

**T.R.**  
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**INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF BLOGGING AND PORTFOLIO-  
KEEPING ON ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS'  
LEVEL OF AUTONOMY, SELF-ASSESSMENT AND LANGUAGE  
ACHIEVEMENT**

**Yelda ORHON**

**Supervisor**

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Recep Şahin ARSLAN**

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## YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ ONAY FORMU

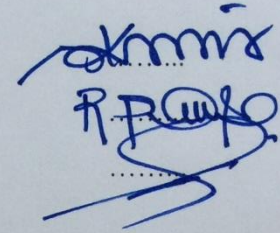
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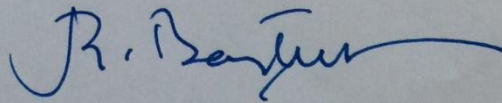
Başkan: Doç. Dr. Şevki KÖMÜR

Üye: Doç. Dr. Recep Şahin ARSLAN (Danışman)

Üye: Yrd. Doç Dr. Selami OK



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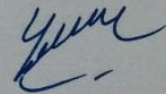


Prof. Dr. Ramazan BAŞTÜRK  
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### ETİK BEYANNAMESİ

Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, tez yazım kurallarına uygun olarak hazırladığım bu tez çalışmada;

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- Kullanılan verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığımı,
- Bu tezin herhangi bir bölümünü bu üniversitede veya başka bir üniversitede başka bir tez çalışması olarak sunmadığımı beyan ederim.



Yelda Orhon

**To my husband, my parents, my sister, and  
my precious nephew, Ege**

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patience, and unconditional love through the years of my education. Last, I also would like to express my incomparable love to the youngest member of our family, my adorable nephew, Ege.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Investigating the Impact of Blogging and Portfolio-Keeping on English as a Foreign Language Learners' Level of Autonomy, Self-Assessment and Language Achievement**

Yelda Orhon

This study aims to investigate the effect of blogging and portfolio-keeping on EFL learners' autonomy levels and self-assessment of their language skills in the process of learning a language. In addition, it aims to contribute to the learners' language achievement through the application of learner blogs and portfolios and to reveal the perceptions of the learners towards the use of blogs and portfolios as educational tools. The study lasted for ten weeks with 60 pre-intermediate prep-class students assigned to three groups; namely blog group, portfolio group, and control group. The participants in the blog group kept personal blogs where they could share their personal studies regarding their language learning process with their classmates, get feedback both from their course instructor and classmates on their own work and make comments on each other's works in addition to their usual classroom practices. They shared their essays, story reviews, vocabulary studies, grammar studies, and any extracurricular language activities on their personal blog pages. The participants in the portfolio group kept portfolios and collected all their works in a personal folder in addition to their usual classroom practices; and they received feedback from their course instructor and classmates on their own works and provided feedback to the works of their classmates. They were free to add anything to their portfolios, which meant that they could put their essays, story reviews, vocabulary studies, grammar studies and any extracurricular activities in their personal portfolios. However, there was no implementation in the control group; the participants in the control group had only usual classroom practices. Data were collected through the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire, developed by Egel (2003), the Self-Assessment Checklist, adapted by the

researcher from the self-assessment grid of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, language proficiency exams prepared and conducted by the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University and post-study semi-structured interviews with the students. The findings of the study revealed that the students in each group sometimes behaved autonomously before and after the study, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the learners' pre-test and post-test autonomy levels in each group. In addition, there were not statistically significant differences in the autonomy levels of the learners among the three groups either. Next, although the language achievement scores of the students did not show a significant difference among the three groups after the study, there were meaningful differences in the learners' pre-study and post-study success scores in the portfolio group and control group. The language achievement scores of the students decreased in the portfolio group and control group at the end of the ten-week implementation period. Finally, the self-assessment levels of the blog users increased after the learner blogging application and were found to be higher than those of the portfolio group and the control group, which could suggest that keeping blogs helped students evaluate themselves as better at language skills. In addition, the qualitative findings of the study indicated that the blog users perceived blogging as beneficial to their language learning process in general and reported that it contributed to their language skills, especially to their writing skills, vocabulary knowledge, and communication skills. Also, the portfolio keepers believed that portfolio integration into language classes contributed to their language learning process, especially to their writing skills and vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, the study suggests that the practice of blogging and portfolio-keeping be an effective tool to foster learners' language learning and be integrated into the language teaching practices.

**Keywords:** Learner blogging, Portfolio-keeping, Learner autonomy, Self-assessment, Language achievement, Learner perceptions.

## ÖZET

### **Blog ve Portfolyo Uygulamalarının İngilizceyi Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğrenen Öğrencilerin Özerklik, Öz-Değerlendirme ve Dil Başarı Seviyesi Üzerine Etkileri**

Yelda Orhon

Bu çalışmanın amacı, blog ve portfolyo uygulamalarının, İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin dil öğrenme süreçlerinde sahip oldukları özerklik seviyelerine ve dil becerilerini öz değerlendirmelerine olan etkilerini araştırmaktır. Ayrıca, blog ve portfolyo kullanımı yoluyla öğrencilerin dil başarılarına katkıda bulunmayı ve blog ve portfolyonun eğitimsel amaçlı kullanımına dair öğrencilerin algılarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, blog grubu, portfolyo grubu ve kontrol grubu olmak üzere üç gruba atanan toplam 60 alt orta seviye öğrencileriyle on hafta sürmüştür. Blog kullanan gruptaki katılımcılar, olağan sınıf uygulamalarının yanı sıra, kişisel çalışmalarını sınıf arkadaşlarıyla paylaşabildikleri, yaptıkları çalışmalar üzerine hem öğretmenlerinden hem de sınıf arkadaşlarından dönüt alabildikleri ve birbirlerinin çalışmalarına yorum yapabildikleri bir kişisel blog sayfası tutmuşlardır. Yazdıkları makaleleri, hikâye eleştirilerini, yaptıkları kelime çalışmalarını, dil bilgisi çalışmalarını ve sınıf dışında yaptıkları herhangi bir çalışmayı kişisel blog sayfalarında paylaşmışlardır. Portfolyo tutan gruptaki katılımcılar ise olağan sınıf uygulamalarının yanı sıra, geleneksel portfolyolar tutmuştur ve yaptıkları bütün çalışmaları bir dosyada toplamışlardır. Yaptıkları çalışmalarla ilgili hem öğretmenlerinden hem de sınıf arkadaşlarından dönüt almışlardır ve başkalarının çalışmalarına da dönüt vermişlerdir. Portfolyolarına dâhil edecekleri çalışmalar konusunda özgür bırakılmışlardır; bu da kişisel portfolyolarına yazdıkları makaleleri, hikâye eleştirilerini, yaptıkları kelime çalışmalarını, dil bilgisi çalışmalarını ve sınıf dışında yaptıkları herhangi bir çalışmayı dosyalarına ekleyebilecekleri anlamına gelmektedir. Kontrol grubundaki öğrenciler ise herhangi bir uygulamaya tabi



tutulmamıştır; sadece olağan sınıf içi uygulamaları takip etmişlerdir. Araştırmanın verileri, Egel (2003) tarafından geliştirilmiş olan Öğrenci Özerklik Anketi, araştırmacı tarafından Avrupa Birliği Ortak Dil Kriterleri'nin öz-değerlendirme çizelgesinden adapte edilmiş olan Öz-Değerlendirme Anketi, Pamukkale Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu tarafından gerçekleştirilmiş olan dil başarı sınavları ve araştırma sonunda gerçekleştirilen yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile toplanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, araştırmanın başında ve sonunda her gruptaki öğrencilerin ara sıra özerk davrandığını ortaya koymuştur; bu da her bir gruptaki öğrencilerin ön-test ve son-test özerklik düzeyleri arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farkın olmadığı anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca, uygulamanın sonunda üç grup arasında da öğrencilerin özerklik düzeyleri arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Buna ek olarak, araştırmanın sonunda öğrencilerin dil başarı puanları üç grup arasında anlamlı bir farklılık göstermemesine rağmen, portfolyo grubundaki ve kontrol grubundaki öğrencilerin ön-test ve son-test dil başarı puanları arasında anlamlı farklar bulunmuştur. On haftanın sonunda portfolyo ve kontrol gruplarındaki öğrencilerin dil başarı puanlarında düşüş gözlemlenmiştir. Son olarak, öğrenci bloğu uygulamasının sonunda blog kullanan öğrencilerin öz-değerlendirme seviyeleri artmıştır ve portfolyo grubu ve kontrol grubundaki öğrencilerin öz-değerlendirme düzeylerinden daha yüksek bulunmuştur; bu da blog kullanmanın öğrencilerin dil becerileri yönünden kendilerini daha başarılı olarak değerlendirdikleri anlamına gelebilir. Araştırmanın nitel sonuçları ise, blog kullanan öğrencilerin blog uygulamasını genel olarak dil öğrenme süreçlerine, özellikle de yazma becerileri, kelime bilgileri ve iletişim becerilerine, faydalı olarak algıladıklarını işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca, portfolyo kullanan öğrenciler de portfolyonun dil sınıflarına dâhil edilmesinin, dil öğrenme süreçlerine katkıda bulunduğuna, özellikle de yazma becerilerini ve kelime bilgilerini geliştirdiğine inanmaktadırlar. Bu nedenle, bu araştırma, blog ve portfolyo uygulamalarının, dil öğrenimini desteklemek için etkili birer araç olabileceğini ve dil öğretimi uygulamaları içine dâhil edilebileceklerini önermektedir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Öğrenci bloğu, Portfolyo tutma, Öğrenen özerkliği, Öz-değerlendirme, Dil başarısı, Öğrenen algısı.

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**ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

**LB:** Learner Blogging

**PK:** Portfolio-Keeping

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**CoE:** Council of Europe

**ZPD:** Zone of Proximal Development

**PCT:** Personal Construct Theory

**SAC:** Self-Access Centre

**CEF:** The Common European Framework

**ALTE:** Association of Language Testers in Europe

**ELP:** European Language Portfolio

**GPA:** General Point Averages

**SLWAI:** Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory

**ELPU:** European Language Portfolio Use

**AAS:** Adolescent Autonomy Scale

**LLAS:** Language Learning Autonomy Scale

**CEFR:** Common European Framework of Reference

**LAQ:** Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

**SAC:** Self-Assessment Checklist

**SPSS:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

**ANOVA:** Analysis of variance



**Q1:** Question 1

**Q2:** Question 2

**Q3:** Question 3

**Inf. 01:** Informant 01

**Inf. 02:** Informant 02

**Inf. 03:** Informant 03

**Inf. 04:** Informant 04

**Inf. 05:** Informant 05

**Inf. 06:** Informant 06

**Inf. 07:** Informant 07

**Inf. 08:** Informant 08

**Inf. 09:** Informant 09

**Inf. 10:** Informant 10

**Inf. 11:** Informant 11

**Inf. 12:** Informant 12

**Inf. 13:** Informant 13

**Inf. 14:** Informant 14

**Inf. 15:** Informant 15

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the problem, purpose, significance and limitations of the study as well as the research questions and assumptions in line with the previous studies conducted in the field.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Over the last three decades, the area of foreign language teaching has experienced a great change in accordance with the promotion of the communicative language teaching and learner-centred approach, which supports the idea that students should be active in class, participate in activities and take some responsibility of their own learning in a foreign language class. Moreover, the rapid developments in educational technology have also contributed to the changes related to teaching methods in language teaching. With these innovations, traditional classroom atmosphere has also started to change. Teachers have started to respect students' needs more by putting the learner in the centre of their teaching. It can be stated that language teaching practice has experienced a change towards a more communicative approach in the past three decades (Yang, 1998; Nunan, 1999; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Richards, 2006a; Richards 2006b; Hunter, 2009), and as a result of this change, it has also become more learner-centred. According to learner-centred approach, learners are in the centre of learning process. Therefore, in learner-centred approach, learning how to learn a foreign language is vital (Dickinson, 1987) and it is believed that learners should be given opportunities to use the language for communicative purposes, and teachers should help their learners go on their learning by themselves. Hence, the methodology followed in class, materials made use of, the activities implemented, teacher roles and student roles have been reconsidered in many language classes.

As learner-centred methods have started to be implemented in classrooms, a shift from teacher dependency towards learner independency has begun to occur. This means that learners are not completely dependent on their teachers in the process of language learning, so they have begun to take responsibility of their learning in classroom. Koçak (2003) supports this view by stating that in learner-centred classrooms teachers are less likely to dominate classroom procedure in contrast to traditional classrooms where the teacher is seen as the authority figure. In learner-centred approach to learning, learners are

encouraged to reflect on their learning process and develop a personally meaningful relation to it (Schwienhorst, 2008). Therefore, it can be stated that in today's language classroom, learners are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning, and teachers help learners become more independent both inside and outside the classroom, which illustrates that language learning is actually a collaborative process between learners and teachers. In the light of these changes in foreign language classes, a new term - autonomy- has gained popularity in the last few decades in the field of foreign language teaching. The emergence and rise of autonomy is closely related to the collapse of the traditional language classroom in the 1970s and 1980s and the appearance of innovative forms of learner-focused practice (Benson, 2001). The term -autonomy- was firstly proposed by Holec (1981) in a report to the Council of Europe (CoE) in which he describes autonomy as taking charge of one's own learning. The purpose of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project was to provide adults with the opportunities for lifelong learning and the emphasis was on the need to develop the individual's freedom by developing the abilities which were necessary to act more responsibly in the society (Benson, 2001). This means that it is not important to tell the learner the right answer of a question or explain everything in detail not giving any room for mistake. The point is to be able to make the learners seek the right answer themselves even if they make mistakes repeatedly. Once they learn how to seek information or how to deal with a problem, then they will be able to continue their life more powerfully and will not stop improving themselves all their life.

Since 'autonomy' emerged in the field of education thirty years ago, the term "autonomy" has been a buzzword in the context of language learning both in Turkey and around the world (Schwienhorst, 2008; Little, 2009; Balçıkanlı, 2010). Autonomy is not surprisingly popular because the concept of autonomy is in accordance with several pedagogical concerns (Littlewood, 1996). According to Schmenk (2005) the popularity of learner autonomy may be partially related to the rise of computer technology and the growing importance of computers in language learning environments worldwide. In addition, Dörnyei (2001) also views autonomy as a buzzword in educational psychology and believes that autonomy is very popular because educational organizations resist the change that scholars would like to see applied. Therefore, many studies focus on how to prepare learners to be successful regardless of the education they get.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

It is a well-known fact that language teaching has been a controversial issue in Turkey for many years. Students begin learning English at primary school and go on learning until they graduate from high school. However, when they start university, many students complain that they do not know English. This situation could result from many different reasons. The first one could be related to the way students are taught English. In many traditional language classrooms in Turkey, grammar is still seen as the most important part of a language in many language classrooms. One reason for this belief stems from the idea that grammar is easy to teach. Teachers do not have to put as much effort into teaching grammar as in teaching skills. Another reason why grammar still lies at the heart of language teaching in Turkey is supposed to be the university examinations that students are preparing for. Since such exams do not involve assessing any language skills, students learn the structural part of English at primary, secondary and high schools, but lack the necessary skills to be able to be competent at a language. Furthermore, as English is a foreign language, students do not have many opportunities to improve their competency in skills; namely, they lack authentic language use; they only have their teachers and classmates to practice. Being used to studying grammar of English, students come to university with an expectation of a similar focus on grammar but with a different result in their level of English. Moreover, in many language classrooms, teacher is the 'authority' and 'resource of knowledge'; on the other hand students are the 'passive recipient of knowledge'. Thus, many students lack decision making, independent action, critical thinking and reflection skills and knowledge of how to plan, monitor or evaluate their learning. Little (1999) states that in order to develop autonomy in learners, they should be able to think critically, give their own decisions and act independently.

