and considers it as "the mirror image" of learner autonomy Therefore, encouraging students to participate actively in learning process mostly relies on the teacher's ability to handle the roles in the classroom (Nunan, 1997).

No matter how important learner autonomy is in today's English language classes, when the matter is to encourage students to be autonomous, educators, doubtlessly, tend to possess and support this concept immediately. However, it is not as simple as that. In such circumstances, teachers' right practices to lead student to become autonomous comes to question. In this context, teacher's beliefs about autonomy also affect their practices. Moreover, early education of autonomy has an important role for students' future life. Therefore, this study attempts to find out the beliefs and practices of in both state and private schools.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

In the world of education, the significance of autonomy has increased in recent years. This has provided researchers a motive to study on teachers' and learners' perceptions about being autonomous in learning process. Hence, they have started to investigate the other aspects of it. The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs and practices of Primary school English language teachers in private schools and state schools. The study also aims to find out whether any similarities or differences existed between primary school English language teachers working in state schools and private schools.

1.4. Research Questions

Specifically, the research questions of the present study are formulated as follows;

1.4.1

1. What are the private primary school teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy?
2. What are the state primary school teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy?
3. Are there any differences or similarities between the private and state primary school teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy?

1.4.2.

1. What are the private primary school teachers' perceptions on fostering learner autonomy based on the teaching strategies they actively use?

2. What are the state primary school teachers' perceptions on fostering learner autonomy based on the teaching strategies they actively use?

3. Are there any differences or similarities between the private and state primary school teachers' perceptions on fostering learner autonomy based on the teaching strategies they actively use?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Scharle and Szabó claimed that learner autonomy is an opportunity of the freedom and pontential to direct one's own needs and learning experiences (2000, p. 4). In other words, learner autonomy gives students an opportunity to discover themselves and their own learning styles to become lifelong learners. Cotterall described the significance of autonomy in three different categories including philosophical, pedagogical and practical. From philosophical perspective, learners have the right to decide on the options for their own learning, and helping learners to be independent in their choices is fundamental. From the pedagogical aspect, learners learn better when they are active in their own learning process in terms of pace, mode and content of the instruction. In terms of practical perspective, learners feel assured when they join in decision-making process (1995, p. 219). Therefore, in the light of these reasons, learners take the responsibility of and have a great control over their own learning.

Furthermore, it has been claimed by Rubin and Thompson that the language learner is the crucial concept in language learning process. When they face a failure, they find the mistake with everything such as teachers, conditions, or teaching materials. Nonetheless, the important cause for their deficiency of success can basically be found in themselves (1994, p. 3). In other words, being aware of individual ways of learning and strengths and weaknesses develop learners' success. Hence, autonomy is the basic mode to be conscious of the failure in language learning. Through the help of the autonomy, learners are aware of their own learning process and they will gain learning strategies that continue their learning during their lives.

As mentioned above, autonomy is important in English language education because when learners become more autonomous they gain many opportunities to be conscious of their own learning, observe their language process, and find new ways to be better in English. Therefore, researchers from different backgrounds deal with autonomy from different perspectives with different aspects. Lots of foreign researchers have put emphasis on this subject and researched about teachers' and learners' attitudes towards learner

autonomy. Many different studies in Turkey have been conducted to find out about teachers' and learners' perceptions or attitudes towards autonomy in ELT (Baylan, 2007; Özdere, 2005; Sancar, 2001; Sert, 2006). However, most of these studies have been conducted on teenage or adult learners. No matter how important the primary education is in individual's lives; studies at primary level are quite a few. Thereby, this study intends to research the concept of learner autonomy with regard to beliefs and practices of primary English language teachers working at state or private schools. Hereby, the findings can provide the literature a point of view about the situation at primary levels for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, the associated literature for the current study will be reviewed. In the first place, definition of the term –learner autonomy- with its all features will be presented. Secondly, its relations with contemporary teaching principles will be discussed. Then, research findings related to present study area will be discussed. In the final section of the chapter, issues based on implementation and future of learner autonomy will be discussed.

2.1. Theoretical Background

2.1.1. Definition of Learner Autonomy

Even though learner autonomy has gained popularity for the last two decades, it has been widely accepted in foreign language teaching and learning. Therefore, there is a huge amount of attempt to define the term by many educators and writers. Learner autonomy as a term was first coined by Henri Holec, the 'father' of learner autonomy, in 1981. Holec (1981) described learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's learning." Dickinson enhanced Holec's definition of learner autonomy as "the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his or her learning and the implementation of those decisions" (1987, p.11). Furthermore, Vanijdee (2003) defined it as; "a capacity–a construct of attitudes and abilities – which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning" (p. 76). Little (1991) also asserted that "autonomy is a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action" (p. 4). Hence, Benson (2001) elaborated this term as "the capacity to take charge of, or responsibility for, one's own learning" (p. 47). According to Benson (2001, pp.76-80), this taking responsibility of learning with visible behaviors which students apply to manage their planning, organization and evaluation of learning can be defined easily. That is to say, this type of taking charge is assumed as a psychological issue in language learning.

Moreover, autonomous learners, with the help of control over their own learning, can decide on their own learning goals. Benson (2001, pp. 76-103) stated that a full definition of the autonomy in language learning should have at least three levels that a language learner must employ them: (1) control over learning management, (2) control over goals, cognitive process and (3) control over learning content. All these three control levels are related to each other. When these definitions are taken into account, learner autonomy underlines the learners' responsibility for their own learning and it also urges

them to be independent and life-long learners and to be active in their decision making process.

Grenfell and Harris (1999) also highlight that learner autonomy and learner training is not similar things. Even though they are closely related and fundamental, learner training consists of a deliberate concentration on the learning process itself, not just on the language. A full definition could be that "learner training is the systematic and explicit training of learners in learning strategies in general (meta - cognitive strategies) and strategies for dealing with language and communication in particular (cognitive strategies)" (p. 7). In compatible with the Grenfell and Harris' definition, Dickinson (1993) alleges that learner training is a reciprocal and cooperative process between teacher and learner which targets to supply learners with the competence of control over the management of their own learning by providing a great degree of responsibility.

Learner autonomy is specified by the term of *savoir-apprendre* ("ability tolearnt"), which the Committee for Education Funding describes as the competence to monitor and join new learning experiences and integrating new information with the existing one and changing the latter when there is a need (Council of Europe 2001).

Encouraging learners to set their own learning goals and providing them with opportunities to become aware of their learning process and strategies have crucial role in the definition of learner autonomy.

Furthermore, Sinclair (1999) asserted that autonomy in language learning is fundamentally related to supply the learners with chances consisting activities in class in order to get choice in foreign language learning. Together with these diverse definitions of learner autonomy, Benson and Voller (1997, p.1,2) classified the autonomy in five categories:

- *Situations*, where learners study on their own.
- A set of *skills* that can be learned and employed by learners in self-directed learning.
- An innate *capacity* which is not developed by school education.
- Leading learners to take *responsibility* for their own learning process.
- The *right of learners to* decide on the forming their own learning process.

These categories have demonstrated clearly the place of learner autonomy in language education. Also learners are expected to take the charge of their learning and shape their learning.

Moreover, many reseachers; Benson (2001), Dickinson (1987), Holec (1981), Little (1991), Cotterall (1995), Dickinson (1987), (1993) and Littlewood (1996) researched about autonomy in language learning. They have come to an agreement on the fundamental principle of learner autonomy. The research has revealed that, by means of learner autonomy, learners take responsibility for their learning; they learn decide on what and how to learn; they realize their needs; they contemplate and reflect on their learning critically and they maximize the conditions to practice English inside or outside the classroom (as cited in Sanprasert, 2010, p. 110). That is to say, learner autonomy supplies learners to take charge of their learning and learners are aware of what they need to learn and try to use opportunities to apply the language.

Considering all the definitions, statements or the result of the research stated above, it can be asserted that generally, learner autonomy is defined as learners' taking responsibility and the exerting an effort to take charge in their own learning. When the learners are autonomous they feel encouraged, express themselves better and are aware of their own capacities (Dickinson, 1987; Benson, 2001).

2.1.2. Importance of Learner Autonomy

Associated with the changes in approaches, learners' needs, desires and perspectives about education process; perceptions of learning process, teachers and students have been modified recently. The changes in the education world have started to question the dominance of the teachers in class. These developments have caused a change in the roles in the classroom setting. The teachers are not the only ones who have the charge of the whole learning and teaching process. They have started to delegate duties to their students and encourage them to take responsibilities for their own learning process. Learners are the basic components of the education process and their needs, abilities and learning styles are indispensable parts of it. All learner centered approaches support learner autonomy. Yıldırım (2012) confirms this fact by claiming that the fundamental principles of autonomy are in compatible with major developments in language teaching over the last 35 years, for this reason a change towards more communicative approaches in language teaching has been supported by the changes in discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and functional approaches to grammar. Furthermore, the concept of

"autonomy" has become increasingly important because it can provide a situation where learners' learning abilities can be developed.

That is to say, learning how to learn has raised its importance. Therefore, teachers have to consider the issue in order to keep up with the conditions of the changing world (Holden & Usuki, 1999). Benson (2006) has discussed the essentialness of learner autonomy with regard to the developments that have become remarkably significant over the last twenty-five years. Developments in the world of education like self-directed learning, learner centeredness, self-access systems and individualized/independent learning have been seen in second language learning literature. They increase the importance of the learner autonomy in EFL settings. Hence, Esch (1997) claimed that humas develop their ability to learn by actively engaging in the learning process and taking the responsibility of their learning.

This claim provides close connections between learning and the autonomy. Little (2007, p.14) claims that in order to contribute the improvement of target language proficiency, the promotion of autonomy is required. They have mutually supportive relationship.

According to Crabbe (1993), autonomy has been assumed as a significant aim for three aspects: the psychological, the practical, and the philosophical. The psychological reason is that people have the ability to learn better when they have the responsibility for their own learning. That is to say, learning is more meaningful and permanent when the individual takes the responsibility and the control. Furthermore, learners can make their own choices for their own education process have the chance to feel more motivated in their learning which makes them successful learners. Practicality is the second reason for autonomy. Teachers may not always help individual students when they need because of the current conditions and resources of the schools. Furthermore, students will encounter different teachers through their education life that's why students need to have the ability to observe their learning process and follow his/her studies on their own or they may not have enough time or financial opportunities to continue their education lives. As Crabbe (1993) has touched on, a society may not supply the essential facilities to all its members in each field of learning and learners, in these circumstances, learners need to follow their own learning process in order to get the knowledge and skill they desire. Finally, the philosophical reason is that, as Crabbe (1993) has claimed, the individual has the right to make their own choice not only in learning a language but also in other areas. Marton and Saljo (1976) claimed that learners who consider themselves in charge of their own learning

have bigger potential to take a deep approach to learning, which can guide them in greater achievement in the course of their educational life (as cited in Balçıkanlı, 2008). Furthermore, Borg (2012) listed the advantages of learner autonomy with respect to the results of his recent study. According to him, autonomous learners are more willing, more motivated and dedicated, happier and more focused. They take advantage of learning opportunities outside the classroom and take chances.

As Dewey (1916) mentioned that to be able to crate a democratic society, the essential aim of education should be to get learners ready to be active participnats in both social and political life by helping them gain the abilities and attitudes need for democratic and social participation and he underlined the significance of taking an active role in individuals own education process. As a consequence, encouraging learners to be autonomous should be a primary educational aim. Furthermore, education should have the purpose for helping the people how to think, act and learn independently in their lives.