Another essential point in many language classrooms is that it is the product that is assessed not the process. Student performances are evaluated by summative assessment, usually in the form of exams and students are not involved in the assessment process. Thus, they do not have opportunities to reflect on their performance, think about their learning process or manage their learning depending on their own reflections. However, by getting learners to evaluate themselves in the learning process, teachers not only develop learners' self-critical faculties, but also remind them of the goals of the instructional process and help them create links between what they learn and their goals (Nunan, 1999).

However, in recent years, learners have been involved in learning process through a variety of tasks or tools such as project work, web 2.0 tools, and portfolios (Zubizarreta, 2008; Crane, (2012). With the help of these tools, learners could monitor their learning process and become more independent in decision-making by self-assessing their own performances.

Another problem observed in language classrooms in Turkey is the lack of technology support. The most important reason for the negligence of technology is that many teachers feel uncomfortable with integrating technology into classroom practices since they cannot keep up with the latest technology and are afraid of losing the control of the class (McDermott and Murray, 2000; Means, 2008). As a result, teachers are resistant to integrate technology in to their classroom practices, so students are still taught traditionally, away from current technologies in education. In order to increase the implementation of technology in classes, teachers should be trained on the use of technology (Gahala, 2001). If teachers have trainings on the use of technology in education, they could be more open to innovation in their teaching with the help of technological tools. Another reason for the negligence of technology could be time constraints. Teachers find it hard to catch up with the syllabus most of the time, so they do not want to add more to their class work. Furthermore, due to the time constraints and large class sizes teachers cannot spare enough time for each student in class. However, as young people are too much involved in technological advances, using the Internet for teaching purposes is necessary for many teachers, especially for language teachers. It is very difficult to find authentic materials in a foreign language setting. However, many authentic materials such as news, articles, books, podcasts, and videos are just one click away from the students. The Internet offers learners easy access to online database of resources and allows learners to explore and lead their learning path. Moreover, using technological tools, learners could improve their English at their own pace (Gonzales and St. Louis, 2008). As mentioned before, it is hard for teachers to cater for individual needs of the students in class. Therefore, learners could study at their own pace or in an appropriate way for their learning styles with the help of technology. As a result of combining technology and learning, learners could be more independent of the teacher and become more autonomous. Shotlekov (2008, p.2) claims that technology enhanced learning is vital in “personalized learning” throughout life by providing “learning for anyone, at any time, at any place”.

As an EFL teaching setting, Pamukkale University School of Foreign Languages shares similar problems stated. At the School of Foreign Languages, students of various departments study English for an academic year and at the end of the year they are expected to use the language competently. My experience with university students studying English at preparatory class shows that many students cannot use language skills competently in the target language and they are not interested in developing their language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Since improvement in each skill requires continuous practice both inside and outside the class and class hours are not enough to work on all the skills, students have to go on studying outside class hours as well. However, many of them do not like studying outside the class, because one of the common problems they come across is that they do not know how to study English in general. When they are in class, they are heavily dependent on their teacher; it is the teacher that leads them to improve their weak points most of the time. However, when they get out of the class, they do not study English if there is no homework, because they do not know what they can do outside the class in order to improve their English. As they are used to hearing what they need to do from the teacher, when there is no teacher support around them, they waver.

Many learners are not aware of what they are good at and not in the target language. They cannot assess their own language abilities due to the fact that they do not know their own language learning process very well. Most of them believe they should study everything in the target language. Therefore, even if they are competent enough on a subject, they may study it again and again, wasting their time in which they could study another subject. Consequently, many learners cannot study effectively on their own, which means they lack a very essential point in language learning -autonomy-. Assuming that the learners may have difficulty in planning and organizing their learning, and putting an efficient studying plan into effect, it is a good idea to help learners manage their learning outside the class. The researcher has also observed that while students are at preparatory class, most of them have negative attitudes and feelings towards skills in time, because they believe it is very difficult to improve their skills in the target language, because it takes time to improve language skills. However, the problem could be that they do not practice their language skills effectively outside the class either because they do not know how to study or they are dependent on the teacher. Many students are exposed to language skills mostly in the class, but beyond the walls of the classroom they do not practice their

language skills a lot. Firstly, students have difficulty in reading in the target language. Many students are not interested in reading even as a free time activity, so they do not do much about developing their reading skill in the target language either. Generally, students do not enjoy reading in the target language; as a result they do not read a lot outside the class and their reading skill does not improve a lot. When they cannot understand the reading texts, they feel upset and their motivation for studying decreases.

When learners' attitudes towards listening skill are analyzed, it is generally seen that learners mostly complain that they cannot perform well in the listening skill of the target language. They believe their listening skill is poor, but many students do not try hard to improve their listening skill, as well. Most of them are exposed to target language in the classroom, and outside the class they are not involved in listening in the target language. Consequently, their problems with listening skill continue, and in the end they get demotivated.

Also, preparatory class students also assess their speaking skill in the target language as poor. There are many students who complain that they can understand what is uttered, however they cannot express their ideas in the target language because of their poor speaking skill. As students do not have many chances to practice their speaking skill outside the class, they are mostly limited to the class hours for practising their speaking skill. This is mostly not enough for speaking skill to develop. As a result, when they cannot speak in the target language, they lose their motivation.

Finally, students have problems with writing in the target language, because they always complain that it is boring to write and difficult to generate ideas. Since writing paragraphs or essays requires them to think about a topic to be able to generate ideas, they get demotivated easily when they cannot find anything to write. Being demotivated, learners begin to lose their interest in writing. Moreover, they state that they do not even write essays in their mother tongue, thus it is extremely hard for them to write in a foreign language.

Consequently, developing language skills outside the classroom is not favoured by many Turkish language learners for a variety of reasons at the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University. Another problem that I experience with my students is that they get bored with traditional classroom atmosphere, where they do not have an

active role. They want to be an active agent of their learning. As a result, traditional language teaching methods do not appeal to them, so they expect new and interesting learning practices in their language learning process.

Taking all these into consideration, I decided to conduct a study to help learners go on learning outside the class and engage them in outside classroom activities with an aim to make them more autonomous. The path to learner autonomy will be realized by helping learners take responsibility of their learning, self-assess their learning process and increase their success in English through blogging which is a popular internet facility providing learners with opportunities to contact each other outside the class and through portfolio implementation which is one of the most common and useful tools for learners to see their progress in language learning. The aim of using blogs in the study was to get away from traditional teaching methods, to make learners more active participants of their learning and to move learners from teacher dependency to independency via collaboration and genuine language use on their blogs. I believe that since my students were the children of technology era, integrating technology into their language learning process, and giving them more control over their learning by means of technology would make them more concerned with their language learning process. In addition, the aim of choosing portfolios as the second tool in the study was to involve learners in their learning process by helping them to see their strengths and weaknesses and to make learners more independent by helping them get more aware of the process. Since portfolios are suggested to make learners more aware of their language learning process in many studies, which is also my aim in this study, portfolios were used as an application tool of the present study. Blogs and portfolios have the same aims, but blogs would function as technological portfolios, which would provide a more communicative approach to the learning process.

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

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications on the autonomy level of the preparatory class students and their self-assessment of their own language learning process. It was supposed that after the implementation process, learners would become more aware of their learning, so they would be active in their learning; and as a result they would be more autonomous by taking the responsibility of their learning and would be able to self-assess their language learning better by monitoring and planning their learning process. In addition, the study aimed to



contribute to learners' language achievement scores via learner blogs and portfolios by making them better learners. Also, the study aimed to reveal the perceptions of learners towards the utilization of learner blogs and portfolios as part of their language learning process.

#### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

In the last decade, teachers have been trying to vary their classroom practices in order to keep up date with the latest trends in education. As a result, the integration of technology into classroom practices has become common among many teachers. While integrating technology, teachers benefit from various ways such as the use of social sites as instructional tools, blogs, e-portfolios, discussion boards, wikis, video sites, etc. The use of blogs for educational purposes in language classrooms has attracted a considerable research attention and the results of the studies indicating the effectiveness of blogs have increased the interest in blog use to facilitate both language teaching and learning. As blogging is still a new term for language teaching area, the use of blogs for educational purposes has not been extensively discovered yet. The research available about blog implementation mostly focuses on developing language skills, especially writing (e.g., Arslan, 2014; Karsak, Fer, and Orhan, 2014; Awada and Ghaith, 2014; Foroutan, Noordin, and Hamzah, 2013; Iyer, 2013; Gedera, 2011; Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl, 2010) on learner perceptions (Aljumah, 2012; Sun, 2009; Dippold 2009; Lin and Hooft, 2008) on the promotion of intercultural learning (Lee, 2009; Elola and Oskoz, 2008; Lee, 2011) and on learner autonomy (Dickinson, 2013; Gómez and McDougald, 2013; Arikan and Bakla, 2011; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; Lida, 2009). However, not much attention has been laid on issues regarding the relationship between learner autonomy, and especially self-assessment skills of learners in language classroom and blogging in Turkey.

Another popular implementation in language classrooms has been the integration of traditional portfolios into language classrooms in recent years. Portfolios can be used by learners of all language levels and of different settings, because portfolios are put forward to be useful for learners, and create or increase learner awareness in the teaching and learning process. The results of the studies conducted on portfolios indicate that use of portfolios in language classrooms promotes language learning in various ways. The studies on portfolios mainly focus on learner perception (Ok, 2014; Ok, 2012; Erden-Burnaz, 2011; Apple and Shimo, 2004; Martínez-Lirola and Rubi, 2009), language skills (Göksu

and Genç, 2013; Jahandar, and Khodabandehlou, 2012; Yurdabakan and Erdogan, 2009; İşler, 2005), learner assessment (Fahim and Jalili, 2013; Goçtü, 2012; Nezakatgoo, 2011) and learner autonomy (Yildirim, 2013; Munzur, 2012; Little, 2009; Rao, 2003).

As it is clearly seen, there are many studies on the integration of blogs, and portfolios into language teaching classrooms, but mostly separately. In addition, it can be stated that both blogs and portfolios may yield positive results in similar points in language classes such as language skills, learner autonomy, because it is suggested that both blogs and portfolios give learners a sense of ownership, lead them to independence, create awareness; shortly contribute to language learning and teaching process. Therefore, the present study aims to combine these two useful and popular tools, namely blogs and portfolios, in language classrooms. As blogs and portfolios may be more commonly and actively used at a variety of levels of education as part of classroom practices in the following years, it is important to find out the positive impacts of implementing these tools in a language classroom from different angles. To gain new insights regarding the contributions of blogs and portfolios to learners' language learning process, the current study explores how learner blogs and portfolios promote learner autonomy, self-assessment and language achievement scores of the learners.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following research questions.

1. Do learner blogging (LB) and portfolio-keeping (PK) applications make any intergroup differences in the autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of EFL learners?
2. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the blog group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
3. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the portfolio group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
4. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the control group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?

5. Are there any differences between the participants' perceptions towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications in terms of such variables as:
- a) gender
  - b) major field of study
  - c) their background in learning a foreign language

### **1.6. Limitations of the Study**

The present study investigates the correlation between the utilization of portfolios and learner blogs in a language classroom and learner autonomy, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the learners. However, the study entails some limitations.

The first one of these limitations is the limited number of participants in the study. Sixty pre intermediate-level students studying English at the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University took part in the study. The sample may not represent the whole population. Therefore, this makes it hard to generalize the results in different groups in other language levels or educational settings. A larger number of participants may give a more reliable result.

Apart from this, another limitation is the time allotted for the blog and portfolio use. This study was conducted for a definite process (ten weeks). The results of this process may not be sufficient enough to reflect the general tendencies of students for longer periods of time. In addition, the participants who kept learner blogs for ten weeks had no idea what the blog was or how to use it before the study, so this was a new experience for them. It took them some time to get used to using blogs. Therefore, process should be observed for a longer period of time in order to get more reliable results.

Another limitation of the study could be the personal endeavours of the participants while learning English. Learners' efforts to learn English were assumed to be similar. However, the students in each group could have different levels of efforts; therefore this may have affected the results. It was thought that learners' autonomy levels, self-assessment levels and language achievement scores of the students would be affected by only the studies carried out during the implementation process. However, they might be interested in other activities that could have contributed to their autonomy levels, self-

assessment levels and language achievement scores. A more controlled study could give more reliable results.

The final limitation of the study is the mixed demographic features of the students in the classrooms. Since the students in each group were of different genders, language learning backgrounds, and major field of study, it is difficult to make generalizations. In order to obtain more reliable results, another study could be conducted with a larger number of students with similar features in each group.

### **1.7. Assumptions of the Study**

This section presents the main assumptions of the study. The assumptions made are as follows:

1. It is assumed that the number of the participants could represent all the students that study at preparatory class at universities in Turkey.
2. The participants gave sincere answers to the questions both in the questionnaires and in the interview.
3. The students whose autonomy level mean values were higher on the questionnaire were assumed to be more autonomous.
4. The students whose self-assessment level mean values were higher on the questionnaire were assumed to assess their language skills higher and see their language skills at a better level.
5. The students whose exam score mean values were higher were assumed to be more successful language learners.
6. It is assumed that the students used their portfolios or blogs regularly and actively.

## **2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study, the theoretical explanations related to the research problem, and the literature related to different concepts relevant to the research questions. The chapter starts with a brief definition and also description of learner autonomy in English language teaching (ELT). Second, the concept of autonomy is handled within the framework of dominant philosophies of learning. Next, the chapter continues with the review of language learning strategies and their relationship with autonomy. After that, the chapter presents some practical ways to foster autonomy in language classes. Then, the characteristics of autonomous learners and the roles of teachers and learners in an autonomous class atmosphere are displayed. The following section presents the relationship between autonomy and motivation. Later, the chapter handles with the issue of self-assessment and its relation to autonomy, and emphasizes the importance of Common European Framework for the assessment of learning process. The chapter also reviews the relation between English proficiency of learners and autonomy. In the subsequent section, portfolios and blogs are mentioned briefly and their relation to learner autonomy is presented. Finally, the present chapter also refers to the previous research studies conducted abroad and in Turkey on learner autonomy, use of portfolios and use of blogs in language classrooms.

### **2.2. Theoretical Background**

#### **2.2.1. Description of Learner Autonomy**

The concept of autonomy has become part of the mainstream of research and practice within the field of language education for the last three decades. However, the term is difficult to define properly. Although many researchers accepted the importance of autonomy in language teaching and learning context (Cotterall and Crabbe, 1999; Dickinson, 1987; Wenden, 1991), the definition of autonomy differs for many researchers. Researchers differ in their definition because they have different opinions whether autonomy is a capacity or behaviour; whether it is seen as learner responsibility or learner control (Little, 2004). However, one of the mostly accepted definitions of autonomy is that of Holec (1981, p.3) who defines it as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” in

terms of “determining the objectives, defining the contents and progresses; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition (rhythm, time, place, etc.), evaluating what has been acquired”. This definition clearly shows that autonomy gives learners the control over their learning in many aspects. Learners that can determine their objectives, define their progress, select the appropriate methods or techniques for themselves, monitor their language acquisition and evaluate the results are called autonomous. Therefore, the first step of becoming autonomous is to get more conscious of the language learning process.

Another definition of ‘autonomy’ is by Schwienhorst (2008) who describes autonomy as a pedagogical concept and sees this concept both as a capacity of the learner and a goal that teachers and learners should always work towards. According to him, learner autonomy involves not only learners’ giving their own decisions, but also undertaking the responsibility for their learning. It can be inferred from this definition that everybody has a capacity of being autonomous; however, they should make an effort to become more autonomous. Here the responsibility is not only learners’, but it also belongs to teachers, who should help learners become autonomous individuals.

Benson (2001, p.50) comes up with a similar definition of autonomy by stating that autonomy is “the capacity to take charge of one’s own learning”. According to Benson (2001), autonomy involves control over three major levels of the teaching and learning process which are learning management, cognitive processing and the content of learning. Benson (2001) also believes that autonomy is closely related with self-directed learning which he describes as a kind of learning where learners determine the objectives, monitor the progress and evaluate their learning themselves. With this view, Benson’s ideas are in line with Holec’s (1981). To be able to carry out self-directed learning, learners should be trained on the necessary skills related to self-management, self-monitoring and self-assessment (Benson, 2001), which entails the existence of a teacher. It can be stated that autonomous learners are the ones who can manage their own learning, have a capacity for reflection, and evaluate their outcome. In autonomous learning, the teacher can guide students or create the atmosphere suitable for learner autonomy although there is no teacher guidance in self-directed learning. Therefore, these two concepts are closer in terms of their goal, which is to make learners more independent and take responsibility of their learning, but different in the way it is achieved. Benson (2001) states self-directed

learning leads to autonomy. However, Holec (1980) has not got the same idea with Benson (2001) at this point, as Holec (1980) believes it is better for learners if they train themselves with or without teacher guidance. According to Holec (1980);

“The basic methodology for learner training should be that of discovery; the learner should discover, with or without the help of other learners or teachers, the knowledge and the techniques which he needs as he tries to find the answers to the problems with which he is faced. By proceeding largely by trial and error he trains himself progressively.”(p.42).

Dickinson (1987) describes autonomy as a situation in which the learners are totally responsible for all the decisions about their learning and the implementation of those decisions. Similarly, Wenden (1991) maintains that autonomous learners are willing to take responsibility for their learning and aware of the importance of their roles in the learning process. Another definition of autonomy is by Little (1991, p.3) who states that “autonomy is a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action”. From these definitions, it can be inferred that it is learners’ responsibility to decide what to learn and how to learn, to reflect on their learning and to take the necessary action after reflection. All these definitions show that autonomy is a concept which is very elaborate in definition and which highlights the importance of learner role in the learning process.

When the definitions of autonomy in the literature are reviewed, it can easily be seen that different terms can be used to refer to the same thing and the same term can be used to mean different things. This means that sometimes researchers used different terms to describe autonomy, but sometimes they used the term autonomy for different purposes. At this point some confusion arises. It can be stated that while using the term ‘autonomy’ in the literature, there are some misunderstandings regarding its definition. Benson (1997, p.1-2) claim that the word ‘autonomy’ is used at least in five different ways in language education:

1. for situations in which learners study entirely on their own;
2. for a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
3. for an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education;
4. for the exercise of learners’ responsibility for their own learning;
5. for the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

Little (1991) also presents the common misunderstandings about autonomy. According to Little (1991; p.81);

1. Autonomy is not a synonym for self-instruction; in other words, autonomy is not limited to learning without a teacher.
2. In the classroom context, autonomy does not entail giving up responsibility on the part of teacher; it is not a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best they can.
3. Autonomy is not something that teachers do to learners; that is, it is not another teaching method.
4. Autonomy is not a single, easily described behaviour.
5. Autonomy is not a steady state achieved by learners once.

In contrast to these misunderstandings, autonomy proposes that learners can get help from their teachers in order to become autonomous. Autonomy does not mean that students should do everything on the way to autonomy on their own, which means that teachers should also fulfil their responsibilities. However, this does not mean that teachers will make learners autonomous. Autonomy is not something that learners can have ready-made; they should work for it however long it takes. While learners are trying to be autonomous, teachers can provide learners with necessary opportunities to enhance their autonomy, but in the end it is the learner who will be autonomous.

It is obvious that there is a confusion regarding the concept of autonomy which is used for different meanings. However, as it is seen, the term “autonomy” entails many concepts in its definitions such as capacity, self-direction, self-management, responsibility, awareness, independence, decision-making, self-reflection, self-evaluation etc. The common point in all these concepts is that they are essential for learners, because each of these concepts is a must to become autonomous.

### **2.2.2. Place of Learner Autonomy in Education and ELT Settings**

Many researchers stress the importance of autonomy for a successful language learning (Little, 2001; Wenden, 1991). Thus, autonomy has been in the field of inquiry of language learning for over the past thirty years (Benson, 2001; Little, 2001; Littlewood, 1996). This growing interest in autonomy can also be seen in the objectives of education in general in different countries. The purposes of education in general include preparing learners for future life by providing them with the necessary skills to continue their learning after they graduate from school. Many national curricula in Europe accept learner autonomy as an objective (Aoki, 1999). It can be claimed that learner autonomy has been an ‘ultimate goal of education’ for a long time (Benson, 2001). This reveals that the primary aim of education is not only to teach learners what they have in their curricula, but also to teach them how to seek for the knowledge they need. Candy (1991, p.271) argues



that learning is not simply a matter of memorisation; “it is a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or even imposing meaning on) events” (cited in Thanasoulas, 2000). As teachers cannot help learners all their lives, learners should find a way to meet their needs. Learners should understand that learning is a lifelong process and they should have the necessary skills to direct their learning. They should learn how to initiate and organize their learning. Thus, it is necessary for learners to be trained on how to learn on their own in order to become efficient both in the language they learn and life in general. If they become autonomous learners in general, they will be self-directing individuals instead of being spoon-fed.

When we look at the field of language teaching and learning, it can be clearly seen that learning a language thoroughly is a very long process which necessitates individual endeavours outside classroom context. Learning a language entails not only learning the vocabulary and grammar of that language but also learning all the skills of the target language. Classroom hours are usually not enough to teach a person all parts of a language. Moreover, due to the large populations at schools, teaching cannot always fulfil every student’s needs or fit their learning styles. Learners need to go on their learning outside the classroom context in a way that will satisfy them. Moreover, no matter how learners are taught a language, the important thing is what they do to learn a language both inside and outside the classroom. Dickinson (1987, p.9) contends that learning something is always a “personal, individual act” and states “No-one can learn the meaning of a word for me, though, of course, others can help me towards that end.” Moreover, language learners should monitor their progress in learning process, so that they can detect their weaknesses and strengths and assess their performance. This will motivate them more to learn the language, because they can set new goals depending on the results of monitoring, which means the active involvement on the part of the learner. It can be claimed that the students' involvement and autonomy can increase their motivation to learn the language (Brown and Hudson, 1998).

Of course, teachers can help learners, that is they can direct learners, but they cannot make learners learn something if learners do not undertake their own responsibilities. Moreover, all learners are not the same in classroom context which means that there are learner differences between learners in a class that create the differences in their success levels in language learning. Some learners may also need to carry on their

study outside classroom to be able to succeed in learning the language. Thus, it is essential that learners be aware of their responsibilities and abilities, and they know how to continue their learning beyond the walls of the classroom.

### **2.3. Dominant Philosophies of Learning and Autonomy**

In the field of education, there have always been dominant philosophies underlying the classroom practices. Teachers follow a certain approach that shapes their teaching and apply the methodologies or techniques of that specific approach in their teaching. This is also observed in the field of language teaching. In the early 1960s, behaviourism was very influential in language classes. Behaviourism explains that learning occurs as a result of behavioural responses to physical stimuli. Reinforcement, practice and external motivation play a central role in learning. Learners are seen passive agents who can be affected via reinforcement and external motivation (Skinner, 1953) and the important thing is the outcome of the process which is observed as a change in behaviours. Many teachers apply the rules of behaviourism in their classes and teach with methodologies in accordance with these rules. However, different approaches to teaching occurred in time and teachers started to direct their teaching depending on these approaches. Humanism, constructivism, cognitivism, communicative approach, learner-centred approach, and experience-based view of language learning are popular approaches that emerged as a reaction to behaviourism within the field of psychology. The concept of learner autonomy emerged from the notions of the approaches that involved learners in the learning process actively. In the literature, a number of approaches and theories have been identified to be in harmony with autonomy in language teaching.

#### **2.3.1. Humanism**

Humanism is one of the approaches that emerged as a reaction to behaviourism. Its founders are mainly Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers. In this theory, there is a great emphasis on the learner and learning is believed to take place in a learner-centred classroom atmosphere. The central idea underlying humanism is that everybody has a potential for learning and they need to fulfil their potential and self-actualize themselves. In order to achieve this, learners should be provided with opportunities. In a humanistic classroom, teachers act as a facilitator in the learning process. In a supportive and

collaborative classroom atmosphere, learners are involved in the learning process actively and take the responsibility of their learning, which are clear signs of autonomy.

### **2.3.2. Constructivism**

Constructivism is a psychological theory of knowledge which emerged as a reaction to behaviourism. It has its roots from the studies of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner, Howard Gardner and Nelson Goodman and the others. Constructivism suggests that knowledge is in our minds and learning is constructed through experiences. It is stated that knowledge is constructed rather than taught by someone. Therefore, the ultimate goal of education is not the improvement of behaviours or skills, but cognitive development and deep understanding. We use our prior knowledge and experiences to build new knowledge, therefore everyone processes information differently. According to Chun and Plass (2000), “Constructivist approaches to learning advocate allowing learners not only to interact directly with information to be learned, but also to add their own information and construct their own relationships” (p.160). Learning is seen as a process in which learners are cognitively involved in seeking answers of their questions, making generalizations, and testing the theories they have developed. Language learning does not mean memorizing sets of rules or structures; instead each learner comes to classroom with their own world knowledge and experiences to use while learning a new language. Candy (1991, p.271) puts forward the idea that “learning is a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or even imposing meaning on) events”. Therefore, it can be stated that learners’ metacognitive strategies, ideas and experiences are crucial in the constructivist view. When students take a principal role in planning and determining the content of the course, they contribute to their language learning actively rather than just receive the knowledge passively. Learning environment should be rich in authentic activities for learners to be able to interpret their environment and construct their own meanings. As learners are creating new knowledge based on their own schemata, they are active agents of learning process rather than passive ones. Therefore, learning is more important than teaching in the constructivist view.

### **2.3.3. Social Construct Theory**

Social constructivism is based on Vygotsky’s theory, which gives importance to social interaction, language and culture in the process of learning. Social interaction and

collaboration are seen essential in the process of cognitive development preceding learning. Vygotsky believes learning cannot be isolated from social context. Therefore, cultural factors also affect learners and learning, which means that teachers should value the diversity in class. In social constructivism ideas are constructed through interacting with the teacher and other students. According to Vygotskian theory, building a classroom atmosphere that encourages interaction leads to effective classrooms. Vygotsky (1962) believes learning is developmental and constructive. One of the main concepts of Vygotsky's theory is the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which means children learn better when they get help from the others (Vygotsky, 1962). Vygotsky (1962) puts forward that children have 'action knowledge' and 'potential knowledge', and they can deal individually with some tasks with their action knowledge, but there are also some tasks that they can only complete with assistance. As a result, it can be stated that their thinking abilities develop through interaction with adults. Scaffolding which is an assisted learning process supports the ZPD as well. While students are performing a task, they will perform better with assistance or guidance. In addition, it is believed that children firstly learn anything on social level, and then on individual level. Therefore, it can be stated that, collaboration among students are of great significance for language classrooms. With the help of social support, learners can become independent individuals after some time. As a result, they can turn into autonomous individuals who can deal with problems by themselves and lead their learning process more consciously and competently.

#### **2.3.4. Personal Construct Theory**

After the 1950s, as a reaction to behaviourist approaches, psychology started to focus more on the individual. Many psychologists believed that individuals were crucial for their own development. George Kelly was one of these psychologists and he developed his theory of Personal Construct emphasizing personal experiences. According to Personal Construct Theory (PCT), people have their own constructions of reality by testing hypothesis in order to understand the world. In this view, Kelly views man as a 'scientist'. Since everyone's experiences are unique, individuals' interpretations of the world around them are also unique. They always revise their knowledge and reconstruct what they already know. Therefore, it is the learners who can actually develop themselves. Personal construct helps learners to be more active in their learning by taking control over learning (Little, 2001). Teachers can help learners to be more aware of what they already know. At

this point, Benson (2001) puts forward the idea that learners should be guided to be more aware of their existing personal construct system and to control their own learning process. It can be stated that the more learners recognize their own learning system, the more they would be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. As a result, they can become lifetime autonomous learners.

### **2.3.5. Critical Theory**

Critical Theory, first introduced by Max Horkeimer in one of his essays in 1937, puts emphasis not on understanding and explaining the society but on critiquing and changing it. It is basically associated with understanding the organization of everyday life. The critical theory involves all the major social sciences like economics, history, geography, sociology, psychology, political science and anthropology, which aim to improve the society's understanding of how the world functions by criticizing the values and norms of the society. The core of the critical theory lies beneath the word 'critique'. People should criticize everything around them instead of accepting everything without questioning. When it is examined in relation to learning, critical theory suggests that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered or learned, which is in line with Constructivism. According to this approach, learning is seen as a process of interaction with social context, including the possibility of political action and social change (Thanasoulas, 2000). As can be inferred from its name, it has a critical viewpoint for learning, which has a different perspective from the traditional way of learning. Learners are expected to reflect on the things that are happening around them. As learners become more aware of their social context, they get more autonomous by constructing meaning of the world around them.

## **2.4. Language Learning Strategies and Autonomy**

In the past few decades, second and foreign language teaching research has been focusing more and more on the concept of learning strategies. It is assumed that using strategies can make learners better learners. However, what do learning strategies mean? Oxford (1990, p.8) defines learning strategies as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations." Similarly, Rubin (1987) defines strategies as "strategies which contribute to the development of the language system which the learner constructs

and affects learning directly” (p.22). These definitions demonstrate that learners should be active agents in their own learning. Moreover, it can be stated that learners who employ strategies for learning can apply these strategies on different occasions, which will facilitate their learning process. It can be suggested that employing learning strategies can help learners be more self-directed and have more self-confidence. Another definition of learning strategies is by O’Malley and Chamot (1990, p.1) who define learning strategies as “special thoughts or behaviours that individuals use to comprehend, learn, or retain new information”. Similarly, Wenden (1991) claims that learning strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use while learning a new language and they help learners to understand the nature of a language and language learning process. In another definition learning strategies are defined as “intentional behaviour or thoughts used by learners during learning so as to better help them understand, learn, or remember new information” (Richards, Platt, and Platt, 1992, p.209).

The thing all these definitions share is that learning strategies facilitate learning process and provide learners with necessary skills to think about how they learn and to take control over their learning. Learners who deploy learning strategies have knowledge about language learning processes, planning learning stages, content and methods, and self-evaluate their learning experiences. It is observed that autonomy is closely linked to learning strategies. According to Rubin (1975) good language learners are the ones who are equipped with learning strategies. Therefore, learners should be trained on strategy use and become more independent, more responsible and eventually more autonomous. Therefore, it can be stated that direct guidance in language learning strategies and techniques may be useful for the promotion of learner autonomy. Learners may become aware of their weaknesses and strengths by means of strategy training (Cohen, 1998). It is indicated that learners employing learning strategies could make decisions on how to deal with a task, monitor and self-evaluate their language learning performance.

The classification of learning strategies differs among researchers. A considerable number of linguists have attempted to categorize the learning strategies. Some of the most prominent ones are demonstrated as in the following.

Oxford (1990) classifies learning strategies as direct and indirect learning strategies. Direct strategies -memory, compensation and cognitive- require mental processing of a language, whereas indirect strategies “support and manage language

learning without -in many instances- directly involving the target language” (Oxford, 1990, p.135). Thus, indirect strategies -metacognitive, affective and social- entail learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, searching for opportunities, controlling anxiety level, maximizing cooperation and empathy (Oxford, 1990). Later, the researcher suggests the taxonomy of strategies which include six language learning strategies which are: *Metacognitive Strategies, Social Strategies, Affective Strategies, Memory Strategies, Cognitive Strategies* and *Compensation Strategies*. Another categorization of learning strategies, sharing common features with Oxford (1990)’s taxonomy, has been suggested by O’Malley and Chamot (1990) who classify them as cognitive, metacognitive, and social and affective strategies. Therefore, strategies can be mentioned under three headings, which are cognitive, metacognitive, and social and affective strategies.