2.1.3. Characteristics of Autonomous Learner

Dickinson (1987) identified autonomous learners as the ones who are responsible for all decisions that they have to make in their own learning. That is to say, they act independently of the teacher and they take active roles in their own learning process. Dam (1995, p. 45) also agreed with Dickson and pointed out that a learner can defined as autonomus when they have the competence to be able to formulate their own learning goals, decide on the content and objectives of a course and choose the materails to be used in the course. In addition to these statements, Scharle and Szabô (2000) describe autonomous learners as the ones who agree with the idea that their own efforts for their learning are and they act accordingly. They do not try to just please the teacher or get good marks when they complete their homework or answer questions in class. They collaborate with other students and teachers so as as to learn something. Nevertheless, they do not always follow the instructions obediently; they can question why they are performing the activity first or they can formulate alternatives for improving that activity. From this perspective, autonomous learners are inclined to experience learning on their own and take active roles in teaching learning activities. In addition to these, Candy (1991) listed characteristic features of the autonomous learners as;

- methodical and disciplined
- logical and analytical
- reflective and self-aware
- demonstrates curiosity, openness and motivation

- flexible, interdependent and interpersonally competent
- persistent and responsible
- shows confidence and has a positive self-concept
- independent and self-sufficient
- has developed information seeking and retrieval skills
- develops and uses criteria for evaluating (as cited in Benson, 2001, p.85).

Hedge (2000) asserts that autonomous learners are the ones who are self-motivated. They have a clear idea of what they need or want to learn and they have their own learning plans to achieve their goals. Furthermore, Cotterall (1995, p.200) claimed that autonomous learners have the potential which enables them to handle the obstacles which are put in front of them by the system, society and social norms. Dickinson (1993) pointed out that autonomous learners are the one who have the capability of being active and independent in their learning process. She also claimed that autonomous learners can define, set and change their own goals to adapt their own learning needs and interests so they can use learning strategies, and observe their own learning process. In this context, taking responsibility is the key characteristics of autonomous learners.

In the light of these different the characteristics of autonomous learners, these features support the learners to become aware of and take charge for their own learning and make them more motivated and encouraged.

2.1.4. Misconceptions about Learner Autonomy

Even though Holec (1981) defined the concept of autonomy, many researchers have attempted to explain the term in different ways. Learner autonomy has been identified as a difficult term to be explained in terms of what it is because it is seen as a process rather than a product (Thanasoulas, 2000). Little (1991p. 3-4) agreed with this idea by stating that autonomy is not "a single easily described behavior" because it can show itself in various ways. These different definitions of the learner autonomy include some irrelevant conceptions of autonomy which derive from misunderstanding of the term. Gardner and Miller (1999) stated three significant factors which cause the misconceptions of the term autonomy: the first reason stems from different definitions of the writers. Secondly, because of the differences on writers 'points of views about learner autonomy, some areas about the concept have been left open to discussion and finally due to the application of these concepts in different geographical areas where these concepts have been developed independently using different but often similar terminology.

Benson (2001, p.2) pointed out the misconceptions about the concept and its implementation. He stated that autonomy is considered a learning way without the help of a teacher or out of the classroom however this misconception may be the result of terminological or conceptional confusion in the field.

According to Little (1991 p.3-4) there are a bunch of misconceptions about learner autonomy:

1. Autonomy is not a concept which just means learning without teacher.
2. In the classroom context, autonomy does not mean leaving all the responsibility to the learners.
3. Autonomy is not another way of teaching or learning method.
4. Autonomy is not just single sided, it is mutual between teachers and learners

The issue which clarifies the fact that learners are actively involved in their own learning process and responsible for this process has been emphasized by the definitions of learner autonomy. Fenner and Newby (2000) put emphasis on issue that the concept of autonomy does not just mean that the learner is self-supporting and independent.

To clarify the misconceptions about the learner autonomy, Dickinson (1987, p.11) has listed various different terms in the literature on autonomy. A number of these terms are used synonymously, and some of them have very different meanings:

- *Self-instruction:* situations in which learners study without direct control of teachers
- *Self-direction:* students' attitude towards learning where they take the responsibility but do not interfere with the other decisions in learning enviorements
- *Autonomy:* the situation in which learners are totally responsible for all the decisions related to their learning and the implementation of those decisions.
- *Semi-autonomy:* the level at which learners get ready for autonomy.
- *Self-access materials:* materials which are suitable and available for self-instruction.
- *Self-access learning:* this is self-instruction using these materials.
- *Individualized instruction:* "a learning process in which individual's characteristics, needs and learning styles are taken into consideration"

Furthermore, Esch (1997) stated three common misconceptions which should be refrained from about the concept of learner autonomy. The first one is the decrease of autonomous learning to a group of skills, and the second one is related to the definition and

application of learner autonomy as the avoidance of language-learning specific issues. Finally, it is not a concept which states isolation of the learning from the teacher or classroom context.

Another misconception is about the autonomy in practice. Even though encouraging learners to be completely autonomous is always desirable as claimed by Nunan (1997), it is not always easy and possible to make it true. Still, it has been considered as a new method. As Benson pointed out, the term of learner autonomy is a new point of view in language education and it is not a method, or an approach. It provides an aspect to the teachers about learners' needs, their abilities and their participation in the process of language learning. Moreover, as Little (1991) and Benson (2001) claimed, learner autonomy isn't an ability which can be applied in the other learning areas once acquired by the learners. It requires perseverance, encouragement and persistence.

To conclude, it could be claimed that the concept of learner autonomy is difficult to define and interpret. However, it can be said that it is based on learners' personality, willingness and perseverance to achieve their learning goals. Being autonomous supplies learners to set their own learning goals, be aware of their learning process, take charge of their own learning, choose their own methods and techniques for better learning. In autonomous learning, teachers' help is being a facilitator for learners, and they can study in groups or pairs so as to share their own knowledge.

2.1.5. Ministry of National Education's English Language Education Policy for Primary Education and Learner Autonomy

English has gained importance increasingly and become the world's lingua franca since there are a number of political, economic and various technological inventions and developments around the world during the twentieth century. In addition to these factors, most of the meetings, literature in various areas, conferences, international trade are all conducted in English. All these facts raised the significance of English education generally and it has become an indispensable part of Turkish education system too. Palfreyman (2001) claimed that due to social and economic activations in the society, English is a school subject as a foreign language in the current educational system of Turkey. Ahmad (1993, p. 210) puts emphasis on the significance of learning English in Turkey by claiming that English is a key concept to have a successful career in Turkey. This increasing value of English has given a way to more beneficial and appropriate ways in teaching/learning English and new methods/techniques have been enhanced based on the learners' creativity and meaningful use of language.

Furthermore, in teaching English or all foreign languages around Europe, all methods and techniques are on the basis of the aims and objectives of Council of Europe Language Policy. One of the main aims of Council of Europe (2001, p.3) in language teaching is to support learners at all levels to use language in their own situations regarding their own needs, motivations and characteristics by developing suitable instruments, methods and materials.

That is to say, Ministry of National Education has shaped the content of Primary Schools' English Language Curriculum with regard to Council of Europe Language Policy.

Moreover, the national curriculum has been conducted by taking the learners' needs, motivations, characteristics, abilities, compatible methods, authentic materials, fundamental aims and objectives are taken into consideration. Furthermore, many studies have been conducted so as to increase the quality of teaching and learning in national foreign language education. They have revealed that the tendency has been moved from Teacher-centered Approaches to learners and Learning-centred Approaches (MEB, 2006), because it is an obvious fact that the learner is the starting point in foreign language education. Hence, it was emphasized in Ministry of National Education's English Language Curriculum for Primary Education Grades 4,5,6,7, and 8 that learners need language input which is comprehensible and suitable to be used the language productively. Later, in 2012 via arrangements in the country, Turkish Ministry of National Education announced that teaching English as a foreign language was determined to begin at the second year of the primary school and this agreement added in the weekly course schedule of the 2012-2013 academic year (Küçüktepe, Eminoğlu Küçüktepe and Baykın, 2013). The other remarkable change is that in classroom contexts, communicative approach was beginning to be implemented which provides students to take active roles in their learning. With the acceptance of communicative approach, learner autonomy has become a basic factor in language teaching and learning. That is to say, when the learners take responsibility of their own learning, they can observe their learning process and they can transfer their learning outside the classroom. Furthermore, it is aimed to improve active participation of learners through tasks which foster communication. Therefore, active participation in learning process supplies effective learning and gives learners chances to improve their own ways for better language learning.

2.1.6. Role of Teachers in Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy requires a student centered learning environment; however, this does not mean teachers have no roles in this process. It is difficult for learners to develop

language learning autonomy without teachers' help and encouragement. The teacher has a significant part in the development of learner autonomy as they have the power to help create imagined communities and to stimulate or stifle them (Murphey & Chen, 2005). Teachers may differ in the roles they take in the classroom or they may differ in the level of proficiency in foreign language. No matter which role they take in the classroom, they positively or negatively affect the learners 'autonomy.

Teachers play a crucial role to make the learners more autonomous in the foreign language classrooms. Teachers should encourage their students to take responsibility for their learning (Gardner & Miller, 1999). Kohonen (2001) has claimed that the language teacher has an important role as a source for autonomous language learning, and their professional development directly affects learning and autonomy.

It can be said that teachers' beliefs and perceptions can powerfully form both their practices and the learning facilities learners get. That's why, the extent in which learner autonomy is encouraged in language learning classrooms will be affected by teachers' beliefs and perceptions about autonomy. (Borg, 2011).

De Vries and Kohlberg (1987) described what an autonomous teacher looks like. They know what to do, and reason of it. They can assume how children are thinking and at the same time know how to intervene to promote the constructive environment. Autonomous teachers criticize the curriculum and can make changes; they do not accept what curriculum specialists give them. They take the charge of teaching they are offering children. It can be asserted that language teachers may have difficulty in fostering learner autonomy without any autonomy-oriented training.

It seems evident that teacher's contribution to the learner autonomy is crucial as mentioned above. Furthermore, Rubin and Thompson (1991) pointed out that teachers who support autonomy concept, provides a positive classroom atmosphere, provides suggestions on how to study a foreign language and the teachers are significance resources for motivation such as encouraging the learners to be more successful. Teachers should have knowledge of both language and language learning as well". Namely, teachers are fundamental factors in the promotion of learner autonomy and they have the power to encourage learners to take charge of their own learning and make learners monitor their own learning process.

2.1.7. Student Roles in Learner Autonomy

As it is seen, learners' roles in the classroom have been modified in the modern education settings together with the changes in teachers' roles and through the

development of the concept autonomy. As a matter of fact, every human being should be autonomous in each situation. Rubin and Thampson (1994, p. 59) pointed out that "learning a language is a little like learning to ride a bicycle. Until a learner actually gets on the bike and takes a few spills, no meaningful learning can take place". Namely, learners need to participate in the learning process actively and take responsibility for their own learning. Moment and Fisher (1975) stated that autonomous people take their own decisions. This is a must for every student since they need to make decisions about their carriers and their lives. In the education process, students have the right to reflect their needs and individual preferences and qualities and this is an essential part of the process. Learners may vary from one another in many ways due to the personal factors. This shows evidence to the necessity of shaping their lives so as to meet their needs through looking for different but suitable ways.

Littlewood (1996) classified autonomy under three categories; as a communicator applying language interactively in appropriate contexts, as a learner formulating appropriate learning strategies to join independent learning, and as a person developing personal learning context. Besides this classification, Dickinson (1993) pointed out three remarkable features of autonomous learners. Firstly, autonomous learners can identify what has been taught while most of the learners are unaware of what is happening in traditional classes. Secondly, they can set their own learning objectives in collaboration with the teacher. The last feature of autonomous learners is that they can choose and conduct suitable learning strategies consciously, and they can observe their own learning process. Dickinson (1993, pp. 330-331) also states that, students should have competence to be able to develop their own learning objectives, choose the suitable content for their learning and monitor their own learning".

Moreover, autonomy expects learners to be critical thinkers and not to be passive receivers of information throughout the process. Autonomy has a close relationship with critical thinking which does not support passivity.

Baylan (2007) pointed out that autonomy requires learners to have a set of socio-psychological features which separate them from the traditional learner type. Dickinson (1987), and Wenden (1991) also mentioned these common features of autonomous learners. It can be summarized as an attitude towards self-direction, a motive to learn, self-awareness, independence, an active participation in learning, a capacity for learning, and metacognitive capacity.

It is obvious from what have been discussed above that learners have more responsibilities in autonomy supporting climate than the traditional classrooms. The teachers should encourage learners to reveal and use their characteristics to maximize their autonomy. It can be inferred that it requires a lot of effort for learners to be autonomous

2.2. Empirical Studies on Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy is a concept which brought a breath of fresh air to the education world. It gained importance day by day and contributed to the revolution of the roles in the class, aim and perception of the education. It has become a conception which is accepted world-wide. Therefore, it is an issue of concern for researchers and various studies have been conducted on the perception of teachers abroad and in Turkey.

With respect to studies conducted abroad, Shahsavari (2014) studied autonomy with the same tool developed from the one employed by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012). In her study, she included learners' views so as to compare learners' perceptions with the ones of teachers. It was revealed in this study that both learners and teachers have a consensus about the fact that autonomy helps students to improve their language learning and has an important effect on their success. Furthermore, she stated that majority of the teachers agreed that learner autonomy was requirable than it was probable. However, learners considered themselves more positively on the probability of the leaner autonomy than the teachers. The ground for this discrepancy was the result of the difference in how the teachers and learners perceive learner autonomy. Nevertheless, she did not identify what these discrepancies were in her study. In her research, teachers claimed that the students take responsibility of their learning and do not have the tendency to act autonomously due to the fact that they consider the teacher as the main figure in the classroom context and they refer the main role to the teacher. They went on claiming that when they attempted to allocate some of the responsibilities in the classroom, learners considered that those teachers were inactive and were not well experienced so they were trying to get rid of their responsibilities. It can be concluded from this point that classroom culture and society dynamics have a vital role in perceptions of both teachers and learners as well. Finally, in the study teachers indicated that there was no permission for them to be creative in their teaching so as to stay away from any kind of problems with the administration, they obeyed the sanctions.

Al Asmari (2013) carried out a research at Taif University English Language Center for the purpose of finding out teachers' practices and perceptions of learner autonomy in their classrooms. It is stated in this research that it is significant to supply

students with trainings on learning and to integrate it in teaching so as to help students develop autonomy.

In Santos' (2002) research titled "Stimulating Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Convincing the Teachers", the researcher studied the major causes why teachers generally are so unwilling to encourage their students to behave autonomously. It has been revealed that interior elements, such as submission to college view and ideological tendencies, were claimed to be more appropriate to certify the reluctance to new teaching methods than external factors, such as restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Education. It was also stated that instructors at universities and future teachers are more inclined to the opinion of encouraging students to be autonomous than school teachers.

Chan (2003) conducted a research titled "Autonomous Language Learning: The Teachers' Perspectives" to study students' and teachers' perspectives about learner autonomy. The researcher also studied the teachers' opinions about their roles and responsibilities, their evaluation of their students' dijudication skills and the autonomous language learning activities which they apply to help students take responsibility for their learning. The findings pointed out that teachers mostly consider themselves to be more in charge of the methodological and motivational parts of learning, however they assume themselves as less responsible for the students' learning activities out of classroom. The outcomes of the research also indicated that mostly teachers are positive towards their students' various latent skills connected to the different aspects of learning.

Al-Shaqsi (2009) studied teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy with 120 English language teachers in state schools in Oman. The researcher applied a questionnaire for this study and it questioned respondents about (1) the characteristics of autonomous learners (2) their learners' ability to sustain independent learning and (3) how learner autonomy might be encouraged. The participant teachers defined the three characteristics of autonomous learners as using computers to search information, using a dictionary and asking the teacher to explain when they do not understand (Borg, 2012).

Yoshiyuki (2011) studied English language teachers' theoretical affirmative opinions about learner autonomy with their classroom practices which were reported as less affirmative by them and revealed a significant difference between the two. The purpose of the research was to study teachers' readiness for encouraging teachers' readiness for encouraging their learners to behave autonomously. It has been indicated by this study that many Japanese EFL high school teachers, while showing different aspects of

autonomy in various ways, are not fully prepared to encourage their students to be autonomous learners.

Kennedy (2002) conducted a study with the purpose of the research figuring out to what extent teachers encourage Turkish students to be autonomous. He resulted in Turkish language classes promotion of learner autonomy is not an issue which can be easily implemented and it could be an error to expect Turkish learners, who have conventional experiences before entering English language classrooms, to act fully autonomously too soon.

With respect to studies conducted in Turkey, Karababa et al. (2010) conducted a research with 159 learners who were learning Turkish as a foreign language. One of the remarkable results is that 30% of the students indicated that they do not know what studying without the help of a supervisor mean. Another attention-grabbing result is that students answered the statement of "expecting the teacher's evaluation" with high percentage of "yes" and item showing how the group of students were dependent on their teachers. The learners in this research claimed that they wouldn't prefer to be assessed by their peers but their teachers instead. It can be deduced from these results that these learners were not autonomous in both self and peer assessments. As a result, they confirmed the idea that the reason why students gave the responsibility of organizing, monitoring and evaluating their learning to teacher was because they didn't know autonomy and had not been provided with the opportunity to be autonomous by then.

In his study Özdere (2005) stated that the participant teachers have slightly positive opinions about learner autonomy and as for the place of learner autonomy in the classroom; they thought some parts of teaching and learning are more feasible than the others. It has been indicated in the study that the perceptions of the teachers about learner autonomy changed based on facilities provided in their work place and the opportunities for the use of authentic language in their classrooms.

Sancar (2001) studied about EFL student teachers' perceptions with regard to learner autonomy in formal language learning context. The researcher also searched about whether university teaching leading to learner autonomy. The results indicated that students were in need of direction and raising awareness to figure out their learning styles and strategies and to take control of their learning. The research revealed that teachers was the ones who are responsible for awakening the students' awareness and can promote the development of autonomy in the classrooms.

In Çoban (2002) studied the attitudes of the instructors in Gazi University and Yıldız Technical University towards learner autonomy. It was indicated in the research that language teachers in both universities are inclined to have positive opinions about encouraging learners to be in charge of their learning. Nevertheless, they appeared to be reluctant to allow students to decide on concerning the content of lesson or methods and techniques to be used.

In order to apply in the classroom concept, the teachers are in the first phase. How much they support the concept 'autonomy' affects the atmosphere and degree of students' autonomy. Therefore, at this stage, teachers' perceptions and their practices to foster autonomy matter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the design of the research, setting, data collection procedures and instruments, data analysis, and treatment process have been presented in detail.

3.1. Research Design

In this present study, survey research design, which employed quantitative data in order to define both private and state primary schools English Language teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy and their practices to foster it and to identify whether there is a differencence between private and state primary school English Language teachers. As it was clarified by Fraenkel & Wallen (2009), in survey research the main aim of the researchers is to identify in what way the samples of a population assess themselves on one or more variables through a survey. Punch (2003) also points out that "on a quantitative survey, though not all surveys are quantitative, the survey is designed to produce numerical data, and proceeds by measuring variables" (p. 3). Additionally, Dörnyei (2007) points out that application of the quantitative methods decreases the stress of idiosyncratic human variability and personal prejudice and provides objectivity into the study.

Regarding the aim of this study, Mackey & Gass (2005) suggest that a questionnaire, which is a form of quantitative research method, is one of the most commonly used tools when the researcher's aim is to investigate the opinions or attitudes of large groups of participants. Furthermore; Netemeyer, Bearden, Sharma (2003) state that questionnaires are seen as data collection tools to analyze the discrete features and the numbers in a scale and help to differentiate the levels of the answers. Considering the purpose of the current study, it can be specified that survey research design is adopted in this study. The quantiaitive data were collected through questionnaire which is adopted by the researcher. The descriptive statistics methods were used to analytze the data collected through the questionnaire with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The reason behind the use of descriptive statistics in the study was to get exact and detailed. Table 1 summarizes the general framework of the research process.

Table 1. *General framework of the research process.*

1.Research Questions	Literature Review, Previous Studies
2.Research Design	Survey Research
3.Data Collection Tool	Questionnaire
4.Data Collection Procedure	Administration of the questionnaire to 82 English Language teachers working in private or state primary schools
5.Analysis Procedure	Descriptive statistics

3.2. Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in various state and private primary schools in Denizli, Turkey. The participants were English language teachers working in these primary schools. In Turkish education system, teaching English starts at grade 2 in all types of schools. Some private schools start teaching English in kindergarten or first grade level. There is a common English teaching curriculum developed by the committees of Ministry of National Education for the all schools but most of the private schools prefer their own curriculum instead of the common one or they follow both of the curriculums. State schools generally follow the common curriculum and books provided by the government. However, the situation is different at private schools. They work with foreign publishers and choose their own books to cover in English classes.

Denizli, as a province in Turkey, locates at the west part of the country. It is famous for its developing industry, textile and truism. These developing factors also affect the level of income in the city. Therefore; there is a big amount of tendency towards private schools there. The number of the private schools and competition among them is an undeniable fact in this city. There are as many state schools as private schools in Denizli. Most of these state schools' physical conditions are in a good state. Furthermore, on the contrary to the other parts of Turkey, due to its location and accessibility, many state schools have their own English teachers. Therefore, enough number of participants from both private and state schools is available for the study. Considering all the factors mentioned above English Language teachers working at private and state primary schools in Denizli were chosen as the participants for the study.

As mentioned above, there are differences between state and private schools about curriculum and education process. This situation is assumed to affect the autonomy and its place in the classroom. Depending on the education programme and the procedure, teachers can have various practices in implementation of autonomy in their classrooms. Furthermore, their beliefs and perceptions about autonomy also affect their practices in the classroom setting too. Therefore, both state and private school teachers were chosen to see the difference and similarities. Demographic information regarding the participants is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. *Demographic information regarding the participants*

Gender		Type of School		Degree Held		Years of Experience in Teaching				
Male	Female	Private	State	Master	Bachelor	Less than 5 years	5-9 years	10-14 years	20-24 years	More than 25 years
13	69	45	37	14	66	23	27	22	9	1

N=82

Data have been collected from 82 (69 females, 13 males) elementary English language teachers, 45 of which who work in private schools and 37 who work in state schools. 14 of the teachers had Master's degree, 66 had Bachelor degrees and there are two missing answers. 23 teachers had less than 5 years of teaching experience, 27 had between 5 to 9 years of experience, 22 had between 10 to 14 years of experience, 9 had between 20 to 24 years of experience and 1 participant who had more than 25 years of teaching experience.