#### **2.4.1. Cognitive Strategies**

Cognitive strategies are strategies that enable learners to understand the new language in different ways, e.g., through reasoning, analysis, note-taking and synthesizing (Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford, 2003). They are directly related to subject matter content such as applying a grammar rule, and using formulas of classifying vocabulary. Thus, it can be stated that cognitive strategies are useful in helping learners. Examples of cognitive strategies include the recognizing, retention, storage, repetition, retrieval of words, phrases and other elements of the target language. Common cognitive activities that can be implemented in class include repetition, translation, imagery, grouping, note-taking, guessing meaning from context, making inferences, scanning or summarizing.

#### **2.4.2. Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies for learning refer to general ways of managing learning. These strategies include behaviours such as planning, monitoring and evaluating success in learning process. Students who employ metacognitive strategies can think about how they learn, organize, manage, and monitor their learning and evaluate their success in learning. Metacognition refers to the awareness, knowledge, and control of cognition. Metacognitive strategies utilize the knowledge of cognitive progression to regulate learning process (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990). Oxford (1990) defines metacognitive strategies as “the actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process.” (p.136). The difference between metacognitive and

cognitive strategies is that cognitive strategies are strategies that refer to specific tasks or problems like understanding a text or practicing some grammatical patterns. However, metacognitive strategies are the ones involving reflection on how tasks can be carried out or how they have been carried out. It can be stated that learners make use of cognitive skills while performing a task, however they use metacognitive skills to understand how the task has been performed (Garner, 1987). According to O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Kupper, and Russo (1985a), metacognitive strategies involve directed attention, selective attention, self-monitoring, self-evaluation and self-reinforcement. According to many researchers (Wenden, 1991; Victori and Lockhart, 1995; Reinders, 2000), the employment of metacognitive strategies helps learners become more active agents of their learning and become more autonomous by enabling them to take control over their learning. The fact that learners process information by planning for their learning, monitoring their learning process and finally evaluating their product leads them to autonomy. If learners are taught metacognitive strategies, they can see learning as a process in which they act actively and over which they have control. In order to foster autonomy, it is a must for students to have a high metacognitive awareness. Activities such as think-pair-share, problem-solving activities, keeping journal, using checklists in class will help enhance learners' metacognition.

### **2.4.3. Social and Affective Strategies**

Social strategies are described as the ways in which learners cooperate with others and control themselves in order to boost their learning (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Social strategies lead learners to interact with each other, teacher or native speakers by asking questions or by cooperation. The word "affective" is related with emotions or feelings. When learning a language, one cannot ignore emotions, attitudes or motivation. Affective strategies include the management of emotions, attitudes and motivation. Socio-affective strategies can be employed in classrooms in order to create a more positive, comfortable and fun atmosphere. Socio-affective strategies employed can be cooperation and question for clarification. The activities that could be practiced within the framework of socio-affective strategies include role plays, group discussions, and pair and group works.



## 2.5. Fostering Autonomy in Learners

According to Dörnyei (2001), there are two crucial ingredients of autonomy-supportive teaching practices. These include learner involvement in organizing the learning process and a change in the teacher's role. By a change in teacher's role, Dörnyei (2001) means leaving traditional teaching styles and adopting a facilitating style. To be able to leave traditional teaching styles, teachers need to put the learners in the centre of classroom practices. In order to involve learners in the learning process, Dörnyei (2001) proposes a number of ways. The first one is giving learners choices about activities, teaching materials, topics, assignments, due dates, the pace of their learning, the arrangement of the furniture and the peers they want to work with. The main point in allowing learners to choose is to make them feel in control. If they feel that they are in control, they will see themselves responsible for their learning. According to Dörnyei (2001), the second way to involve learners in learning process is to give learners positions of genuine authority, which means making them the responsible person of some of the functions in class. Dörnyei (2001) suggests that encouraging student contributions and peer teaching which could take place as pair or group works is also another important way to involve learners. The other two ways include assigning learners with project works which help learners to organize everything themselves and helping learners self-assess their learning process. It is believed that self-assessment raises learners' awareness about their strengths and weaknesses. Another essential point about teachers is that they should also possess some degree of autonomy in order to help their learners become autonomous. It is claimed that learner autonomy is closely associated with teacher autonomy. This means that teachers should be made aware of the importance of autonomy in their training so that they can create a classroom atmosphere encouraging autonomy in the future as well. Little (2007) explains this deeply by stating "Teachers cannot be expected to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they do not themselves know what it is to be an autonomous learner." (p.27).

Dickinson (1987) argues that autonomous learners are responsible for all the decisions in their learning and the implementation of these decisions. However, Dickinson (1987) also states a much wider meaning of autonomy which is not limited to individuals by claiming that education systems of countries want to make their individuals independent learners who are able to think for themselves. For this aim, fostering

autonomy is a vital goal of education. Dickinson (1987, p.27) proposes a number of ways to foster learners' autonomy which include "allowing individuals to take decisions, undertaking responsibility for their own learning through co-operation with others in group works, exchanging ideas and opinions with others and discovering about authority figures and autonomous individuals through reading". Dickinson (1987) describes learner responsibilities as analyzing their own needs, specifying the objectives, selecting the processes and assessing their progress. Moreover, it is also stated that giving learners the opportunities to practice the language through pair or group works helps learners become autonomous.

According to Oxford (2008), learner autonomy can be reflected and promoted through the use of learning strategies. Oxford (2008, p.52) explain this by claiming that the use of strategies involves "taking active, timely, coordinated responsibility for learning" and believes that learners are not born knowing all the strategies they need. Thus, in order to help learners become autonomous, learners should be trained on strategies. Harmer (2007) also states that in order to foster autonomy in learners it is important to present them a variety of strategies and get them to select a strategy so that they can take the responsibility for their learning. Similarly, Dickinson (1987) also expresses the importance of strategies in fostering learner autonomy stating that learners should learn how to learn in order to become autonomous. Language is too complex for students to completely learn all they need in class, so not everything can be taught in class (Cotteral, 1995). This illustrates the importance of learning how to learn, being independent learners and taking the responsibility for their own learning. Learning how to learn means that learners know about their learning process and themselves as a learner; they plan their learning, discover and then use appropriate strategies to achieve the goals that have been set by them in the plan (Dickinson, 1987). This suggests that learners should discover the most appropriate strategies for themselves through trying out the kinds of activities that the teacher advises and through trying out strategies from other learning experiences. Harmer (2007) indicates that students need to be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies so that they could be autonomous learners. At this point, Rogers (1969, p.104) emphasizes the importance of learning how to learn by stating:

"The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change; the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security".

Harmer (2007) believes that teachers should help students think about how they learn and how this learning can be made more effective. Here, the emphasis is on the importance of learner training. One way to get the learners to think about how they learn is the checklist of “can do” statements in European Language Portfolio (ELP) prepared based on the Common European Framework of References (CEFR). By using the checklist, students have an opportunity to reflect on their learning. According to Harmer (2007) another way to foster autonomy is to get students to take more active role by giving them a degree of agency. They should try to use the language to express what they want to say. Another effective way proposed by Harmer (2007) is to encourage students to write journals which allow students to express their feelings more freely and provide opportunity for them to think about both how they are learning and what they are learning.

With the popularity of autonomy in the context of language learning, the term ‘self-access centre’ has also started to become popular. This is a learning centre for learners who can study on their own or in pairs or groups. This centre has an essential role in promoting learners’ autonomy. It has a range of materials from grammar reference, workbooks to audio and video excerpts. There are a lot of books, worksheets, CDs, DVDs, computers, dictionaries, reading texts, listening materials and so on in a self-access centre. Therefore, self-access centres could also be used as a way to promote learner autonomy.

Brajcich (2000) also proposed a number of practical ways to promote learner autonomy which include:

1. Ensuring student independence and collaboration
2. Becoming aware of learning preferences through keeping a diary
3. Identifying teacher/student roles together at the beginning
4. Being patient and giving students time
5. Assigning projects outside the class
6. Giving students non-lesson classroom tasks and getting students to design materials
7. Informing students on school’s resource centres
8. Emphasizing the importance of peer-editing and follow-up questions
9. Encouraging students to use English in class and creating an environment for them to communicate comfortably
10. Focusing on fluency, not accuracy
11. Allowing learners to use reference books in class

## 2.6. Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

It has been widely accepted that autonomous learners generally have the characteristics of good language learners. The fact that autonomous learners and good language learners share common characteristics reveals the importance of promoting autonomy in language classrooms. Researchers suggest different characteristics for autonomous learners. From the earlier definitions of autonomy stated, we can conclude some key characteristics of autonomous learners. From Holec's (1981) definition, it can be claimed that an autonomous learner is someone who can take the responsibility for his/her learning, set their learning objectives, define the contents and progresses, select appropriate techniques, strategies, resources and materials to learn the language, monitor and assess their learning process.

Another characteristic of an autonomous learner is to be an independent learner, which means that autonomous learners are self-directed learners. Learners should not depend on their teachers for everything they learn. Otherwise, learners get used to spoon-feeding and expect everything from the teacher, causing them to become totally teacher-dependent. However, autonomous learners are independent learners, giving their decisions themselves, continuing their language development all the time and asking for help only when they need.

Another important characteristic of an autonomous learner is to be motivated. If a learner is highly motivated to learn a language, they will take the responsibilities for learning the language willingly. At this point, intrinsic motivation could be a more effective step towards being autonomous. Learners should not wait for external motivation to learn something; in contrast, they should be intrinsically motivated to learn. By this way, they can become autonomous. In short, it can be expressed that autonomous learners have high motivation to learn (Ushioda, 1996).

One of the most agreed characteristics of autonomous learners is that autonomous learners can employ appropriate learning strategies consciously. Within the process of developing autonomy, learners develop effective learning strategies. According to Ellis (2008), good language learners have a range of strategies they use, and they select which strategies to use in accordance with their long-term goals for learning a language and for a particular task.

Another researcher discussing the characteristics of autonomous learners is Chan (2001). As a result of a questionnaire survey on the perceptions of autonomous learners, Chan (2001) has identified the qualities of autonomous learners as follows:

Autonomous learners:

- have high motivation
- are determined
- have curiosity
- have good organization skills
- work hard
- are interested in learning about the language
- have enthusiasm
- are actively involved in their learning process
- take steps for their own learning
- do not miss any opportunities to improve themselves
- are flexible

Another researcher investigating the characteristics of autonomous learners is Omaggio (1978, cited in Wenden, 1991) who has found seven characteristics of successful language learners. According to Omaggio (1978, cited in Wenden, 1991, p.41-42), autonomous learners:

- are aware of their learning styles and preferences
- are actively involved in the learning process
- do not hesitate to take risks while learning the language
- are good at using clues and making inferences
- pay attention to both form and content
- have attempts to create their own system of the target language and to think in the target language
- are tolerant to the target language.

Another researcher who describes autonomous learners is Candy (1991), who has identified more than 100 characteristics of autonomous learners. However, these are generally gathered under 13 headings. According to Candy (1991), autonomous learners

have discipline, take responsibility, have research skills, think logically and analytically, monitor their learning process, have their assessment criteria, and they do not depend on others. In addition, autonomous learners are aware of themselves, curious, open-minded, motivated, flexible, determined, creative, self-confident and good at interpersonal relations.

Considering all the characteristics identified, it could be asserted that many researchers state the characteristics of autonomous learners in their own ways. However, while uttering the characteristics of autonomous learners, their statements are close to each other most of the time. The common characteristics of autonomous learners can be summarized as follows:

- Being independent from the teacher
- Taking active role in their learning
- Being flexible, motivated, organized and determined
- Being aware of their learning by monitoring the learning process
- Self-assessing their learning

## **2.7. Roles of Teachers and Learners in Autonomous Learning**

For several decades, with the introduction of autonomy in language classes, while the classroom atmosphere has witnessed a great change, the rapport between teachers and learners has also experienced a huge shift. There is a great difference in the roles of teachers and learners between traditional classroom and learner-centred classroom. Teacher and learner roles in traditional classroom have witnessed a radical change in terms of the distribution of power and authority (Benson, 2001; Baylan, 2007).

### **2.7.1. Roles of Teachers**

In traditional classroom, teacher is the dominant figure in class, controls the class strictly and is assumed to teach the subject. Teachers generally tend to see students as empty vessels to be filled with information coming from the teacher and the course book in a traditional classroom (Dörnyei, 2001). However, in learner-centred classroom where the learner is the centre of learning and the aim is to promote learner autonomy, teacher does not control the class but shares the control with the learners. For language teachers,

learners are becoming the source of information while designing activities to be used in class and the centre of curriculum design in a learner-centred classroom (Tarone and Yule, 1989; Campbell and Kryszewska, 1992; Nunan, 1993).

There are new roles for the teacher in a learner-centred class where the teacher is responsible for enhancing learner autonomy. One of the roles of the teacher in non-traditional classroom is being a facilitator of students' learning. This means teachers help learners discover or create their own meanings, and find their own way while learning a language.

Autonomous learning emphasizes the independence of learners, but it does not mean learning without a teacher. Reinders (2000) supports this view by stating that autonomous learning does not necessarily mean learning alone or without a teacher and adds that learners should develop their autonomous skills, however as learners become more autonomous, teachers' roles in the learning process do not decrease but change. Thanasoulas (2000) agrees with Reinders (2000) and claims that as learner autonomy increases in a class, teachers do not become 'redundant'. The point here is that teachers are responsible for teaching learners how to learn. The first thing they can do to help learners become autonomous learners is to make them aware of the strategies which they can select and adapt to their needs. Teachers should create 'learning-centred classrooms,' not just 'learner-centred classrooms'. This means that teachers should provide all the information to students that they may need in order to raise their awareness about their learning styles and strategies. It can be understood that the teacher is responsible for making students aware of their learning styles and strategies, which is a significant step for promoting learner autonomy. They really have a crucial role in providing strategy training for learners, because if learners are aware of the strategies they can use when they need, they will not totally depend on the teacher for every difficulty they experience but take the responsibility for them.

Another significant role of the teachers of autonomous learners is to be active participants of the learning process. Teachers also have the roles of monitoring the learners to be able to determine their strengths and weaknesses in the learning process and then guide them for better learning. Teachers are not only transmitters of information, but they also participate in the learning process. Moreover, Little (1991) claims that learner autonomy requires teachers to act as observers, facilitators, counsellors, consultants,

analysts, catalysts, and discussants in order to make the learning process stimulating and interesting in various ways.

Another key point in an autonomous class is the rapport between the teacher and the students. Teacher should establish a friendly, relaxing atmosphere for students. Teachers should encourage learners, help them develop self-confidence, motivate them by sharing the control with the learners and providing them choice in class. Brown (2001) and Dörnyei (2001) state that teachers should not control the learners too much to make them autonomous learners; instead they should respect learners and let them get involved in every part of their learning.

### **2.7.2. Roles of Learners**

As education in language classrooms has started to focus more on learners, learners' roles in traditional classroom have also started to change. In traditional classrooms, learners are heavily dependent on their teachers for their learning process. They think that it is the teacher who is responsible for everything or who is in control of their learning. However, in non-traditional classroom, learners are aware that they have the biggest responsibility for learning a language and they are not passive agents. Learners are expected to contribute to their learning in an autonomous classroom. Autonomous learners should be aware of what is going on in their class (Dickinson, 1993). Learners know that they need to plan, organize, monitor their progress and assess their own learning process. This means autonomous learners should take the responsibility for their own learning.