3.3. Data Collection

3.3.1. Instrument

Quantitative study includes numerical data. Creswell (1994, p.2) points out that, "Quantitative research is an inquiry into a social or human problem based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true". That is to say, quantitative studies try to study out the relationships between the variables using numbers so as to generalize the theory accurately. Furthermore, the result researchers gain about their research is more objective since quantitative data is based on the numbers and the evaluation is done via a statistical method which provides researchers detailed information about their studies.

Considering the factors mentioned above, quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire (Appendix 2). This questionnaire is developed by the researchers with the help of contemporary articles and literature review. Then the questionnaire was sent to the proffessors at Pamukkale University, English Language Education Faculty. According to the feedback taken from the professors, the questionnaire was adopted and rearranged.

The questionnaire is composed of four sections. In the first section of the questionnaire, there are demographic information related questions. This part includes some variables; such as type of school, gender, year of experience, degree held, teaching grade, which are assumed to be the influential factors for implementing autonomy in the classroom. These factors were taken into consideration while the collected data were analyzed. In the second part, three questions were provided for the participants, which were expected to supply a general view of autonomy from the perspective of the teachers. Third section includes 21 Likert scale questions which are about teachers' perceptions about their students as autonomous learners. This part tries to find out what teachers think about their students and the students' level of being autonomous. Final part of the questionnaire consists of 23 questions about teachers' practices to make their students autonomous individuals in or out of the classrooms. The questions, in part 3 and 4, overlap with each other so as to find out the relationship between the teachers' perceptions and practices.

3.3.2. Procedure

Before implementing the questionnaire, the permission of Provincal Directorate for National Education was taken by submitting the aims and questionnaire of the study. In order to administer the study, copies of the questionnaire were sent to different state and private primary schools in Denizli. A sample of questionnaire has been also created on Survey Monkey which is an online questionnaire administration system so as to administer questionnaire and some participants were contacted through this way in the first term of 2017-2018 academic year. Before conducting the research, the participants were informed about the questionnaire and the aim of the study. They were guaranteed that their answers to the questions would be confidential and would contribute to a Master's Degree Study and would not be used for other aims. The teachers were not asked to write their names on the questionnaires but they were asked to indicate the grade they taught. The teachers were given a week to complete the questionnaires. At the end of the week, the questionnaires were collected by the researcher from the teachers.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data for the present study included quantitative data gathered through the questionnaire which was developed by the researcher.

In order to analyze the data descriptive statistics methods (SPSS 23) was applied. Furthermore, since the main purpose of this study was to find out whether there is a difference between state and private schools in terms of teachers' perspectives and practices about learner autonomy in order to analyze and identify finding descriptive statistics, t-test methods were used. In order to analyze the data which has only very few participants in each group (less than eight participants). Thus, this t-test cannot affirm that these two groups come from a normal distribution because they include very few participants (Mann and Whitney, 1947). This implies that the measurements can be lack of precision. Therefore, the parametric test of mean using the students' t-distribution cannot be referred to because it is not possible to check that the two samples are normally distributed. The Mann-Whitney U test can be used to analyze and identify the data regarding the difference between smaller groups. This test has an advantage of possibly being used for small samples of subjects (five to 20 participants) (Nachar, 2008). It can also be applied when the measured variables are of ordinal type; thus, for the data which have smaller groups, the Mann- Whitney U test was applied. In order to analyze the data in a meaningful way, the items in the third and fourth section in the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) were categorized under five headings according to the area they address. The categories were as follows; 'determining methods and techniques to use', 'self study', 'determining classroom management issues', 'determining objectives of the lesson' 'determining textbooks or materials to use'.

For the 'determining methods and techniques to use' category the items 1, 5,17,18,20 in section 3 and the items 1,2,3,19, 20 in section 4 were grouped under this heading (See Appendix 2).

For the 'self study' category the items 2,16,19 in section 3 and the items 4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,18,21, 23 in section 4 were grouped under this heading (See Appendix 2).

For the 'determining classroom management issues' category the items 3,4,15 in section 3 and the items 12, 17 in section 4 were grouped under this heading (See Appendix 2).

For the 'determining textbooks or materials to use' category the items 8,9,14 in section 3 the items 13, 16 in section 4 were grouped under this heading (See Appendix 2).

For the 'determining objectives of the lesson' category the items 6,7,10,11,12,13,21 in section 3 and the items 14,15, 22 in section 4 were grouped under this heading (See Appendix 2).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter results obtained from the questionnaires will be presented and discussed under two categories. They will be introduced with respect to the distribution of the questionnaire sections.

4.1. Results of Research Question 1.4.1:

1. What are the private primary school teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy?

2.What are the state primary school teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy?

3. Are there any differences or similarities between the private and state primary school teachers' perceptions on learner autonomy?

In order to answer research question A1 and A2, percentages of the answers for the questions in Section two (see Appendix 2) have been examined. They were asked to report how much they agree with two statements which are:

S1. Generally, the students I teach English most often have a fair degree of learner autonomy.

S2. Generally, in teaching English I give my students chances to foster learner autonomy.

The results regarding the statements are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Teachers' responses to Statement 1 and Statment 2*

| | | Private Teachers | | State teachers | |
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Strongly Disagree	0	0	2	5.4
	Disagree	4	8.9	9	24.3
	Partially Agree	23	51.1	19	51.4
S1	Agree	16	35.6	7	18.9
	Strongly Agree	1	2.2	0	0
	Total	44	100.0	37	100.0
	Strongly Disagree	2	4.4	1	2.7
	Disagree	1	2.2	0	0
S2	Partially Agree	6	13.3	9	24.3
	Agree	27	60	23	62.2
	Strongly Agree	8	17.8	4	10.8
	Total	54	100.0	37	100.0

As shown in Table 3, 44 teachers from state schools and 37 teachers from private schools responded to the questionnaire. For the first statement **%**37.8 of the teachers in private schools and %18.9 of the teachers in state schools reported that they agreed or strongly agreed. For the second statement %77.8 of the teachers in private schools and %73 of the teachers in state schools agreed or strongly agreed.

It was revealed in the current research that both state and private primary school English language teachers have a positive attitude toward learner autonomy. Moreover, the participants stated that they fairly encourage their students to be autonomous learners with the help of the methods and techniques they apply in their classes.

In order to further explore teachers' perceptions, in statement three teachers were asked how often they take feedback from their students. Table 3 below summarizes the teachers' answers to the third statement which is "How often do you get feedback from your students about their English learning process?"

Table 4. *Teachers' responses to Statement 3*

		Private Schools		State Schools	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
	Never	1	2.2		
	Once in each term	7	15.6	3	8.1
Valid	More than once	17	37.8	17	45.9
	Regularly	20	44.4	17	45.9
	Total	45	100.0	37	100.0

As shown in Table 4, in private schools, %37.8 of the teachers took feedback more than once in a semester, %15.6 of the teachers took feedback once in a semester and %2.2 of the teachers never took feedback. In state school, %45.9 of the teachers reported that they took regular feedback, %45.9 of the teachers took feedback more than once in a semester and %8.1 of the teachers took feedback once in each semester.

The current study revealed that the answers of both state and private school teachers are consistent with their answer to the first and second statement. Both private and state primary school English language teachers reported that they encourage their students to be autonomous learners. As another step of this process, they stated that they ask their students to reflect on the learning activities and the process. There is no significant difference between the state and private school English language teachers.

The questions in the third section were designed to ask the participants to evaluate their students' degree of autonomy. In order to analyze the data in a meaningful way the items in the third section were categorized under five headings according to the area they address. The categories were as follows; 'determining methods and techniques to use', 'self study', 'determining classroom management issues', 'determining objectives of the lesson' 'determining textbooks or materials to use'.

According to the results gathered, two of them were sub dimensions of the Section 3 which are "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study out of classroom" showed statistically significant difference. Third was Student Autonomy Score (SAS) which was derived by adding the score values of participants' answers for items in Section 3. T-test was used to investigate whether there are any significant differences between private and state school group.

Two dimensions from Section 3 were examined which are "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study out of classroom". Both variables were compared via t-tests between private and state teacher group scores. According to normality tests, private group scores were not distributed normally; thus, to satisfy normality assumption of t-test one outlier participant has been excluded from analysis. New skewness and kurtosis values in private group for "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study out of classroom" are -.87, .24 and -.81, .65 respectively. Shapiro-Wilk tests still suggest non-normal distribution ((W=.93, $p<.05$), ((W=.94, $p<.05$) in the same order. Graph 1 and 2 shows histograms of the distributions. Considering the data, it was decided that distribution is normal enough to proceed to t-test. For state school data, skewness and kurtosis values are .37, -.82 and .31, -.41 respectively in the aforementioned order. Shapiro-Wilk tests also suggest normality ((W=.94, $p>.05$), ((W=.96, $p>.05$).

Descriptive and t-test results can be found in Table 5 and 6.

Table 5. *Descriptive table for Section 2 dimensions for private and state data*

	School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self Study	Private	43	13.53	2.66
	State	36	11.86	2.80
Determinig Methods and Techniques to use	Private	43	23.81	4.61
	State	37	20.51	4.99

As can be seen in Table 5, private school group had overall higher scores in "determining methods/techniques to use" (*M*=23.81, *SD*=4.61) than the state school teachers (*M*=20.51, *SD*=5.00). Both private and state school teachers have positive attitudes towards the autonomy level of their students. However, private school teachers are more positive towards sharing responsibility with their students in terms of techniques and methods to be used in the classroom than the state school teachers.

As shown in Table 5, private school group had overall higher scores in "self-study" (*M*=13.53, *SD*=2.66) dimensions than of state schools (*M*=11.86, *SD*=2.80). Both private and state school teachers have positive attitudes towards the autonomy level of their students Nevertheless, private school teachers have more positive views about their students' efforts out of the classroom to learn English independently than the state school teachers

Table 6. *T-test results for Section 2 dimensions between private and state data*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Self study	Equal variances assumed	.17	.683	2.72	77	.008	1.67	.61	.45	2.90
	Equal variances not assumed			2.71	73.08	.008	1.67	.62	.44	2.90
Determining Methods Tech. to Use	Equal variances assumed	.68	.41	3.07	78	.003	3.30	1.07	1.16	5.44
	Equal variances not assumed			3.05	74.04	.003	3.30	1.08	1.15	5.45

As shown in Table 5 and 6, t-test indicated that difference is statistically significant for both "determining methods/techniques to use (*t*=3.07, *df*= 78, *p*<.05) and "self-study" (*t*=2.72, *df*=77, *p*<.05).

Student Autonomy Score (SAS) was created to examine how teachers evaluate their students' autonomy. SAS Score was generated by adding together the score values of the answers to the items in Section three (see Appendix 2). Teachers' score values of the answers to the questions in section three were calculated in total. A total of 79 SAS scores

were calculated, 3 participants' answers were excluded from the analysis due to missing values. Normal distribution assumption was checked for SAS in both groups. For private schools, skewness and kurtosis values are -.59 and .21 respectively. Shapiro-Wilk normality test suggests the distribution is normal ($W= .96$, $p>.05$). For state schools, skewness and kurtosis values are .54 and -.52 respectively. Shapiro Wilk suggests distribution is not normal ($W= .94$, $p<.05$). Although Shapiro Wilk suggests non-normality, p value is close to .05 and other indicators suggest normality. Thus, it was decided that both distributions are normal and assumption is not violated. T-test was utilized to analyze group differences.