## **2.8. The Relationship between Motivation and Autonomy**

Learner autonomy has been a popular issue among researchers in the field of language teaching and learning. Therefore, researchers aim to find out what makes learners autonomous. At this point, motivation is one of the key issues that have been reported to have a possible relation with autonomy. Dörnyei (1998) argues that motivation and learner autonomy go hand in hand. In the field of education, motivation has received a great attention. Although researchers and educators accept the importance of motivation in educational contexts, its exact meaning is vague among experts as it is seen a very complex issue. According to Dörnyei (2001), motivation is an abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people think and behave as they do. For Dörnyei



(2001), a motivated student is someone who is a keen, committed and enthusiastic learner, who has good reasons for learning, who studies willingly and who perseveres to succeed in learning. From this definition, it can be claimed that in order to succeed in learning, students need motivation. According to Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process." (p.203). In addition, Brown (1987, p.114) defines motivation as "an inner drive, impulse, emotion, or desire that moves one to a particular action". According to Gardner and MacIntyre (1993), motivation is comprised of three components: "desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction, and satisfaction with the task" (p.2). Shortly, we can state that motivation is an inner motive to do and sustain an action. For example, if learners are motivated to learn a language, they will study willingly, without any negative emotion.

Most scholars seem to agree that motivation determines how much effort learners put into foreign language learning. This means that the more motivated learners are, the more effort they put into language learning. Therefore, it has been a very significant predictor of failure or success in any learning situation. Since many scholars suggest autonomous learners are more successful language learners, there have been numerous studies investigating the relationship between learner autonomy and motivation. However, whether autonomy increases motivation or motivation leads to autonomy are controversial issues among researchers. Dickinson (1995) claims that motivation is the result of taking responsibility for learning outcomes, which indicates autonomy by stating:

Learning success and enhanced motivation is conditional on learners taking responsibility for their own learning, being able to control their own learning and perceiving that their learning successes or failures are to be attributed to their own efforts and strategies rather than to factors outside their control, each of these conditions is a characteristics of learner autonomy (p.174).

Some other researchers (Littlewood, 1996; Spratt, Humphreys, and Chan, 2002) puts forward that motivation precedes autonomy. Motivation is claimed to influence learners' readiness for autonomous learning. If learners are highly motivated, they can take the responsibility for their learning instead of expecting everything from someone else. However, all learners are not motivated at the same degrees or in the same way. Some learners are interested in outside rewards to continue their learning whereas the others are only interested in the satisfaction they get from studying.

There are two types of motivation –intrinsic and extrinsic motivation- that cause people to decide what they do. Intrinsic motivation is defined as “motivation to engage in an activity because that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do” (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p.39). On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is described as “actions carried out to achieve some instrumental end such as earning a reward or avoiding a punishment” (Deci and Ryan, 1985, p.39). Learners with intrinsic motivation are internally interested in learning a foreign language, have a desire to succeed, enjoy learning the language, and have positive attitudes towards it. These kinds of learners are interested in the activity they do for its own sake. However, learners with extrinsic motivation generally value language learning for practical advantages or benefits it provides to the learner such as job opportunities, promotion, financial rewards or high marks. When intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is compared, intrinsic motivation has been found to be a more powerful predictor of success in learning situations than extrinsic motivation (Ellis, 2008). Thus, it is the intrinsic motivation which is thought to help learners become more autonomous. This means that, if learners are intrinsically motivated to learn a language for the sake of learning, they are ready to take the responsibility for their learning and continue their learning by themselves willingly, which is a powerful sign of autonomy in learners.

### **2.9. Autonomy and English Proficiency**

While learning a new language, the ultimate goal is to be proficient in the target language and most of the learners focus on the product rather than the process with this goal in mind. Studies have revealed that students’ language success is influenced by learner autonomy. It is clear that autonomous learners make better learners than non-autonomous learners. It is asserted that some degree of autonomy is a necessary precondition for successful language learning (Scharle and Szabo, 2000). In the field of second and foreign language teaching and learning, since the theory and practice of language teaching leapt to a new dimension, the importance of leading students to a more autonomous phase in their learning has emerged as one of its more outstanding themes. While learners are learning a language, it is not only the teacher’s responsibility to teach the language, but also the learner’s responsibility to learn the language. Learner autonomy entails learners’ having responsibility and getting involved in both the learning and assessment process. Learners know themselves better than teachers can. They know how they learn best, and what they lack or need, which means that success depends on not

others but themselves (Little, 2006). However, learners should be given opportunities to discover themselves. Benson (2010) stresses the importance of the school by expressing that schools should not only enable learners to reach a high level of proficiency in the target language, but also equip learners with the necessary attitudes and skills to continue to plan, organize and monitor their own learning after they finish school. Learners should use every opportunity to improve their learning, cooperate with other learners and use appropriate strategies in the learning process. When learners actively participate in the learning, success will follow their participation. It is stated in Yildirim (2008) having control over the learning process enhances learners' motivation; and as a result of being motivated, they become more successful. In short, learners who are actively and independently involved in their learning are highly motivated and learn effectively (Dickinson, 1995; Dörnyei, 2001; Little, 2006). Wenden (1991) summarizes seven characteristics of autonomous learners; however the characteristics also signal successful language learners. According to Wenden (1991) autonomous learners are involved in the learning task actively, aware of their learning styles and preferences, careful with both form and content, able to think in the target language actively, successful in making inferences and guessing, tolerant language learners and lastly are not afraid to take risks to communicate. When these characteristics are examined in detail, it is clearly seen that these are also the characteristics that successful language learners should have. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that successful language learners have potential to be autonomous language learners at the same time.

### **2.10. Autonomy and Self-Assessment**

Self-assessment is a term that has started to become more and more important with the change in language teaching methodologies. With the advent of communicative language teaching, traditional classrooms began to experience changes both in teaching and evaluation. In traditional, teacher centred classrooms, written exams or oral exams are the most common tools of assessment. It is the teacher who assesses students' success. However, in more learner-centred classrooms, alternative ways of assessment have appeared in the last two or three decades. Self-assessment is one of the alternative assessment ways through which learners can evaluate their success. During the self-assessment process students are involved in making judgments about their own work. They reflect on how they have performed the task, what has gone well or wrong while

performing the task and what they have learned. This process awakens learners' self-awareness and improves their self-assessment skills. In relation with recent theoretical approaches to language teaching/learning, self-assessment requires learners to develop their own ability to assess how much they have learned, and how much more they need in learning environments (Nunan, 1999; Benson, 2001; Egel, 2003). They continuously reflect on their learning process, which is a vital part of self-assessment. Reflection helps learners become more effective learners who are aware of their goals, strengths and weaknesses. If learners reflect on their learning, they will be more motivated to achieve their goals and more willing to take responsibility for their learning. Moreover, they will share the assessment responsibility with teachers, which will improve their self-confidence as well.

Many researchers draw attention to the benefits of self-assessment. Race (2001) suggests a number of benefits of self-assessment by stating that self-assessment deepens students' learning experiences, enables students to become familiar with the assessment culture in higher education, helps them become autonomous learners, and helps them develop skills related to lifelong learning. As learning is a lifelong activity, learners need self-assessment skills in order to go on learning all their life. Gardner (2000) adds that self-assessment provides learners with personalized feedback on the effectiveness of their learning strategies and specific learning methods. Dickinson (1993) believes monitoring and self-assessing their own learning are the final characteristics of autonomous learners. Cotterall (1995) supports Dickinson about the self-assessment skills of autonomous learners and states that learners who are autonomous monitor their language learning process, and also assess the efforts they make. According to Benson (2001) benefits of self-assessment can be listed as follows:

Self-assessment;

- helps learners to evaluate the effectiveness of their communication.
- makes learners more aware of their learning process and more stimulated to consider the course content and assessment.
- enhances their knowledge of possible goals in language learning and so learners achieve control over their learning and take part in the decision of classroom activities.
- expands assessment criteria to include areas that learners are competent in.

To conclude, self-assessment is a key concept in autonomy development. Dickinson (1987) argues that self-evaluation of a performance is an important skill for all language learners but of particular importance to autonomous language learners. Similarly, Holec (1981, p.3) states that self-assessment is an integral part of autonomy by suggesting “autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's learning”. As a result, self-assessment is a tool which supports learners who are on the way of becoming autonomous. Autonomous learners decide their learning content, the time of learning and the way to learn; but they also evaluate the result of their learning. Learners who are capable of self-assessment decide what they assess, when they assess it and how to assess it. Autonomous learners take responsibility for their learning and this responsibility includes monitoring their own progress and self-assessing it as well. In short, self-assessment, and autonomy are interrelated concepts and they influence each other in the learning process.

### **2.11. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)**

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides a common basis for language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, textbooks, and examinations across Europe. It demonstrates what language learners should learn and what kind of skills or knowledge they should have in order to sustain an effective communication (Council of Europe, 2001). It defines levels of proficiency and provides global descriptors for each level of proficiency enabling learners to evaluate their progress at each stage of learning. The CEFR provides objective criteria for language learning programs to revise their objectives, current practices, syllabuses, content, and methods so that it will facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications gained in different learning contexts and promote mobility across Europe. The CEFR is a common framework for language learning, teaching and assessment. Language centres, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers can make use of the CEFR while shaping their teaching. Learners can also observe their language learning process with the help of the descriptors that the CEFR provides. Another usage of the CEFR is for language assessment. National or international level examinations could be prepared consulting the CEFR. The levels that the CEFR identified are from A1 -very limited proficiency- to C2 -native like proficiency- in relation to five language skills. The CEFR also presents a self-assessment grid which has a detailed descriptions of five language skills- listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production and writing- for each level. The common reference levels validated by the

Council of Europe have been adopted by some international exam centres including the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), Cambridge ESOL, Goethe Institute, and etc.

The European Language Portfolio (ELP) is a valuable tool that is in line with the philosophy of the CEFR where learners can record their language learning experiences and document their progress. The ELP has two functions: pedagogical and reporting function. Pedagogically, it is developed to make the language learning process more transparent to the learner and the others and promote learner autonomy. The reporting function of the ELP means that it serves as a tool including information about L2 proficiency and intercultural experiences. The ELP has three main parts: *Language Biography*, *Dossier* and *Language Passport*. In the Dossier, they can keep any kinds of documents related to their language learning experiences such as certificates. In the language passport, learners give personal information and state the languages they know and the intercultural experiences they have. The language biography contains self-assessment checklists -can do statements- which help learners become aware of their competency. The ELP is claimed to promote learner autonomy as learners assess their learning process, which enables learners to take more responsibility for their learning (Little, 2004). Therefore, it can be stated that the ultimate purpose of the ELP is to create more autonomous language learners who are capable of controlling their language learning.

## 2.12. Portfolios

Recent decades have been a reform era for the field of education in several aspects such as teaching methods, assessment techniques, the role of technology in teaching and learning, curriculum, materials and etc. Educational pedagogies place the learner in the centre of learning and aim to make them life-long learners who function as the self-sufficient individuals of the society. Many methods have been applied in education to make learners more active participants of their learning process. One of them is the use of portfolios in classes, which has been popular in line with the principals of the CEFR. Keeping portfolios is argued to contribute to learners' learning by keeping track of their learning process. Portfolios can be developed for many different aims: for learning, for professional development, for assessment, or for job applications and promotions. They can serve many different audiences: for lecturers, for mentors, for employers, or for the user herself/himself. Portfolios have been used in many fields like finance, business or

medicine for long years. However, in recent decades, the importance of one area where portfolios are used frequently has grown so much, which is education. One of the most popular ways of alternative assessment is student portfolios which have become an increasingly popular assessment method throughout the 1990s in the education field (Ewell, 2002). There are many definitions of portfolio which have common characteristics in the literature. A portfolio is often described as an individual collection of students' work that has a great deal of information about what students know, what they can do and what they have done in a course over a period of time. According to Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (1991) a portfolio is "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas" (p.60). Learners can keep track of their learning process through a portfolio because portfolios document learners' whole learning process. They can decide what to include or exclude in their portfolios, which enable learners to take more control over their own learning. Learners can put their essays, vocabulary works, research projects, pictures and so on in their portfolios. Therefore, they are claimed to represent a more authentic assessment tool showing students' real performances during a learning period. Two purposes of keeping portfolio in education have been noted; the first one is alternative assessment and the second one is self-growth. In tertiary education, portfolios provide an alternative form of assessment (Chang, 2001).

Research conducted on portfolio implementation in language classrooms indicates that portfolios have some benefits. First of all, they provide a picture of students' learning process, their abilities, and the strategies they use. Another benefit of portfolios is that they increase student involvement in the assessment procedure, by giving them responsibility for their own learning and enabling self-assessment; and also portfolios provide students an ownership (Genesee and Upshur, 1996). Keeping portfolio helps learners to be motivated, enhances students' satisfaction with what they have achieved, helps them gain awareness of their progress, and improves their language skills (Aydın, 2010). One of the most important advantages of portfolios is they are a tool for fostering autonomy in learners. If students keep track of their learning in a course, they will be aware of their abilities, strengths and weaknesses. Looking at their portfolios, learners will be aware of their own progress, so they will take some responsibility for their own learning, which demonstrates that keeping portfolio affects learners' autonomy. Therefore, it can be suggested that as learners take responsibility while preparing their own portfolios, they

become more autonomous (Richards and Renandya, 2002). What is more, as learners are free to decide on the content of their portfolios, they take a step towards autonomy, as well. Moore (1994) explains the relation between portfolios and autonomy by stating that portfolios “allow for self-directed work, self-correction, greater autonomy and greater time frames” (p.632). This means that students can choose the topics they want to study without limiting themselves to school works and timetable. Shortly, portfolios are essential for leading learners towards self-assessment and autonomy.

### **2.13. Blogs**

Today, it is almost impossible to imagine life without technology since all areas of our lives have been surrounded by technology. In all parts of our daily lives, we make use of technological tools in one way or another. One of the areas that technology is deeply connected to is the field of education. Language teaching pedagogy experienced a change towards communicative language teaching by focusing on learners, cooperative learning, authenticity, and interactive classrooms during the 1980s and 1990s. Since the shift in the field of education, educational technologies have also started to change inevitably. Using internet-related technologies in educational contexts has become very popular around the world. In today’s information technology age, the Internet is one of the indispensable parts of communicative classrooms. Innovative teachers make use of online communication tools such as chat rooms, blogs or wikis as an extensive activity, especially in tertiary education in order to increase the opportunities for interaction outside the classroom. What is more, teachers’ teaching tasks become more efficient and diverse with the help of technological tools. One of the most common online applications used for language teaching is a blog or weblog which is a website that includes personal works that can be regularly updated and organized. Today, having a blog is very easy through some blog providers such as [blogger.com](http://blogger.com) or [20six.co.uk](http://20six.co.uk). These providers enable blogs to be user-friendly by providing ready templates. Blog users can choose any templates they wish, which is a way to personalize their blogs. This draws the attention of learners since they have the control over their personal pages.

Blogs have many advantages for both teachers and students. With the help of blogs, teachers can diversify their teaching practices and motivate learners more. Deitering and Huston (2004) describe blogs as a “virtual extension of the traditional classroom that encourages student-to-student interaction, provides a dynamic context for dialogue and



feedback, and is particularly exciting in its potential for teaching with writing” (p.273). What is more, learners can keep in touch with their friends outside the classroom. Due to several restrictions in formal educational contexts –limited time, crowded classrooms, intense curriculum- teachers could make students practice the target language outside the classroom by means of blogs. Blogs are very beneficial to practice language skills, especially writing and reading skills (Warschauer and Liaw, 2011). Learners can write about any topic which they want to share their ideas on and so the audience can also find a lot of materials in each other’s blogs to read. By this way, reading and writing skills of learners inevitably improve. Blogs also allow learners to communicate with both teachers and peers (Mynard, 2007) through reading and writing. Since blogs provide a facility to comment, learners can ask questions, comment or reflect on one another’s posts, and share their ideas. Therefore, learners have an opportunity to be engaged in authentic social interaction, which makes students motivated in the learning process.