Table 7. *Descriptive values of SAS for private and school data*

	School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student Autonomy Score	Private	43	72.72	13.75
	State	36	66.44	14.40

As shown in Table 7, in private schools SAS points have a higher value ($M= 72.72$, $SD= 13.76$) while state schools SAS points are lower ($M= 66.44$, $SD= 14.40$). That is to say, private school teachers have more positive views about their students and their level of autonomy with respect to the state school teachers. Table 8 and 9 shows descriptive values of groups. Table 8 summarizes t-test findings.

Table 8. *Independent Samples Test*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Diff.	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Student Autonomy Score	Equal variances assumed	.35	.56	1.98	77	.052	6.28	3.17	-.04	12.60
	Equal variances not assumed			2.0	73.25	.053	6.28	3.19	-.07	12.63

T-test results indicate that there are no statistically significant difference between state and private school SAS values ($t= 1.98$, $df= 77$, $p= .52$).

As it was stated above in order to answer the research questions A-1, 2 and 3 the questions in section three were divided in groups of five. Determining methods and

techniques to use and self-study out of the classroom discussed above were two different sub-categories. There were three more sub-categories which were; determining objectives of the lesson and textbooks to use in the class, determining evaluation process and procedure, determining classroom management issues. No significant difference could be discovered about state and private school teachers' perceptions about determining objectives of the lesson and textbooks to use in the class, determining evaluation process and procedure, determining classroom management issues.

4.2. Results of Research Question 1.4.2:

1. What are the private primary school teachers' perceptions on fostering learner autonomy based on the teaching strategies they actively use?

2. What are the state primary school teachers' perceptions on fostering learner autonomy based on the teaching strategies they actively use?

3. Are there any differences or similarities between the private and state primary school teachers' perceptions on fostering learner autonomy based on the teaching strategies they actively use?

The research questions of part B were about the classroom activities to foster autonomy. The questions in the fourth section (see Appendix 2) were designed to ask the participants to evaluate to what extent the participants support their learners in terms of autonomy. In order to analyze the data in a meaningful way the items in the fourth section were categorized under five headings according to the area they address. The categories were as follows; 'determining methods and techniques to use', 'self-study', 'determining classroom management issues', 'determining objectives of the lesson' 'determining textbooks or materials to use'.

Three variables were investigated to answer research questions B-1-2-3. Similarly, two of them were sub dimensions of the Section four which are "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study out of classroom" and Total Strategy Perception (TSP). Normal distribution assumption was checked. For the private school data, Skewness and kurtosis values for TSP, "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study out of class" are -.24, -.08; -.19, -.56; -.30, .63, respectively which indicates normality. Shapiro Wilk tests also suggest distribution is normal for TSP ($W=.99$, $p>.05$), "determining methods/techniques to use" ($W=.97$, $p>.05$) and "self-study out of class" ($W=.96$, $p>.05$). In state school data, same analyses were conducted for normality

assumption. Skewness and kurtosis values in the previous order are -.19, -.69; .08, -1.08; .33, -.33, respectively which suggests normality. Shapiro Wilk was again utilized and indicated normal distribution for 3 variables, in the previous order ($W=.97$, $p>.05$), ($W=.95$, $p>.05$), ($W=.97$, $p>.05$).

TSP was derived from participants' answers to items regarding teachers' practices to foster autonomy in the classroom via methods and techniques they applied. TSP values, similar to SAS, were generated by adding together the score values of the answers to the items in Section four. For two sub-dimensions and TSP 3 separate t-test analyses were utilized. Below mentioned, teachers' score values of the answers to the questions in section four were calculated in total

Table 9. *Descriptive values for TSP, "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study" variables*

	School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TotalStrategy Perception	Private	45	86.20	11.09
	State	37	78.62	9.66
Determining Methods/Tech. to Use	Private	45	24.13	2.86
	State	37	21.89	3.22
Self Study	Private	45	36.80	5.19
	State	37	32.30	4.41

As shown in Table 9, in terms of TSP values, private school teachers had higher overall scores than state schools for TSP ($M=86.2$, $SD=11.09$), state schools had lower average scores for TSP variables ($M=78.62$, $SD=9.66$). This shows that private school English language teachers are inclined to foster autonomy a little bit more in their classrooms compared to the state school English language teachers.

In terms of the sub-dimension of "determining methods/techniques to use", private school group had overall higher scores in "determining methods/techniques to use" ($M=24.13$, $SD=2.86$) while, state school teachers have lowers scores ($M=21.89$, $SD=3.22$). This reveals that private school English language teachers share the responsibility with their students while they decide the methods or techniques to be used in their classrooms compared to state school English language teachers.

In terms of the sub-dimension of "self-study out of class", private school teachers had higher overall scores than state schools for "self-study out of class" ($M=36.8$, $SD=5.19$), state schools had lower average scores ($M=32.30$, $SD=4.41$). The private school

English language teachers provide their students with more opportunities to study English outside the classroom compared to state school English language teachers.

All assumptions were checked and satisfied and t-tests were utilized. T-test was used to analyze whether the differences are statistically significant. T-test table can be found in Table 10.

Table 10. *T-test table for TSP, "determining methods/techniques to use" and "self-study" variables between private and state school groups*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Diff.		t-test for Equality Means					95% ConfidenceInterval of the Diff.	
		F	Sig.	T	Df.	Sig.(2-tailed	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	Lower	Upper
Total Strategy Perception	Equal variances assumed	.21	65	3.26	80	.00	7.58	2.32	2.95	12.20
	Equal variances not assumed			3.30	79.71	.00	7.58	2.29	3.01	12.14
Determining Methods/Techniques to Use	Equal variances assumed	1.55	.22	3.34	80	.00	2.24	.67	.90	3.58
	Equal variances not assumed			3.30	72.74	.00	2.24	.68	.89	3.59
Self Study	Equal variances assumed	.43	.51	4.18	80	.00	4.50	1.08	2.36	6.65
	Equal variances not assumed			4.24	79.91	.00	4.50	1.06	2.39	6.61

Table 10 shows that there is statistically significant difference between private and state school scores of TSP ($t=3.26$, $df=80$, $p<.05$), "determining methods/techniques to use" ($t=3.37$, $df=80$, $p<.05$) and "self-study out of classroom" ($t=4.18$, $df=80$, $p<.05$).

The results indicate that private school English language teachers support their students to be more autonomous in their classrooms through the practices they apply in the classroom. They share the responsibility of choosing methods and techniques to be used in the classroom. They support their students in terms of self-study. Finally, their total perception about fostering autonomy is more positive than the state school English language teachers.

Teacher's education level was also investigated whether it would create any difference in terms of SAS and TSP scores. 14 participants had master's degree while 66 had bachelor degree. Due to insufficient number of participants in master's group, non-parametric version of the t-test, Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare groups. For SAS no statistically significant difference was observed between master's group (Mean Rank= 44.71) and bachelor's group (Mean Rank= 37.73) ($U= 361$, $n_1=14$, $n_2=63$, $p=.29$).

For TSP no statistically significant difference was observed between master's group (Mean Rank= 41.79) and bachelor's group either (Mean Rank= 34.43) ($U=377$, $n_1=14$, $n_2=66$, $p=.28$). Table 11 and 12 summarizes Mann Whitney U test results.

Table 11. *Mann Whitney U test results for SAS*

	Student Autonomy Score
Mann-Whitney U	361.000
Wilcoxon W	2377.000
Z	-1.057
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.290

Table 12. *Mann Whitney U test results for TSP*

	Total Strategy Perception
Mann-Whitney U	377.000
Wilcoxon W	482.000
Z	-1.077
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed).	.281

As shown in Table 11 and 12, the educational levels of the participants do not have an effect on their perceptions about autonomy.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this chapter, discussion on the results of the study, summary of the study, conclusion in the light of the results, pedagogical implications, and limitations of the current study together with the suggestions for further research have been presented in detail.

5.1. Discussion on the Results of the Study

In a broad sense, autonomy is not an unknown area for teaching Turkish learners a foreign language but learners and their teachers need further knowledge and education about self-learning and classroom applications to enhance their competence for autonomy.

Without enough knowledge and guidance, teachers will not be able to improve the skills to promote learner autonomy in their own classrooms. Recently, language education underwent a shift in the focus which results in more communicative and learner centered language classrooms. However, explicitly there is still a significant way to go before the improvement of language-learning skills, and the importance of preparing learners for, and encouraging them in language use outside the language classroom becomes an essential area of attention in the field.

In order to create a learner centered classroom context which is a result of current developments, learners need to have the abilities to take responsibility of their own learning. Therefore autonomy should be supported and fostered in the classrooms. As the teachers' perceptions are significant in terms of supporting an idea, the current study focused on the teachers' perceptions on autonomy and fostering autonomy with the help of classroom practices. Private school English language teachers were positive towards autonomy in general and they stated that they fostered autonomy in the classroom in their classrooms with the activities they apply. State school teachers were also positive towards autonomy in general and they also claimed that they fostered autonomy in the classroom in their classrooms with the activities they apply. However there were significant difference between state and private school English language teachers' perception. The private school group was found to be slightly more positive towards autonomy and fostering autonomy.

In connection with recent theoretical approaches to language teaching/learning, self–assessment necessitates that students improve their own potential to evaluate the degree of their learning and the further need for it (Benson, 2001; Egel, 2003). Therefore, students should be encouraged to keep an account of their own progress to define their own strengths and weaknesses. According to Benson (2001) self-assessment has a crucial role

since the process encourages students to consider their potential critically and reflect on their own competence. As Dam (1995) states, self-assessment regarding requirement of time, reflecting on learning and honesty for both students and teachers might create a classroom atmosphere where mutual trust and respect is available. On that account, asking students to reflect on the classroom activities and the learning process can increase their sense of belonging and they can be active in their own learning. As the current study revealed, the answers of both state and private school teachers are consistent with their answer to the first and second statement. Both private and state primary school English language teachers reported that they encourage their students to be autonomous learners. As another step of this process, they stated that they ask their students to reflect on the learning activities and the process. There is no significant difference between the state and private school English language teachers.

As Fenner and Newby (2000) claimed, students must have right to comment on choice of materials that they use in the autonomous classroom atmosphere. Via this, students are given a chance to employ resources in their own context, continue learning without supervision and undertake more responsibility of their own learning (White, 2003, p. 34). As the teachers' perspectives about the determining methods and techniques to use in the classroom were positive, this area can be related to the motivation for students and meeting their students' needs might be difficult for teachers Hereby, students can develop their sense of belonging and responsibility over their learning by bringing their own materials or deciding on the materials to be applied during the course of lesson (Dam, 1995; Nunan, 1999; Benson, 2001).