Learners benefit from blogs as an instructional tool tremendously. Ward (2004) and Palfreyman (2005b) put forward the idea that blogs can develop a sense of audience awareness. By getting aware of their audiences, learners can be motivated to write for them. In addition, learners also read many different viewpoints on an issue, which certainly helps to develop learners’ critical thinking skills. Godwin-Jones (2003) identifies two main functions of blogs: interaction and cooperation. As learners share their opinions and criticize others’ works, blogs help to develop student reflectivity. Learners can reflect on what they read on their peers’ blog pages. This can increase interaction between students. Shortly, blogs serve as a tool for learning outside and create a learning environment in which collaborative learning and reflective thinking occur (Lee, 2011). In addition, having a blog helps shy students express themselves in a better way. Since there is no pressure of face to face interaction on blogs, they can communicate with others without anxiety. Blogs can provide a “dis-inhibiting context” (Ward, 2004, p.3) for learners where they can write freely and communicate comfortably. Ducate and Lormicka (2008) suggest that “blog offered a forum where students were comfortable expressing themselves more openly than in class, perhaps because they had more time to think about what they wanted to write and due to the personal nature of blogs” (p.18). What is more, students can support their ideas by posting pictures or videos to help them express themselves more clearly.

One of the most important benefits of blogging is that blogs may promote learner autonomy. First of all, blogs give learners a sense of ownership. It is learners who control their blogs, who decide whether to post something, what to post, or when to post. They are responsible for what they do with their blogs. It is this personalization and ownership that maintain learners' motivation in learning (Ferdig and Trammell, 2004). Learners can use each other as learning resources, so they need to undertake the responsibilities that they see as the teacher's responsibility in a traditional classroom. Harwood (2010) views blogging as a means to move students away from being teacher dependent towards being independent learners. Another way blogging can promote learner autonomy is through reflection. Little (1991) asserts that reflection is one of the key concepts of autonomy. Learners exchange ideas with peers, which promotes their metacognitive skills, indirectly their autonomy. They reflect ideas on a topic, initiate conversation with peers, collaborate with others, and develop high thinking skills by analyzing, criticizing, and synthesizing. Hence, it can be stated that blogging can aid learners to take decisions on their own, encourage them to take risks in the learning process and have control over their learning.

## **2.14. Empirical Studies**

This section presents the studies related to the research problem both in Turkey and around the world.

### **2.14.1. Studies on Learner Autonomy around the World**

Language teaching traditions have experienced a great change with the developments in the field of language teaching over three decades. As a result of these changes, different terms have become significant in language teaching learning area. Learner autonomy is only one of these terms which have become popular issues among educators and researchers. As a result of this popularity, there have been a vast number of studies conducted on learner autonomy all over the world.

Chan (2001) investigated learners' attitudes and perceptions of language learning, teacher and learner roles, their learning preferences and perception of learner autonomy via a questionnaire and an interview. The results of the study indicated that they had certain views of the nature of learner autonomy and they were very much aware of its demands. Moreover, the students were reported to have gained an awareness of the different roles of

the teacher and themselves, various learning preferences and approaches, and the choice over different learning practices and procedures.

Dafei (2007) investigated the relationship between learner autonomy and English proficiency in a teacher college in China by means of a standard language test, a questionnaire for learner autonomy and an interview. The results of the study showed that the students' English proficiency was significantly and positively related to their learner autonomy, which means that the more autonomous a learner becomes, the more likely he/she achieves high language proficiency.

Another study was carried out by Nakayama (2010) who conducted a study to examine the influence of portfolios on learner autonomy. The students were asked to keep a portfolio for a year. The findings of the study indicated that using portfolio positively influenced students' autonomy.

Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2011) conducted a study to investigate learner strategies that were used by students and the techniques that could promote learner autonomy in a higher institution in Macedonia via questionnaires for students and teachers and learner diaries. The findings of the study revealed that learner autonomy was very important while the majority of participants relied on a teacher in many occasions. In their study, the mostly preferred strategy used by the students was reported to be note-taking strategy and also the teachers believed in the use of portfolio, learner diaries and vocabulary notebook as powerful tools to promote learner autonomy.

Nakata (2011) carried out a study which investigated teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy and professional autonomy using strategies through a questionnaire and an interview. The findings of the study revealed that whereas teachers understood the importance of autonomy, they were not fully ready for promoting learner autonomy and did not achieve the full characteristics of language teacher autonomy to a high degree. Another finding of the study was that although most of the teachers were aware of the importance of strategies, they did not use them efficiently.

Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) aimed to find out teachers' beliefs and practices about autonomy in language classes. They wanted to investigate specifically what learner autonomy meant to teachers, their beliefs about whether autonomy contributed to L2

learning and whether their students were autonomous, and what challenges they came across while promoting learner autonomy in their classes. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicated that teachers conceptualized learner autonomy mostly in terms of strategies for independent and individual learning. They were also optimistic about promoting learner autonomy in their classes; however, they believed that some factors such as lack of motivation, limited experience of independent learning and fixed curriculum prevented the development of learner autonomy. The study also showed that teachers had different views about the extent to which their learners were autonomous.

As it is clearly seen, autonomy has been a common concern of many studies all around the world for several decades. Researchers try to investigate autonomy in different perspectives in combination with related concepts. The interest in autonomy has also been observed in Turkish studies as well. Many researchers in Turkey prefer to focus on autonomy in their studies as it may ultimately change language teaching and learning habits.

#### **2.14.2. Studies on Learner Autonomy in Turkish Context**

As learner autonomy has been a popular issue in language learning, the studies carried out in language teaching and learning areas in Turkey have also focused on learner autonomy recently. To begin with, one study carried out by Yildirim (2008) attempted to investigate a group of university level Turkish EFL learners' readiness, willingness, and capacity to learn autonomously via a questionnaire. The results of the study indicated that students were ready to take more responsibility in their language learning process as they felt capable of performing autonomously.

In another study, Ustunoglu (2009) conducted a research to investigate the perceptions of university students and teachers regarding the responsibilities and abilities related to autonomous learning, and the autonomous activities both inside and outside the classroom through a questionnaire and an interview. The study also investigated whether these responsibilities, abilities and activities changed significantly based on motivation level and gender. The results indicated that students did not perceive themselves as autonomous enough in language learning, they were unwilling to take responsibility and they continued to see the teacher as a dominant figure who was the decision maker in the

classroom. Another result was that teachers lacked the ability to lead their students towards autonomous learning.

In another research, Balçıkanlı (2008) aimed to foster learner autonomy through activities by having an experimental and a control group. The researcher collected data by means of questionnaires. Both the experimental and control groups had the same education with the same teacher and for the same amount of time. With the experimental group, the lessons were carried out through the principles of autonomy and activities while the lessons of the control group were conducted via ordinary teaching methods. During this period, some significant adjustments were carried out in the actual classroom atmosphere of the experimental group such as the teacher roles, materials, activities, projects, journals, learner logs, learner contract and portfolios. The results of the study revealed that the learners in the experimental group showed a stronger tendency towards autonomy than the control group did.

Demirtaş and Sert (2010) carried out a study to identify how the English language preparatory education at a university matched with the learners' needs and the extent of learner-centred activities to improve learner autonomy. The study also looked at the level of autonomy perceptions of the learners and its influence on the General Point Averages (GPAs). As for data collection, both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were used in the study. The first instrument was the 'Autonomy Perception Scale' developed to measure perceptions of the learners considering their autonomous learning skills. Moreover, a semi-structured interview form was developed by the researchers. The last instrument was an observation form developed by giving attention to the autonomous learning activities defined by Mynard and Softlaren (2003). According to the findings of the study, it was revealed that most of the students thought the program met their needs but they could not make use of autonomous learning skills. From the results of the study, it can be stated that there exists no correlation between the scores of the 'Autonomy Perception Scale' and the GPAs of the learners.

Karagöl (2008) also investigated the effects of involving learners in the learning and decision-making process through the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) on learner autonomy and its contributions to the intrinsic motivation of the learners. Thirty-three sixth grade students at a state primary school participated in the study. The data were collected via questionnaires regarding autonomy, which is the Learner

Autonomy Questionnaire, and regarding motivation which is the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory; and a classroom observation checklist. It was found that the intrinsic motivation level of the students rose during the case study process. Moreover, the use of self-assessment checklists and the involvement of learners in choosing their tasks fostered their autonomy and this, as a result, raised their intrinsic motivation towards language learning.

In another study, Egel (2003) researched the development and implementation of an ELP junior model for Turkish primary school students and also investigated the impact of the ELP on the learner autonomy of the students. The fourth and the fifth grades of two primary schools, one being a public and the other one being a private school, were chosen as the participants of the study and were divided into control and experimental groups. A learner autonomy questionnaire was distributed to the students before and after the experimental process, and Learner Anchor Questions designed by the Council of Europe were administered at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the implementation. After implementing the ELP in the experimental group classes, it was found that ELP was an influential tool in promoting learner autonomy of the students in the experimental group, especially those in the state school.

Another study conducted on learner autonomy was Ogmen's (2010) study on high school learners. In this study, Ogmen (2010) investigated the effects of vocabulary learning e-portfolio on the development of vocabulary learning strategies and improvement of learner autonomy. With the help of computer technology, the aim of the study was to make learners more aware of their present vocabulary learning strategies and more autonomous. The participants of the study were 89, 9<sup>th</sup> grade Anatolian High School students. The instruments used to collect data included pre- and post-application questionnaires, researcher logs, the e-portfolio application and semi-structured interviews. Students were given 12 assignments in line with the vocabulary items taught in their English class. The results of the study showed that e-portfolio application was beneficial for developing specific vocabulary learning strategies. However, it did not contribute too much to their level of autonomy.

In another study, Erden-Burnaz (2011) aimed to explore the perceptions of EFL learners towards the benefits and challenges of keeping portfolios and how keeping a portfolio affected learner autonomy. The research involved 21 intermediate level students attending the School of Foreign Languages of Galatasaray University. Students had a

thirteen-week portfolio implementation. Data collection instruments were a pre- and post-portfolio study survey, an open-ended question survey prior to the study and interviews with the students after the implementation. The results indicated that students had positive perceptions towards keeping a portfolio both before and after the implementation of portfolios and would rather have portfolio assessment rather than traditional assessment for various reasons. In addition, learners stated that they became more autonomous with the help of portfolios.

In a very recent study, Merc (2015) aimed to investigate the possible effects of learner autonomy training on the study habits of first-year university students. Participants of the study were 122 students enrolled in a “Learner Autonomy” class at Anadolu University. Learners in this class received a 12-week learner autonomy training in terms of study skills such as managing school work stress, note-taking and reading and preparing an assignment/project. Data were collected via a questionnaire to find out the study habits of the students both before and after the training. The findings of the study suggest that first-year EFL teacher trainees had relatively good study habits in regard to motivation, organizing and planning their work, working with peers, utilizing resources and feedback, note-taking and reading, and preparing an assignment/project at the beginning of the semester. Study habits of the learners seemed to change positively at the end of the study. The results also showed that learner autonomy training decreased learners’ anxiety and concerns related to managing their school work.

### **2.14.3. Studies on the Educational Use of Portfolios around the World**

A lot of research has been conducted on the use of the ELP in language classes around the world for some time (Ripley, 2012; Khodadady and Khodabakhshzade, 2012; Huang, 2012; Cruza, 2013). Researchers have investigated the relation between the utilization of portfolios and different aspects in language classes such as motivation, self-confidence, anxiety or language skills.

Perclová (2006) conducted a study to investigate the implementation of the European Language Portfolio pedagogy in Czech primary and lower-secondary schools by describing the beliefs and attitudes of teachers and learners. It aimed to find out whether teachers’ beliefs were in accordance with the ELP pedagogy. The study involved 53 English, German and French teachers and their 902 learners and 53 potential ELP teacher

trainers. Data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively through questionnaires, interviews, class observations, study of documentation and field notes. The results indicated that teachers' beliefs and attitudes varied and showed that teachers found the ELP stimulating for their work but also a bit challenging. Another finding was sharing ideas during seminars was extremely motivating for teachers and many teachers asked for the seminars to continue. In addition, most of the learners believed using the ELP was interesting and useful.

In another study, Huang (2012) implemented portfolios in the English course in order to help students develop their comprehensive language skills, language knowledge, and language culture as well as language learner autonomy. Participants of the study were 31 first-year students aged between 19 and 21 attending Xuchang University in China. Data collection instruments were questionnaires, weekly field notes kept by the researcher, students' portfolios and student-teacher conferences. The findings showed that students had positive attitudes towards the use of portfolio assessment and the portfolio assessment developed students' language competence, increased their cross-cultural knowledge and fostered learner autonomy and motivation.

Khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012) conducted a study in order to explore the effect of portfolio and self-assessment on writing tasks and self-regulation ability. The participants of the study were 59 freshmen university students attending the writing class at Tabaran University in the 2010-2011 academic year fall semester. There were two groups; an experimental group and a control group. The study lasted for 16 weeks and the participants in both groups received instruction according to the pre-planned procedure. Whereas both groups wrote several essays during the course and took a self-regulation questionnaire and the same writing task both at the beginning and end of the course as pre-and-post tests, only the participants in the experimental group were required to write portfolios regularly and perform self-assessment tasks. After four weeks of getting instructor feedback using a checklist in teacher-student conference sessions, they could follow the instruction in how to self-assess their tasks using the checklist. Data collection tools were a writing International English Language Testing System (IELTS) task and the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire developed by Pritrich et al. (1991). The writing task was used as pre and post test in order to determine the level of the students' writing ability and their improvement during the course. The second instrument was used



to determine the students' autonomy and self-regulation in writing. The findings of the study revealed that there was no difference in writing and self-regulation abilities between the two groups at the beginning of the course. However, the students in the experimental group scored higher on writing tasks and attained higher self-regulation ability as a result of writing portfolios and self-assessment.

Cruza (2013) aimed to determine whether portfolio assessment applied in a lower secondary school for nine months had any effect on adolescents' autonomy levels. Participants of the study involved students of lower secondary school aged between 13 and 16 and they were categorized as experimental and control groups. The study lasted for 9 months. The students in the experimental group were additionally exposed to portfolio assessment during the study. Mixed methods research was used in the study, so data were collected both quantitatively and qualitatively through a questionnaire, monthly classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with the learners. The research results revealed that the implementation of portfolio assessment did not contribute to the overall level of learner autonomy.

#### **2.14.4. Studies on the Educational Use of Portfolios in Turkish Context**

Researchers in Turkey have also been carrying out studies on portfolio use in language classes which are similar to the studies conducted around the world but different in contexts (Ozturk and Cecen, 2007; Yildirim, 2013; Ok, 2014).

In a study, Ozturk and Cecen (2007) investigated the effects of portfolio-keeping on the writing anxiety of students. The study involved fifteen preparatory class students aged between 17 and 20 attending an ELT Department of a foundation university, in İstanbul, Turkey. Data were collected through the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory, a background questionnaire and two reflective sessions. According to the results of the study, portfolios can be used as a means of helping students reduce their writing anxiety in L2. In addition, portfolios might have positive effects on participants' future teaching practices. The study indicates that students of the teachers who are aware of portfolios and their positive effects on writing anxiety can benefit from portfolios.

In another study, Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) aimed to explore the effects of portfolio assessment on reading, listening and writing skills of preparatory class students

attending a secondary school and get their opinions on portfolio assessment. The participants of the study were 44 students aged between 15 and 16 and they were categorized as the treatment and control group. The treatment group had portfolio assessment activities while the control group was administered the traditional course program. The results showed that portfolio assessment affected students' writing skills significantly; however the same results were not revealed for the reading and listening skills. Another finding obtained from the analysis of the students' answers to the open-ended questionnaires indicated that portfolio assessment was a fair method of assessment and enhanced students' responsibility and motivation. However, students also had some negative opinions on portfolio assessment such as its taking time and its being difficult to self-evaluate, review and correct students' work.

Another study was conducted by Sert, Adamson, and Büyüköztürk (2012) who investigated the difference between the perceptions of adolescents towards autonomy through the European Language Portfolio Use (ELPU), and the effects of autonomy and ELPU on English attainment. Another purpose of the study was to find out how the ELPU and autonomy promoting strategies were used. The participants of the study were 309 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> year students in their early adolescence and 11 teachers in two private schools in Ankara and Adana. Data were collected through the Adolescent Autonomy Scale (AAS) originally designed by Noom, et al. (2001) and the Language Learning Autonomy Scale (LLAS) developed by the researchers. The findings of the study revealed that the students who did not use the ELP scored higher on the AAS and the LLAS than those who used the ELP. Also, it was found that while the LLAS scores were significant predictors of English attainment, the ELPU was not. In conclusion, it can be stated that the ELPU did not contribute to students' AAS, ASCORES, LLAS scores and the English attainment.

Yildirim (2013) aimed to investigate the effect of using portfolios on fostering the autonomy of ELT major prospective teachers. The study lasted for 14 weeks. The participants were comprised of twenty-one third grade pre-service teachers attending the ELT Department of Çukurova University, Adana, Turkey. There were three data collection instruments. The first one was an autonomy questionnaire that collected the quantitative data of the study and that was adapted from Chan, Spratt and Humphreys (2002) in order to determine students' readiness for autonomy. It was administered both before and after the portfolio implementation process. Qualitative data were collected via semi-structured

interviews with the student-teachers and the third instrument was portfolio evidences: graded goal sheets, reflection reports and cover letters, all of which aimed to explore student-teachers' views about the portfolio process. According to the findings of the study, using portfolios enhanced student-teachers' autonomy with respect to their personal and professional development. The results also revealed that the prospective teachers felt positively about using portfolio. In addition, portfolio implementation process seemed to help them self-assess themselves and become aware of their learning process.

In a recent study, Ok (2014) aimed to find out the reflections of the freshmen students at an ELT department in Turkey on portfolio implementation in the Advanced Reading-Writing Course with regard to their development in language and vocabulary use. Participants of the study involved 46 freshmen students attending the Department of English Language Teaching of Pamukkale University. Data were collected through two instruments; the first one was the reflective essays which identified students' opinions on the portfolio implementation and the second instrument was the unstructured interviews conducted in order to get students' views on the process. According to the findings of the study, it was found that with the help of portfolio-keeping in the Academic Reading-Writing Course, students showed progress in writing with respect to language and vocabulary use. In addition, learners felt that their self-confidence in writing skill and speaking skill also increased at the end of the process. Therefore, it can be concluded that portfolio-keeping yielded benefits towards using English more self-confidently and towards progress in writing and speaking skills and vocabulary use.

In general, it can be asserted that keeping portfolios gets learners' attention on the learning process, motivates learners, enhances student involvement in the learning process, makes revision process clear and eventually promotes autonomy.

#### **2.14.5. Studies on the Educational Use of Blogs around the World**

Today since we live in the era of technology, technology has been an indispensable part of our lives. It is almost impossible to think of a life that lacks technology. Therefore, the integration of technology into the field of education, which is supposed to prepare learners for real life and educate learners in connection with real life, was inevitable. Thus, technology-assisted teaching and learning has been drawing attention of the researchers as well. Recently, one of the popular ways of integrating technology into language

classrooms has been the use of blogs. Correspondingly, the number of studies carried out with respect to blog use in language classrooms has also been increasing. Many researchers have been conducting studies focusing on the effect of blog use on language learners all around the world (Pinkman, 2005; Mynard, 2009; Lee, 2010; Aljumah, 2012; Hashimoto, 2012).

In a study, Pinkman (2005) aimed to investigate the usefulness of blogging in a foreign language classroom and the effect of blogging on developing learner independence and on motivating learners to practice the language skills outside the classroom. The study involved fifteen pre-advanced English learners at Kwansai Gakuin University in Japan. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews which were conducted at the end of the academic term in order to obtain the learners' attitudes towards technology and blogs. Findings suggest that keeping blogs contributed to learners' reading and writing skills as well as oral communication skills. In addition, learners believed that blogging enhanced their motivation to use English because of the interaction with their classmates and teacher and the feedback from their classmates and teacher. Also, some of the participants were willing to go on using blogs even after the study. In conclusion, it can be stated that blogs can be beneficial for language classes.

Another study conducted by Mynard (2009) investigated whether blogs could serve as a tool for reflection on learning. The study lasted for 12 weeks and during this period, students were asked to use blogs to communicate with their teachers and write about important events. A total of 22 female Japanese students of English who were attending a college for one semester in the United Kingdom were the participants of the study. Data collection tool was the participants' blogs. The researcher used students' blogs to investigate the reasons why students used blogs. According to the findings, students used their blogs to write their reflections about their language learning. They shared their feelings related to their exam results, occasions when they got disappointed with their speaking skill, their goals and how their class learning contributed to their everyday life. In conclusion, according to the results, blogs could be useful for learning students' reflections on their learning process.

In another study, Lee (2010) aimed to explore the effect of blogging as out-of-class assignments on developing advanced level university students' language competence. The participants of the study were seventeen advanced level university students who were

asked to keep personal blogs over a 14-week period. Data were collected through learners' blog pages, post-study surveys and final interviews with the students. According to the results of the study, using blogs actively contributed to learners' writing fluency and enhanced their motivation to write.

Rahmany, Sadeghi, and Faramarzi (2013) conducted a study in order to investigate the effect of using weblogs in language learning as a tool for enhancing vocabulary knowledge and increasing the accuracy of Iranian EFL students in writing skill. The study involved 25 students aged between 20 and 35. The participants were given five weeks of instruction and were assigned to write five articles on pre-determined topics and post them on their weblogs. Students were introduced online vocabulary enhancement tools and online grammar checking websites in order to make them benefit from these tools while posting comments to their peers' weblogs. Data collection tools were the weblogs of the students. The results showed that there was a significant increase in the number of words the students recommended to each other and also the number of grammatical errors decreased significantly.

In another recent study, Dickinson (2013) aimed to explore how blogging was used to promote language awareness and learner autonomy with a group of Japanese EFL learners. Participants of the study consisted of ten Japanese learners of English. All participants were second or third year students at university. Blog posts and comments were the data collection tools. Content analysis technique was used to examine the interaction between learners in their blog posts, to investigate their writing fluency and to reveal common themes in the students' views about blogging. The findings suggest that blogging yielded benefits for the learners by helping them become more independent in their learning and more aware of their learning by providing them with opportunities to communicate in English. In addition, the results also showed that blogging developed both interpersonal and language skills of the students.

#### **2.14.6. Studies on the Educational Use of Blogs in Turkish Context**

As it is clearly seen, blogging has been a common concern of many studies all around the world for quite some time. Researchers try to investigate blogging from different perspectives in combination with related concepts. The interest in blogging has also been observed in Turkish studies. Researchers in Turkey have started to focus on

blogging in their studies from various angles (Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010); Arikan and Bakla, 2011; Arslan, 2014; Aydın, 2014).

In a study, Arslan and Sahin-Kizil (2010) aimed to investigate the impact of blog-centred writing instruction on university students' writing performance. Participants of the study comprised 50 intermediate level university students aged between 18 and 21; 23 of them were assigned as the control group and 27 of them were assigned as the experimental group. The study lasted for 16 weeks. The students in both group followed the same curriculum by using the same materials. However, the students in the control group were received writing instruction only in class, but the students in the experimental group were taught writing based on the process approach via blogging. The participants were instructed on language use, vocabulary, mechanics, organization, and content. The students were given a writing performance task at the beginning of the study and at the end of the study to test their writing performance. The participants were asked to write a paragraph on a topic that they chose both before and after the study in order to measure the difference in their writing performances. The paragraphs of the students were evaluated by three EFL teachers using a rubric. The findings of the study revealed that students who were taught writing through blogs performed better than the ones who had only in-class instruction. The researchers concluded that use of blog software could be beneficial for improving the writing skill of the students, especially when the class hours are limited.

Arikan and Bakla (2011) investigated the effect of blogging on EFL learners' autonomous learning. The study involved seventeen elementary level adult learners. Data were collected via a questionnaire, a post-task structured interview and classroom observation notes taken by the class teacher. The questionnaire consisted of a five-point Likert scale and the questionnaire data were analyzed through SPSS 15.0. The post-task structured interview included three questions about the overall experience, challenges that the learners met, and their likes and dislikes. The findings of the study suggest that the learners enjoyed keeping a personal blog and believed it contributed to their autonomy. The results also showed that some of the learners encountered problems using technology and some learners had problems due to their level of English. However, despite the problems encountered, blogging was found fruitful in motivating learners and increasing their autonomy.

In a very recent study, Arslan (2014) aimed to investigate the effect of blogging and portfolio-keeping on a group of prospective teachers' writing skill. The study examined the extent to which receiving feedback from course instructor and peers helped the formation of ownership in writing and how giving feedback to peers' writing works through blogging and portfolio-keeping affected prospective teachers' writing skill. The participants of the study included 59 pre-service English teachers with similar backgrounds of English. The researcher assigned 29 of the participants as blog writing class and the other 30 as portfolio writing class. The study lasted twenty eight weeks with both groups. Data were collected through pre- and post-study questionnaires, assessments of participants' essays at the beginning and end of the year and through the feedback given to the writings. According to the findings of the study, blog and portfolio implementations contributed to student teachers' writing skills specifically in terms of process, organization, content, language use, mechanics, and accuracy. The results suggest that as blogs and portfolios involved feedback from the course instructor and peers, they were useful tools for writing courses in an EFL context.

As it can be seen, blogging has been a popular research theme for researchers and the popularity of blogs has been increasing in educational contexts for some time.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

The present chapter overviews the overall design of the study, the participants, the setting, the research questions, the data collection instruments along with data collection procedure, and data analysis. The current study uses a mixed methods approach in an attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Do learner blogging (LB) and portfolio-keeping (PK) applications make any intergroup differences in the autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of EFL learners?
2. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the blog group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
3. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the portfolio group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
4. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the control group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
5. Are there any differences between the participants' perceptions towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications in terms of such variables as:
  - a) gender
  - b) major field of study
  - c) their background in learning a foreign language

#### 3.2. Overall Design of the Study

The aim of this study is to promote learners' level of autonomy, self-assessment, and proficiency through learner blogging and portfolio-keeping. The study adopted a mixed methods approach involving a qualitative semi-structured interview and a quantitative pre-test and post-test survey. Dörnyei (2007) defines a mixed methods study as the one that “involves the collection or analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at one or more stages



of the research process” (p.163). Using various data collection methods enables researchers to triangulate findings, to check the validity of findings across sources, and to compare the findings. The quantitative side of this study has a quasi-experimental design (pre-test-treatment- post-test). Experimental research enables the researcher to conduct a research by testing a hypothesis under controlled conditions. It seeks a relationship between dependent and independent variables by assigning random groups. However, quasi-experimental design lacks one or more of these elements. Quasi-experimental design provides less control to the researcher and lacks random assignment to experimental and control groups. Therefore, the equivalence of the groups is not assured (Best and Kahn, 2006). As participants were not assigned randomly to the experimental and control groups, this study also used a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design. Two research designs were used in this study: a quasi-experimental design and a survey design. The data collected by the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS statistical programme. The descriptive statistics of the questionnaires were also calculated.

The study seeking to investigate the correlation between the learner autonomy, self-assessment, and language achievement of the students and learner blogging, and portfolio-keeping was carried out at the School of Foreign Languages of Pamukkale University in the second term of the 2011-2012 academic year. The study had pre-test-post-test design because the study aimed to explore whether there would be any difference in the learners’ autonomy levels, self-assessment levels and language proficiency levels between the experimental groups and the control group after the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications. Learners’ levels of autonomy, self-assessment and language success were evaluated through quantitative data collection tools both before and after the implementation and the results were compared in order to find out whether there would be any changes in their results.

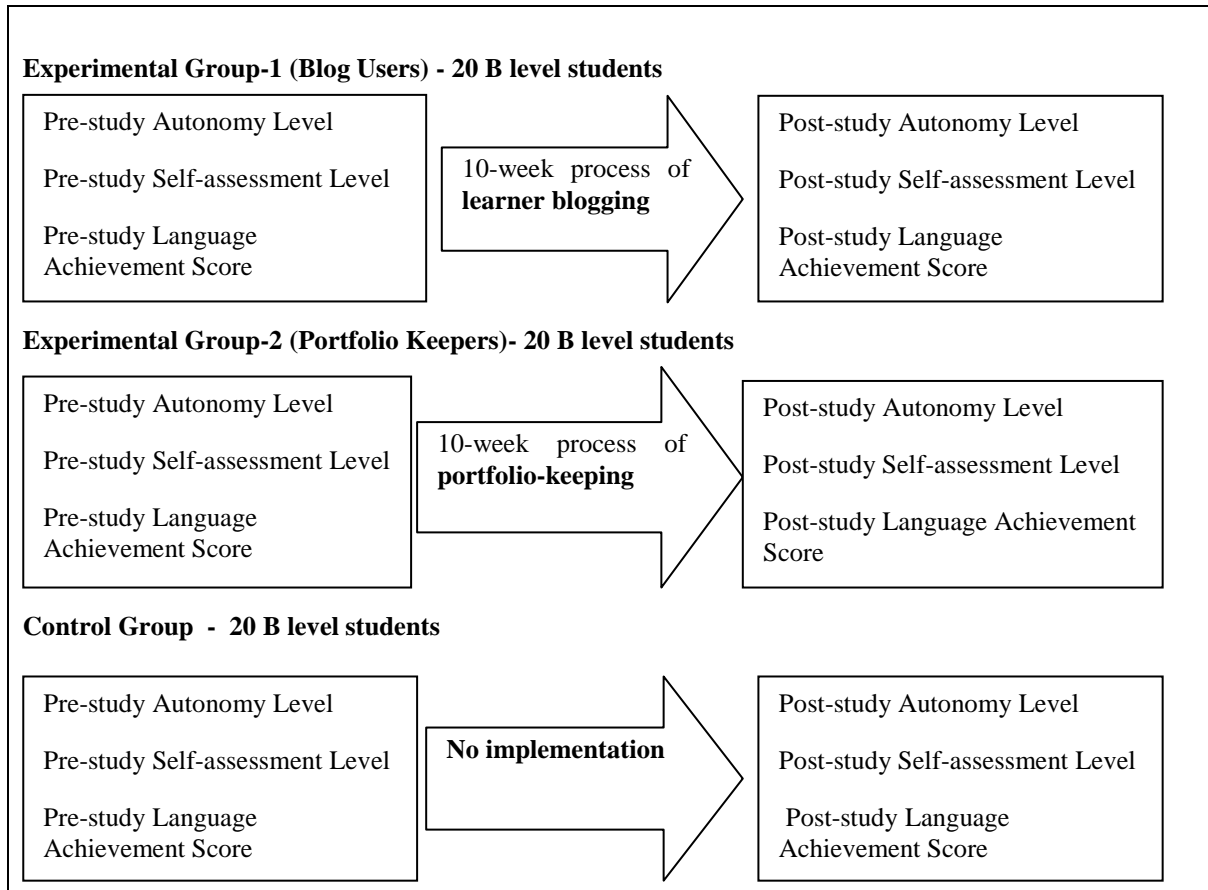
A total of 60 students who were studying English at preparatory school were chosen as the subject of this study from the same language level (B level) and put into two groups; forty students were assigned as the two experimental groups and twenty were assigned as the control group. The experimental groups were divided into two groups: the first group had blog implementation and the second group had portfolio implementation for a ten-week period. There was no implementation in the control group. Both the experimental and control groups had the same education for the same amount of time.