There is a large quantity of research pointing out that sharing responsibility with the students in the decisions such as; type of the activity, materials to be employed and type of homework, supplies them with choice of different approaches and understandings to promote learner autonomy (Nunan, 1999; Fenner & Newby, 2000; Benson, 2001). Namely, it is regarded as an essential requirement that students should be provided with enough opportunities and control over the classroom activities and materials. Considering the four sub-sections on methodology, it should be clarified that the private and the state school teachers favor the involvement of the students in those decisions as much as possible. Besides, as Camilleri (1999) found out that the teachers agreed that the students should be active in decisions about various learning activities, such as defining the objectives of a course or selecting the content of the course. In line with the findings of Camilleri, Balçıkanlı (2010) revealed that, the student teachers in Turkey were positive about

including students in the process of decision making about various classroom practices. As this study revealed, the teachers seem to have positive inclination towards involving students in selecting methods and techniques to be applied in the classrooms. The results are in line with the answers given in the section one and two which state that the teachers have positive attitude towards autonomy and they encourage autonomy in their classrooms. However, there is a difference between state and the private primary school English language teachers about method and technique selection. The private primary school English language teachers have more positive attitudes towards the issue of involving students in determining methods and techniques to use. As Santos (2002) indicated, internal factors, such as submission to college view and ideological tendencies, were stated to be more suitable to certify the reluctance to new teaching methods than external factors, such as restrictions imposed by the Ministry of Education. The state school teachers' reluctance in including their students in decision making process of techniques or methods to be used in the classroom can be the results of interior elements such as the offering of the school view, ideological inclination or colleague pressure. Compared to the findings of the study which was conducted by Özdere (2005), the perceptions of the state school English teachers about learner autonomy can show difference based on facilities provided in their work place and the opportunities for authentic language use in their classroom contexts the private school English teachers.

The learners who are autonomous can concentrate on their own learning so they can learn without the help of a supervisor. In order to study and learn the target language on their own, teachers must get their students ready to take more control of their learning than they may be used to. As Lee claimed, if teachers foster autonomy in their classes and help their students to be more autonomous learners, they should consider what their students think about autonomous learning and their responsibilities in their learning process. For this reason, it is crucial for teachers to develop their own their learners' perceptions and attitudes when they are trying to create autonomy supportive classroom contexts.

Since there has been a change in focus of language instruction by being more learner-centered, it has allowed learners to take control of their own language development. This shift in focus has been considered by language programs which are in favor of autonomy and they expect their learners to be able to discover some of their own strengths and weaknesses; thus, they can observe and direct their processes of language development by themselves.

Regarding autonomy, Weaver and Cohen (1994) indicated that learners should be encouraged to learn how to learn and observe their learning process in a foreign language classroom. These researchers also pointed out that language learners should be taught to become conscious of and proficient in the use of various techniques and strategies that can be employed during the learning process. The present study has showed that in order to reach the phase of studying unsupervised; the language learner may still be dependent for guidance. Pinkman (2005) pointed out that the use of technology is preferred by many language teachers make use of technology to supply their students with practices and environments to keep on learning outside the classroom since this kind of practices helps learners to study at their own pace and provide opportunities to select their own materials. Internet supplies students with authentic and global places and various interesting devices to succeed learner autonomy and submit them a chance to learn, practice and communicate with others in the target language outside the classroom.

The present study revealed that the primary school English language teachers are slightly positive towards students' self-study outside classroom. Since continuing learning and studying outside classroom are essential requirements for the autonomy, teachers should encourage their students to make use of the non-class environments and utilities. Nonetheless, the current study found out the significant difference between the private and state school English language teachers' perceptions about self- study. Private primary school teachers were found to be more positive towards students studying on their own out of the classroom compared to state school English language teachers. The reason could be socio economic conditions. Even it is 21st century in which everybody has access to the information easily; the participants' students are coming from the families who are financially limited. Nevertheless, private school students have better opportunities compared to state school students therefore encouraging them to study at home can be easier. That is, state school English language teachers seem to be negative when it comes to the point to talk about their students studying on their own at home because of the limited socio economic reasons. Another reason could be supporting and non-supporting parents at home. As it was stated above, most of the state schools where the present study was conducted were in reduced circumstances of Denizli, the parents of these schools are not well educated or they work in hard conditions. Therefore, they do not have time or opportunity to support their children to make use of the non-class environments to learn or practice language. Furthermore, it can be stated that sending their children to school may seem enough for them to learn English. Since these children are at the primary level and

they need guidance to be autonomous, it can be assumed that state school English language teachers cannot find supporter parents out of their classes who can help their children to continue studying and learning. The picture is different when the point comes to private schools, because generally parents of these schools in Denizli context are well-educated and they choose private schools to support their children's education better. Therefore, they are ready to do everything to support their children in or out of the classroom. Accordingly, the private school teachers evaluated their students positively about their studying out of classrooms on their own.

Motivation is another factor, which plays an important role in improving and developing the learners' communicative skills. Together with the autonomy students start to develop intrinsic motivation which leads them to continue studying out of the classroom and use the target langue in the non-class environments. The classroom management problems decrease together with the increase in the intrinsic motivational level of the students. For these reasons the students need to be encouraged to take responsibility of their own learning from the very young ages. Therefore, the perceptions of the state school teachers should be changed accordingly. In order to do this, the teachers who are actively working should be trained and the student teachers should be educated in this way.

As Deci et al. (1991) found out the students in autonomy supportive classrooms showed more intrinsic motivation, considered competence, and self-regard. Deci et al. (1991) stated that the teachers are inclined to support autonomous practices when their students are more attentive and motivated, whereas the teacher do not prefer autonomous activities in their classroom when the students are more inattentive and less motivated. Thus, the difference between private and state school English language teachers can be based on the results revealed by Deci et al. (1991). The students in private schools can be more motivated towards learning English because of their circumstances such as studying abroad in future and parents' life conditions such as having jobs which require the use of English. Hence, they have opportunities to visit abroad starting from early ages because of their parents' business or economic possibilities. Nevertheless, most of the state school students do not have the same opportunities with the private school students; therefore, they may not be as motivated as them and this may cause low motivation towards learning English. Due to low motivation, the state school teachers may need to display controlling behaviors in their classes rather than encouraging their learners to be more autonomous.

As it was found out that "determining method and techniques to use" and "self-study out of the classroom "sub-dimensions revealed statistically difference. There were three more sub categories which were; determining objectives of the lesson and textbooks to use in the class, determining evaluation process and procedure, determining classroom management issues. No significant difference could be discovered about state and private school teachers' perceptions about determining objectives of the lesson and textbooks to use in the class, determining evaluation process and procedure, determining classroom management issues.

There have been several studies on the assertion that students should be considered equal partners and given an opportunity to decide the time and place of the course (Little, 1991; Dam, 1995; Nunan, 1997; Benson, 2001).

It is considered that with the help of such a chance, students will be able to develop a sense of self-confidence since they are given an opportunity to decide on these issues, which can lead them to enhance their sense of responsibility for the learning process. Nevertheless, the Turkish educational system does not entitle students, when it comes to making a decision on time and place of the course for several reasons. Teachers themselves cannot decide on the time and place of their lessons either. Likewise, it might be difficult for the teachers to detect an available classroom every time a teacher wishes for both at private and state schools. Hence, the time and place of classes were regarded as administrative matters by most of English teachers. Besides, even though private school teachers have a say over the curriculum development and deciding on the objectives of their courses, the yearly plans and the curriculum are prepared and supplied by the Ministry of Education in Turkish Educational system. That's why; both state and private school English language teachers are limited in terms of course aims and objectives choice. Furthermore, age is another factor in deciding lesson objectives or text book selection. Since the present study was conducted in primary schools and the students are not mentally mature enough to be decision makers of abstract matters, it is hard to be equal partners on these issues with them.

On the other hand, it would be better to ask for the opinions of students in classroom management or disciplinary issues. In Turkish context, students are rarely given chance to decide the seating arrangement which is mostly organized by the teachers who are considered as the main authority. As it was discussed above, because of the age issue

and traditional inclination in Turkish educational system no data were found out to measure the difference between the state and private school English language teachers about classroom management issues.

Benson (2001) stated that promoting autonomy does not indicate any particular approach to practice. As a matter of principle, any method or practice that helps and guides the learners to take the control of learning can be regarded as a way of promoting autonomy. Benson further indicated that in the field of language education, however, autonomy can be defined can be argued under six broad headings: resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom- based curriculum-based and teacher-based approaches. From this point of view, eclectic approach, combination of various forms, can be attributed to the practices of teachers regarding the improvement of autonomy.

As teachers' practices to foster autonomy in the classroom have importance as much as their beliefs and prospects on autonomy, in the fourth part of questionnaire (see Appendix 2) teachers' practices were investigated. It has been revealed that the majorities of primary school English language teachers in the present study are in favor of fostering of learner autonomy and believes that learners should be guided to be in charge of their learning. As Fenner and Newby (2000) stated, in an autonomy supportive classroom, teachers should provide their students the freedom of choosing materials to be used in the classroom. In the current study, considerably, primary school English language teachers are positive towards promoting autonomy in their classes through the practices they apply in their classrooms. As it was indicated in section three, the participants were positive towards sharing responsibility with their students in terms of determining methods and techniques to be used in the classroom. In the fourth section, the participants intensified their opinions by indicating that they encourage their students to take part in the determination of methods and techniques to be used and study on their own out of the classroom. Similarly, the difference stayed the same in the current section so the results of section three and four are compatible with each other. Private school English language teachers stated that they apply more practices in the classroom where they share the responsibility with their students in choosing the methods and techniques and they encourage their students more to study English out of the classroom than the state school English language teachers.

The reason for the difference stated above can stem from the problems in engaging the students in the process of decision making since the expectations and learning styles of the students may differ in state schools. That can be the reason why the teachers do not

apply the practices which can bring more learner autonomy into their classrooms. Furthermore, state primary school English language teachers could be afraid of sharing some responsibility with their learners since they can be afraid of losing control, specifically if they have kept the control of their classrooms during their teaching lives (Lacey, 2007). Furthermore, in the state schools, English teachers have a strict curriculum to follow which make the promotion of learner autonomy more difficult compared to the private schools which, in general, follow a special curriculum developed only for their school (Smith, 2003).

The other factors related to the difference between state and primary school English language teachers' practices can be associated with learners, institutions and teachers. Since the students are young learners and their socio economic facilities are different from the private schoolers, state school English language teachers may feel that their students or their parents can't comprehend the importance of developing autonomy. Besides, some teachers may stay away from fostering autonomy in their classroom because of the educational system in Turkey. For the majority of the students and parents, teachers have the main part in the class and if the teacher tries to share some part of this power with students, the parents and the students can consider he or she is not an active well-experienced teacher. With the fear of being regarded as inactive or non-experienced, the state school English language teachers may stay away from the activities which can promote autonomy. The other reason may be that their need of in-service training about learner autonomy which can guide them how to encourage autonomy in their classes. Because of the lack of supervision in the state schools, most of the teachers working there don't feel the obligation to attend in-service training courses or seminars to improve their teaching abilities. Due to the fact that autonomy is a recent trendy topic, teachers may need further education or training about it. Since they remain untrained about autonomy, state school English teachers may find it hard to apply practices which can foster autonomy. A study conducted in Turkey supports this fact that as it showed that since the teachers in Turkey are lack of knowledge and training about autonomy, they are unable to guide their learners in terms of autonomy (Erdogan, 2003; Sert, 2006). The reason for the difference may not derive from English Education Faculties since all English teachers are graduates of these universities. The cause can be the product of deficiency in in service training of state school teachers. As the private schools force their teachers to improve their teaching skills for marketing reasons and most of them make seminars or education obligatory for their teachers in an academic year, it is not surprising that these teachers have higher

tendency to use classroom practices to promote autonomy. This situation may be a result of Turkish educational system which applies centralized curricula with teacher centered and didactic teaching styles, focusing more on knowledge acquisition, examinations and overcrowded classrooms in state schools.

Furthermore, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) indicated that there is a connection between learners' English proficiency and their ability to develop autonomy. However, fostering autonomy is easier with the learners who begin language learning than with more proficient ones. For this reason, the primary school students' areas of interest should be taken into consideration and the subjects need to be suitable for their abilities. It means that the primary school teachers should allow students to choose classroom activities and share the responsibility accordingly. Pair and group work is a tool to improve learner autonomy in the learner centered classrooms. The reality is that learners become more independent by learning to cooperate with their peers. From this point, Jacobs and Farrell (2001) stated that group activities play an important role in this since learners adopt a lot of learning strategies when collaborating with, and getting support from their peers and not just the teacher. That is to say if students have a say in the decision making process of classroom activities or group norms, they become more engaged in the learning. (Dörnyei, 2001).

In an autonomy supporting classroom atmosphere, a teacher becomes more of a supervisor, a resource person and a counselor (Camilleri, 1997). A teacher as a supervisor needs to have the ability to manage the class where learners actively join decision-making, as a resource person supports learners to improve an conciseness of their learning styles and learning strategies, and as a counselor provides suggestions to help them manage learning difficulties. On the basis of that, promoting teachers' perceptions of learner autonomy can be a difficult, which requires preparation and support. Preparation can be involved in in-service teacher trainings where teachers can share practical ideas of promoting learner autonomy in the classroom.

In an autonomy promoting classroom context, students are promoted to be inter-connected and to study collaboratively. In order to develop learner autonomy, the relations between teacher and student is significant. The reliance and collaboration between the teacher and the students helps the students feel confident and safe in the classroom. Only then can the students have the sel-esteem and self-reliance to adventure in language learning (Voller, 1997). Therefore, the teachers should reconsider and direct their own beliefs of learner autonomy; otherwise they could restrain learner autonomy in the

classroom 'leading to a lack of authenticity in learning which can disconnect it from real life' (Lamb, 2008, p.273).

When the point comes to self-study out of the classroom, private school English language teachers have more positive attitudes towards it. They support their students to continue studying and learning out of the classroom than state school English language teachers. In order to make self-access language learning prospering, teachers should make their students ready to take more responsibility for their learning than they are used to. As Lee (1998) stated, it is need to be understood that how learners consider autonomous learning and their responsibilities in learning depends on their teachers' perceptions. Thus, it is crucial for the teachers to become conscious of their own and their learners' beliefs and attitudes when they are trying to foster learner autonomy.

Furthermore, a research (Littlewood 1999; 2000) studied the students' perceptions of learner autonomy and revealed that it was not the learners who were reluctant for taking responsibility of their own learning. It was the educational system that created an atmosphere which stays incompetent to foster learner autonomy. The conclusion is that the state of English language teaching in Turkey is in a developmental stage. Through the previous years, students were provided with knowledge which do not require them for further study. Now, they are coming across a new style of learning experience where they can formulate their own learning. Hereby, time will be needed for students to get used to this new role. However, generally students are still being taught to be dependent on the teachers and memorize knowledge instead of constructing meaningful knowledge which will help them to selve real life problems in the state schools as the current study revealed. To conclude, it is an indisputable fact that teachers have quite important part in making the learners more autonomous.

5.2 Summary

The current study aims to study the perceptions and practices of primary school English language teachers in terms of learner autonomy. Furthermore, it investigates wheteher there is a difference between state and private school Enlish language teachers with regard to their views about autonomy. A questionnaire was formulated with the help of current studies and a deep literature review, in order to gather data. The questionnaire had two parts. In the first part, the perceptions of the teachers in accordance with their view of students' degree of autonomy have been evaluated. Then, their views about the practices to promote autonomy in the classroom and how much they apply them have been assessed. There were 82 participants working in state or private schools.

After the analysis of the data, it has been found out that all participants have positive attitudes towards learner autonomy. In the third part of the questionnaire (see Appendix 2) which is about teachers' perceptions on their students' autonomy level, the questions were divided into five headings. These headings were "determining methods and techniques to use", "self-study", determining classroom management issues, determining course objectives and materials to use. When the results are considered, significant differences have been found out under 'determining methods and techniques' and 'self-study' headings. Therefore, private school teachers have more positive perceptions towards their students' autonomy degree compared to the state school teachers. The fourth section items were categorized under the same five headings. Private school teachers, in line with the results in the third section, stated that they apply practices and methods to foster autonomy. The state school teachers were slightly less positive towards the issue compared to the private ones. Based on the findings of the present study, autonomy is not a distant concept in the primary classes. Furthermore, it has been developed recently. The first reason for this difference may be a result of socio-economic reasons. The private school students have better conditions both socially and economically, which helps them to study outside classroom that provide teachers an opportunity to have positive perceptions towards autonomy. Moreover, the profile of parents in the private schools is more supportive towards language learning, as they can provide more opportunities to their children. Therefore, private school teachers are more motivated towards learning English which helps them to foster autonomy in their classrooms. The second reason may be because of the curriculum which requires strict requirement of state school English language teachers. It can prevent them in terms of sharing responsibility and control in their classrooms. Besides, the current study is conducted through a questionnaire. For the next study, interviews which can include teachers' expanded views towards autonomy together with the classroom observations in which the opportunity to monitor teachers' real practices to foster autonomy can be evaluated can be studied to expand the results of the present research.

5.3. Conclusion

Since the primary education is quite important to raise autonomous next generation, promotion of autonomy should begin to be supported in the primary classes. When the learners learn how to learn at the beginning of their education life, they would have ability to improve, observe and reflect on their learning process better in the course of their educational life.

Students should have the opportunities to study at their own paces, and they also need to have a chance to choose in what they do. Their advantages of studying more effectively and learning better are improved when the teachers share the knowledge pf the reason of everything happening in the classroom context. Thus, they will comprehend the aim of the specific activities, their competence to how to overcome them and how to assess them.

Another significant matter is that students are fully responsible for their developmental process and they have the competence to be in charge of their learning. Teachers should consider this fact carefully, and further provide their students with the help in their struggle to learn English. Without enough support and reliance in their competence and skills to be in charge of their own learning, it would not be possible to expect them to succeed in this. Furthermore, what teachers bare in their mind is represented by practices in the classroom which means what teachers consider learners' potential is obvious to them; hereby it either promotes their improvement of learner autonomy, or further reduces it.

Teachers should be certain about the fact that students can improve themselves and learn when they really want to and are engaged in the process not when they are dictated by their teachers. Therefore, teachers' perceptions regarding autonomy and their skills to practice it in their classrooms are an undeniable fact which influences the learners' autonomy.

Talking about how to guide students and their learning process in the class is also another tool to foster learner autonomy. Generally, the teachers work with a syllabus which is determined by authorities and they have to assess learners for what has been taught to them, examinations are inevitable. However, as revealed in the study, the preparation for the central exam pressure unfortunately distracts not only students but also their teachers. Besides, this causes students to consider the language like a lesson to study in the classroom, rather than a subject to be learned both in the classroom and outside the

classroom. Even though the present study's participants are working at the primary level, the pressure of the examination starts very early in the life of Turkish students and as well as the teachers. This pressure of examination can be the other reason of the state school teachers' reluctance in sharing responsibility with their students. However, when the students think that they are in the control of their learning, the pressure may decrease. Moreover, it can be pointed by this way that it is not the product but the process of learning which is more important.

It was revealed in the present study that some teachers working at state schools were not as positive as the private English language teachers about the notion of sharing of responsibility in their classrooms. Shifting responsibility focus from teachers to students may cause teachers concern about loss of control in their classrooms. Nevertheless, students who are provided with more control on their learning will be more successful and active in their learning process which can assist the teachers in their teaching more.

As Porto (2007) indicated, students favored classroom activities when they were given a chance to determine the pace of their study; nevertheless, they were very judical when they felt in rush with the activities the teachers provide no choice of pace. It can be asserted that students want to have a word not just in the type of activities but also for the time given for those activities as well. Curriculum and time limits could be big issues for the state school teachers' reluctance in fostering autonomy. However, in their strive to catch up with the curriculum; teachers need to "achieve a balance between a dynamic and a fast class" as it is revealed here (Porto, 2007: 689).

Another significant point is that, the extent to which learners improve autonomy and a host of abilities and knowledge that are essential for improving autonomy is related to both learner's and teacher's perspectives of their relationship and roles. Therefore; both parts should consider what their roles are in fostering autonomy and how they can succeed this in a shared atmosphere. Thereby, some potential problems that may be derived in the learning process may be inhibited before. It is significant that individuals' feelings, personal beliefs, and skills are also considered (Sarıgöz, 2008) as a demand of learner-centered classrooms.

Another issue revealed in the current study is that some state school teachers have slightly less positive perceptions towards fostering autonomy. In order to change teachers' negative perceptions and knowledge about learner autonomy, training about autonomous learning should be provided to the both state and private school teachers. Seminars and workshops on Learner Autonomy should be arranged by the experts of the area. It is also

significant to train teachers by means of in-service training. What's more, it is crucial to attach importance to the contents of teacher education materials.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

In the rapidly-developing world, new generation need skills and competence to fulfill their own needs by themselves. Since teachers may not always be there for their students, learners should learn how to learn and observe their learning process. That's why, it is important that autonomy should take its place in the world of education.

'*Autonomous Language Teaching*' can be conducted in syllabuses of faculties that educate future teachers to have a new teacher generation who are able to promote autonomy. Furthermore, it should be bared in mind that before university education, it is significant to be trained as an autonomous learner in the early years of education.

From kindergarten to primary school and then high school, it is crucial for every student learn how to learn and then take active part in the '*cycle of autonomy'.* So as to build an autonomous Turkey, the present teachers and the future teachers should be trained in an independent and autonomous atmosphere. Since some students may prefer particular types of classroom activities, teachers can be in need of close relationship with their students and work cooperatively with them. As Cotterall (2000) also indicated, learners should be promoted to set individual goals, observe and reflect on their performance throughout the learning process, and personalize what they have learnt in the classroom. Thanasoulas also (2000) asserted activities, which were also applied by some instructors, such as keeping learning journals and assessment sheets for reflection. Both ways permit learners rebound up their learning process and help them to determine whether it has been as beneficial as assumed until then. Teachers also need to supply learners with chances which make them feel that they are actually in the control of their own learning and have them encourage taking active part in the process despite of the limits. Since in a teacher-centered class, personal differences of learners may easily be left out. Therefore, teachers should put their students in the center of learning contexts and to build a learning environment in which students are encouraged to involve in decision making process. What is craved is that teachers find it desirable that the students should take more part in decision making process. For this reason, teachers should spend some of the class time to make their students more aware of what is happening in the classroom.

In line with what Udosen (2014) reported in her study, a curriculum should be developed in the light of students' in which students are at the center and they will be able to improve their learning skills and construct meaningful knowledge which will help them

to solve their real life problems. The students who are educated via this curriculum are autonomous, active participants of knowledge which is a very important point for democratic citizenship as indicated in CEFR too. Nonetheless, as she further claimed, curriculum instruction is as good as teachers who implement the curriculum, therefore the effectiveness in the implementation of a curriculum equals to the potential and ability of the teachers conducting it. That's why, teachers' perception and practices are central to learner autonomy.

Lamb (2011) suggested some formulas for how to encourage learners to be more autonomous. He stated that helping learners to build their identities as independent and autonomous via organizing autonomy supportive learning environments in which learners are in the control of their own learning; and involving them in decision making processes for learning processes will be beneficial practices for autonomy.

5.4. Suggestions and Limitations

This study is limited to the data collected from 82 primary school English language teachers working at state or private schools in Denizli. For this reason, it can be admitted that the study was conducted with a small number of teachers. This situation makes it difficult to generalize the findings for different teachers in other educational settings in Turkey.

Another limitation was that teachers' classroom practices were not monitored. Hereby, their responses for the questionnaire about whether they promoted learner autonomy and their perceptions about it were relied on since they were the only sources. The participation rate to the questionnaire was not as high as it was expected.

Although teachers were sent a notification for three times and the questionnaire was posted in the social media, it was just possible to collect 82 responses in about three months; however, since the participation was on voluntary basis, teachers were not insisted more than that. Nonetheless, the purpose of the research was to compare the results of state school teachers and private school teachers. The collected data was enough to compare and get significant results.

What's more, the results were obtained through the data collected via a questionnaire. Teachers' personal opinions may affect the results or further information about teachers' perceptions on fostering autonomy can be reached. Therefore, interview could lead more clear results in the present study.

This study aspired to find out teachers' perceptions and prospects on learner autonomy. The teachers have been asked to answer questions about their perceptions of learner autonomy. The current study, is however, not able to give information about what the participants actually do in the classroom. That's why; it could be interesting to study more about what the teachers actually do in the classroom to foster learner autonomy by performing classroom observation. This kind of observation could have been implemented as a follow-up study to the current study, to see if the teachers' perceptions are convergent to what they do in the EFL classroom. A classroom observation could also be precious as a remote study, since, there is no data material that can supply this kind of information about Turkish primary EFL classrooms. Conducting a study like this could provide valuable information about to what extent learner autonomy really is a focus in Turkish primary EFL classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. PETITION OF THE PROVINCAL EDUCATION DIRECTORATE

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 07/02/2018-6249

T.C.
DENİZLİ VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 16605029/44-E.2185156   01/02/2018
Konu : Anket İzni

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi : Pamukkale Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü'nün 25/01/2018 tarih ve 1929 sayılı yazıları.

Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı öğrencisi Hülya KOŞAR "Learner Autonomy in Primary Schools: Teachers Perceptions and Pratices" konulu tez çalışması kapsamında hazırlamış olduğu anket/ölçek formlarını İlgi yazı gereği Müdürlüğümüze bağlı Merkezefendi ilçesinde bulunan temel eğitim okullarında görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerine uygulamak istemektedir.

Yukarıda adı geçen müracaatlar ile ilgili (Lisans/Lisansüstü/Doktora) öğrencileri ve Öğretim Görevlilerinin ilgi yazıları ekinde belirtmiş oldukları okullarda, (Ortaöğretim/İlköğretim/Okulöncesi) konuları ile ilgili anket çalışmalarının "Araştırma, Yarışma ve Sosyal Etkinlik İzinleri" Genelgesinde belirtilen esaslar gereğince; Okul ve kurumların eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerini aksatmayacak şekilde 2017/2018 eğitim-öğretim yılı içerisinde uygulamaları Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.

Olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Mahmut OĞUZ
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
01/02/2018
Hakkı ÜNAL
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Güvenli Elektronik İmzalı
Aslı ile Aynıdır
0 1 -02- 2018

Mahmut TUR
Memur

T.C
DENİZLİ VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

PAMUKKALE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜNE

Kurumunuzca Müdürlüğümüzden talep edilen araştırma isteklerine ait Makam Onayı ve Müdürlüğümüzce Onay verilen anket formları ekte gönderilmiştir.

Gereğini rica ederim.

Hakkı ÜNAL
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Ek:
1-Anket Formları

Sırakapılar Mh. Saltık Cd.No :76 Merkezefendi/DENİZLİ   Ayrıntılı bilgi için: Sefa GELMİŞ -Şef
Elektronik Ağ: http://denizli.meb.gov.tr   Tel: (0 258) 265 55 54/106-109
E-posta: yukekogretimyurtdisi20@meb.gov.tr   Faks: (0 258) 265 01 69

Bu evrak güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır. https://evraksorgu.meb.gov.tr adresinden 3c78-61ca-3a9f-949a-21ad kodu ile teyit edilebilir.

Evrak Tarih ve Sayısı: 07/02/2018-6249

T.C.
DENİZLİ VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 16605029/44-E.2185156   01/02/2018
Konu : Anket İzni

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

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    Yukarıda adı geçen müracaatlar ile ilgili (Lisans/Lisansüstü/Doktora) öğrencileri ve Öğretim Görevlilerinin ilgi yazıları ekinde belirtmiş oldukları okullarda, (Ortaöğretim/İlköğretim/Okulöncesi) konuları ile ilgili anket çalışmalarının "Araştırma, Yarışma ve Sosyal Etkinlik İzinleri" Genelgesinde belirtilen esaslar gereğince; Okul ve kurumların eğitim-öğretim faaliyetlerini aksatmayacak şekilde 2017/2018 eğitim-öğretim yılı içerisinde uygulamaları Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.

    Olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Mahmut OĞUZ
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
01/02/2018
Hakkı ÜNAL
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Güvenli Elektronik İmzalı
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0 1 -02- 2018
Mahmut TUR
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T.C
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    Gereğini rica ederim.

Hakkı ÜNAL
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

Ek:
1-Anket Formları

APPENDIX 2. QUESTIONAIRE

Learner Autonomy in Primary Schools: Teachers' Perceptions and Practices

This questionnaire is part of a study about learner autonomy in ELT which is being conducted by Hülya Koşar (Master student at Pamukkale University and English Teacher at METU Development Foundation Schools, Denizli). The goal of the study is to find out teachers' perceptions about learner autonomy and their practices to foster autonomy in their classrooms. Moreover, it is aimed to figure out the correlation between the results of the teachers working at private schools and the results of the teachers working at state schools within the frame of the research. Participation is voluntary. Your responses are important as they will inform the next stage of the study. There are no wrong or right answers. What the researcher is interested in is your views about learner autonomy. Thank you.

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please tell us about your background.

1. Gender (Tick ONE):

Male ☐   Female ☐

2. What kind of school do you work in?

Private ☐   State ☐

3. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE):

0–4 ☐   5–9 ☐   10–14 ☐   15–19 ☐   20–24 ☐   25+ ☐

1. Degree held:

Bachelor's ☐   Master's ☐   Doctorate ☐

2. Which grade(s) do you teach? (You can tick more than ONE item.)

Grade 1 ☐   Grade 2 ☐   Grade 3 ☐   Grade 4 ☐

Section 2: Your Students and Your Teaching

This section contains 3 multiple choice questions. These questions provide a general aspect for your point of view of learner autonomy.

Learner Autonomy: It has been defined as the ability to take responsibility of one's learning, to have the liability for all the decisions related to all aspects of this learning' and the specific decisions concerning; identification of the course objectives, definition of the course contents and progress, choice of methods and techniques to be used in class, observation of the procedure of learning and development, evaluation of what has been learned. (Holec, 1981: 3)

To what extent do you agree with the following statement? Choose ONE answer:

1. Generally, the students I teach English most often have a fair degree of learner autonomy.

Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Partially agree ☐ Agree ☐

Strongly agree ☐

2. Generally, in teaching English I give my students chances to foster learner autonomy.

Strongly disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Partially agree ☐ Agree ☐

Strongly agree ☐

3. How often do you get feedback from your students about their English learning process?

Never ☐ Once in each term ☐ More than once in each term ☐

Regularly ☐

If yes, how do you get feedback?

(You can choose more than one item.)

☐ Your own observations as a teacher.

☐ Getting students' immediate feedback in the classroom orally.

☐ Asking them to write reflection about their learning process.

☐ Asking students to keep diaries about their learning and English lessons.

☐ Getting individual face to face feedback outside classroom.

☐ Giving questionnaire for getting feedback.

Section 3: Your Students as Autonomous Learners

This section contains 23 multiple choice questions. These questions are about how much you think your learners are autonomous. Please give your opinion about the statements below by ticking ONE answer for each item.

Codes: 1= Very Poor, 2= Poor, 3= Satisfactory, 4= Good, 5 = Very Good

How would you grade your students in terms of their ability to ………………..?	1	2	3	4	5
1. decide their learning activities in class?					
2. decide their learning activities to practice English outside class?					
3. decide their seating plan?					
4. decide the class rules and discipline matters?					
5. decide which topic will be dealt with in the lesson?					
6. set up their own learning goals?					
7. identify their own needs for English lessons?					
8. join in the process of choosing their learning materials (texts, realias…etc.) ?					
9. choose learning materials to support their learning outside class?					
10. evaluate their learning performance?					
11. evaluate the course?					
12. evaluate the course objectives?					
13. identify their weakness in English classes?					
14. decide what they should learn next in their English lessons?					
15. decide the amount of time they should spend on each activity?					
16. try to learn something new outside classroom?					
17. learn co-operatively?					
18. start interaction in English in class?					
19. use the internet to learn English for specific purposes outside class?					
20. decide the type of homework (project, pen and paper or digital…etc.)?					
21. decide how often they should be assessed?					

Section 4: Your Teaching Strategies

This section contains 26 multiple choice questions. These questions are about how much you think you encourage your students to be autonomous learners in terms of your teaching strategies. Please give your opinion about the statements below by ticking ONE answer for each item.

Codes: 1= Never, 2= Hardly Ever, 3= Sometimes, 4= Often, 5 = Very Often

To promote learner autonomy, I encourage my students to………….	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1. be involved in reflection upon teaching methods / activities used in class.					
2. study in groups or in pairs to learn cooperatively.					
3. have in-class performance activities like projects.					
4. read books in English on their own outside the class.					
5. write a letter/ an e-mail / a text message in English.					
6. read magazines or newspapers suitable for their age in English.					
7. watch series/shows/cartoons or movies in English.					
8. listen to songs in English.					
9. use the internet or online sites for learning English.					
10. interact with their friends in English in classroom environment.					
11. study English on their own.					
12. re-evaluate their misbehaviors interrupting the flow of the lesson.					
13. to search and find out about certain topics and be ready to discuss about them in the next lesson.					
14. be involved in reflection on their course book.					
15. reflect upon the aims of each class.					
16. be involved in reflection of the materials used in class.					
17. consider how much time they should spend on each in-class activity.					
18. go on extra mile for learning English outside classroom.					
19. ask questions to their peers about the topic.					
20. discuss their ideas freely in English.					
21. do project-based homework outside class to help them discover and produce in the target language by themselves.					
22. give their opinions about the frequency of course evaluation.					
23. discover language by deducing it from contexts which provide various examples.					

CV

PERSONAL INFORMATION	
Name	Hülya
Surname	Koşar
Birth Date and Place	24 Ağustos, 1990 / Manisa,TÜRKİYE
Nationality	T.C
Adress and E-Mail Address	Yunus Emre mah. 6416 sok no.11 Pamukkale / DENİZLİ hulya.ergun2490@gmail.com
Education	
Primary	4 Eylül Ahmet ve Sabahat Sönmez İlköğretim Okulu , (1997-2004)
Secondary	Demirci Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi , (2004-2008)
Higher education (Bachelor's Degree)	ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ (2008-2013)
Higher education (Master's Degree)	Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi , Denizli / Türkiye (2015-)
Foreign Language	
Foreign Language	English
Exam Name	YDS
Exam Date	Mart, 2013
Points Received	87,5
Professional Experiece	
01.09.2013 - halen	ODTÜ GELİŞTİRME VAKFI ÖZEL DENİZLİ ORTAOKULU'