Before the implementation, the learner autonomy degree of each student was measured through the learner autonomy questionnaire developed by Egel (2003) in both of the experimental groups and the control group. In addition, the participants were also given a self-assessment checklist that was adapted in correlation with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels to determine their perception of their own language levels in each skill. The same questionnaire and checklist were administered in both the control and experimental groups following the ten-week implementation process so as to reveal whether any changes would exist between the control and experimental groups. In addition, their language achievement scores were found out using the midterm exams of the students that were conducted at the School of Foreign Languages. Three exams before the study and four exams after the study were used in order to determine the average of the scores they got from the exams and to compare their mean values both before and after the study.

The students in the blogging group used learner blogs and students in the portfolio-keeping group kept portfolios whereas the students in the control group had ordinary education without any extra implementation. The implementation process lasted for ten weeks. After the implementation process, the same questionnaire and checklist were administered to the students of each group to find out whether there was any change in their perceptions of their level of autonomy and self-assessment between the experimental groups and the control group. At the end of the implementation process, students' language success was also compared to see whether there were any differences between the language achievement scores of the experimental and control groups (for the design of the study, see Figure 3.1.).

All of these instruments formed the quantitative part of the study. However, in order to triangulate the results, the researcher had interviews with the students in the **experimental group-1 (blog use) and experimental group-2 (portfolio-keeping)** at the end of the implementation process. In order to find out how the students felt about using learner blogs or portfolios, the researcher prepared three questions, which were 1) *“After keeping a portfolio/learner blog for 10 weeks, how do you think portfolio-keeping/learner blogging contributed to your English?”*, 2) *“What problems did you encounter while keeping portfolios/learner blogs?”* and lastly 3) *“Did you enjoy keeping portfolios/learner blogs as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If not, why not?”*. While preparing

these three questions, the researcher also got the opinions of three lecturers and an academician who were working at Pamukkale University in order to provide content validity. After getting their opinions, the questions to be asked in the interview became certain.



*Figure 3.1.* Design of the study

Fifteen students in each experimental group -30 in total- were selected randomly for the interview and each one of these students was interviewed individually at the end of the ten-week process of learner blogging and portfolio-keeping. These 30 students were asked the same open-ended questions to be able to get their ideas about their own implementation process. They were asked whether learner blogging and portfolio-keeping contributed to their learning process in any way, whether they encountered any drawbacks while using their learner blogs or keeping their portfolios and finally whether they enjoyed the process. The students' responses to these questions were recorded and then analyzed in order to evaluate their feelings towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping in their language learning process.

### **3.3. Setting**

The research was carried out at the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University in the second term of the 2011-2012 academic year. The school, located in Denizli, has over 1000 students every year. The school offers both day and evening classes, and 20 hours of education per week. The classes are separated as A, B, C levels, from elementary to intermediate, and students are assigned to these levels by a placement exam prepared by the lecturers at the School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the term. The classes that the researcher applied in this particular study were B level classes. As the researcher was teaching B level classes, it would be easier to carry out the study with her own classes. There were 20 students in each of the classes.

### **3.4. Participants**

The participants included 60 students studying at the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University, Denizli. As the researcher worked at Pamukkale University, it was appropriate to carry out the study at the preparatory school to be able to conduct the study very easily. Forty of the subjects were determined as the experimental groups and 20 were determined as the control group. The students were all chosen from the same language level, pre-intermediate level. At Pamukkale University, whether students study at the School of Foreign Languages depends on two things. The first one is the departments' language policies. While some departments require the knowledge of good English, at least intermediate, other departments do not. The students of the departments that require the knowledge of English have to take a language proficiency exam prepared by preparatory class teachers at the School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the academic year in order to determine whether those students whose departments require English will attend English preparatory class or the first year freshman class in their own faculties. If they are successful in this exam, they can start their departments directly. In contrast to this, students who fail this proficiency exam have to study at the preparatory class at least for a year and the ones who succeed at the end of the academic year can start their departments in the following year. However, if learners are not successful in the proficiency exam, they cannot start their department until they pass the proficiency exam which is conducted three times a year for the students who fail at the end of their first year at the English language preparatory class.

Secondly, whether students will study at the preparation class depends on students' own decisions. Studying at the School of Foreign Languages is optional for students of some departments, which means that any student coming to university could study at preparatory class if they like. These departments do not require their students to know English; however some students would like to learn English in their first year anyway. In conclusion, two groups of students study at the School of Foreign Languages, which are the students who have to study and students who wish to study. In order to determine in which class the students will study, students take an English language placement exam, prepared by the preparatory class teachers at School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the year; and after taking this exam, students are placed in classes according to their exam scores. There are three different levels of classes: A, B and C levels, from elementary to intermediate. Students are placed in classes depending on the scores they get in the placement exam which is conducted at the beginning of the academic year. In the preparatory class, students all have 20 hours of English a week and they learn or improve four skills in these courses: reading, writing, listening and speaking skills, and also enhance their vocabulary and grammar knowledge.

The participants of this study were chosen from the B level classes. The experimental classes were the researcher's own teaching classes. Since it would be easy to conduct the study with these learners during the study, the researcher took her own classes to carry out the study. Because these were already existing groups of students that the researcher taught, no random selection or any other statistical sampling method was implemented. Thus, all of the students in the researcher's classes participated in the study. So, the sampling was done for convenience. The control group was selected after consulting their class teachers and making sure that the learners in that class would not be given any portfolio or learner blog implementations during the academic year. All the participants were native speakers of Turkish. The participants' demographic data were collected through a questionnaire. Table 3.1, Table 3.2, and Table 3.3 present the data about the participants' demographic information and English learning background, respectively.

Table 3.1

*Gender of the Participants*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Blogging Group</b>		<b>Portfolio-keeping Group</b>		<b>Control Group</b>	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Male	9	45.0	12	60.0	13	65.0
Female	11	55.0	8	40.0	7	35.0

As seen in Table 3.1, 60 participants, divided into three groups as blogging group, portfolio-keeping group, and the control group, were involved in the study. 45.0% of the participants in the blogging group were male and 55.0% of the participants were female. 60.0 % of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group were male while 40.0% were female. Finally, 65.0% of the participants in the control group were male and 35.0 % were female. As a result, it can be stated that gender distribution of the groups was different in each group.

Table 3.2

*Participants' Major Field of Study*

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Blogging Group</b>		<b>Portfolio-keeping Group</b>		<b>Control Group</b>	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Business	7	35.0	6	30.0	13	65.0
Engineering	8	40.0	6	30.0	5	25.0
Medicine	1	5.0	2	10.0	2	10.0
Tourism	2	10.0	3	15.0	-	-
Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation	2	10.0	2	10.0	-	-
Science and Letters	-	-	1	5.0	-	-

As Table 3.2 reveals, majority of the participants in the blogging group studied at the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Business with percentages of 40.0% and 35.0% respectively. The rest of the participants studied at the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Tourism and the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation. In the portfolio-keeping group, most of the participants were students at the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Engineering with the same percentage, 30.0%. The rest of the participants studied at the Faculties of Medicine, Tourism, and Science and Letters, and the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation. Finally, while 65.0% of the participants in the control group studied at the Faculty of Business, the rest of the participants studied at the Faculty of Engineering with 25.0% and the Faculty of Medicine with 10.0%. In conclusion, it could be stated that the students had different major field of study in each group.

Table 3.3

*Participants' Backgrounds in Learning English*

Years of English study	Blogging Group		Portfolio-keeping Group		Control Group	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
0-1 year	7	35.0	4	20.0	2	10.0
2-5 years	6	30.0	2	10.0	9	45.0
5-10 years	7	35.0	14	70.0	9	45.0

In Table 3.3, it is seen that 35.0% of the participants in the blog group had received 0-1 year of English instruction before they started the preparatory class at Pamukkale University. In addition, 30.0% of them reported 2-5 years of previous English instruction and 35.0% of the participants reported 5-10 years of previous English instruction in the blogging group. Most of the participants in the portfolio group had received 5-10 years of English instruction with a percentage of 70.0%. The rest of the participants studied English for 0-1 year (20.0%) and 2-5 years (10.0%). In the control group, only 10.0% of the participants had 0-1 year of English instruction whereas the rest studied English for 2-5 and 5-10 years with the same percentages, 45.0%. These statistics indicate that the language learning backgrounds of the learners were dissimilar in each group.

### 3.5. Sampling

Sixty students studying at the preparatory school of Pamukkale University participated in the study. Forty students were selected as the two experimental groups. Convenience sampling method was employed while selecting the experimental groups. The students were in two different classes, but their teachers were the same. Therefore, it was easy to carry out the study with them and control the following phases in the study. In conclusion, no random selection or any other statistical sampling method was implemented while forming the experimental groups. In addition, twenty students were assigned as the control group. Purposive sampling or judgemental sampling was employed while deciding on the control group. As the learners in control group should not keep a learner blog or a portfolio, this group was selected very carefully after asking the class teacher about the class teaching and making sure that they would have no learner blog or portfolio implementations during the whole academic year.

### **3.5.1. Experimental Group-1/ Blogging Group**

The students in the experimental group-1 were asked to keep a personal learner blog where they could continue learning and sharing outside the class, which was the first implementation of the study.

Blogging group consisted of eight male and twelve female learners. All the students in the experimental group-1 belonged to the same age category ranging from 18 to 20. All the students had pre-intermediate level of English. The high schools they graduated from included Anatolian High School, State High School, Vocational High School and Private High School. The learners would study at various faculties of Pamukkale University when they finish their preparatory class education such as the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Economics and Administrative, and the Faculty of Tourism. Their English learning backgrounds also varied. Seven learners had been learning English for less than a year. Six of them had been learning English for 2-5 years and seven learners had been learning English for 5-10 years. Their English backgrounds differed although they studied in the same education system. This difference occurred as a result of the problems in the Turkish Education System. Teaching conditions might change depending on the region, city or school where they studied because of lack of teacher, materials, physical conditions of classes and teacher-student attitudes towards English.

### **3.5.2. Experimental Group-2/ Portfolio-keeping Group**

The learners in the experimental group-2 were asked to keep traditional portfolios where they could collect all their works and assignments, which was the second implementation of the study.

Portfolio-keeping group was made up of twelve male and eight female learners. Their ages varied from 18 to 21. Their level of English was pre-intermediate. The high schools they graduated from included Anatolian High School, State High School, Vocational High School and Private High School. The learners would study at various faculties of Pamukkale University when they finish their preparatory class education such as the Faculty of Engineering, the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Economics and Administrative, the Faculty of Tourism and the Faculty of Science and Letters. Learners' period of English learning differed as well. However, most of them, 14 learners, had been



learning English from 5 to 10 years. Therefore, it can be stated that learners' language backgrounds were mostly similar in the portfolio-keeping group.

### **3.5.3. Control Group**

Twenty students were determined as the control group: Thirteen were male and seven were female. These students were in the same class. However, the learners in the control group were not in the researcher's own class. This class was selected after getting their teacher's permission and making sure that they would use neither portfolios nor learner blogs during the term. This class only followed the syllabus and the students in this class were not required to do any extra activities outside the class such as using a learner blog or keeping a portfolio. Learners' level of English was pre-intermediate. Their ages varied from 18 to 21. The high schools they graduated from included Anatolian High School, State High School, Vocational High School and Private High School. The learners would study at various faculties of Pamukkale University when they finish their preparatory class education such as the Faculty of Economics and Administrative, the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Medicine. Nine learners had been learning English for 2-5 years and nine learners had been learning English for 5-10 years. There was no implementation regarding the study in the control group.

## **3.6. Data Collection**

Data were collected by the learner autonomy questionnaire (LAQ), the self-assessment checklist (SAC), language proficiency exams, and student interviews. The following sub-sections review the methods and sources of data.

### **3.6.1. Data Collection Instruments**

The data collection instruments of this survey study included a questionnaire, a checklist, and language proficiency exams, all of which were designed to collect the quantitative data, and semi-structured student interviews designed to collect the qualitative data.

### 3.6.1.1. *learner autonomy questionnaire.*

The literature review reveals that autonomy is a difficult concept to define, to measure, and to promote. Researchers have suggested various definitions and components of autonomy. Thus, there has been no consensus over whether autonomy can be exactly measured. However, there are some researchers attempting to evaluate the autonomy level of the learners. Benson (2001) claims that if it is possible for us to define autonomy and describe it in relation to various aspects of control over learning, we should also be able to measure the degree of autonomy in learners as well. Benson (2001) suggests that we can observe whether learners can control their learning.

In the present study, the learner autonomy questionnaire (LAQ) was administered in order to find out the extent to which learners were autonomous. The questionnaire developed by Egel (2003) was applied to the learners as pre-test and post-test questionnaires so as to find out whether there would be a difference between the groups after the implementation process. The LAQ was formed by Egel in 2003 and it was piloted by Egel (2003) on grade four and grade five students. After piloting the LAQ, the Cronbach Alpha reliability of this questionnaire was measured by Egel (2003) by using the statistical program and the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the LAQ was found as  $\alpha=0.80$ , which can be considered an acceptable reliability. The questionnaire was also applied to different student groups in different settings in several other studies including Gholami and Biria (2011) and Yalçın-Tilfarlioğlu (2013). The reliability of the LAQ was also measured in the pilot phase of the present study and it was found quite reliable ( $\alpha=0.70$ ).

The LAQ consisted of 44 statements based on nine dimensions which aimed to reveal learners' perceptions about their level of autonomy. The dimensions were named as readiness for self-direction, independent work in language learning, importance of class/teacher, role of teacher: explanation/supervision, language learning activities, selection of content, objectives/evaluation, assessment/motivation and other cultures (Table 3.4). The statements under these dimensions aimed to reveal whether learners maintained control with regard to different aspects of learning and as a result behaved autonomously in their learning process. The explanation of each dimension is provided in relation to autonomy.

Table 3.4

*Nine Dimensions in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

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

*Note:* This table was adapted from Egel (2003)'s doctoral dissertation entitled as "The impact of the European language portfolio on the learner autonomy of Turkish primary school students".

The first dimension was the readiness for self-direction, which investigated whether the students were ready to take control of their learning by being involved in self-directed learning activities. Table 3.5 presents the six items under this dimension.

Table 3.5

*Statements of the Readiness for Self-Direction Dimension*

Item 1	When I am learning English, I try to relate the new things I have learned to my former knowledge.
Item 3	When I hear someone talking in English, I listen very carefully.
Item 4	I want to talk in English with my family or friends.
Item 16	In the future, I would like to continue learning English on my own/ without a teacher.
Item 28	If I haven't learnt something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it.
Item 32	I hesitate on the matter of compensating for what I have missed in English lessons.

The second dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the independent work in language learning, which aimed to reveal whether the students preferred to learn a language on their own or with the help of a teacher. Table 3.6 demonstrates the seven items of this dimension.

Table 3.6

*Statements of the Independent Work in Language Learning Dimension*

Item 2	I use other English books and resources on my own will.
Item 5	It is my own preference to read English books written in basic English.
Item 6	While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on my own.
Item 7	I like trying new things while I am learning English.
Item 10	If I cannot learn English in the classroom, I can learn working on my own.
Item 20	I like learning English words by looking them up in a dictionary.
Item 35	I think that I learn English better when I work on my own.

The third dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the importance of class and teacher. This dimension was related to the students' evaluation of the importance of the role of the teacher and classroom setting in language learning. This dimension aimed to reveal whether learners could behave as individuals who were independent from their teachers. The eight items of this dimension on the learner autonomy questionnaire are shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

*Statements of the Importance of Class and Teacher Dimension*

Item 8	I am afraid that I won't learn a topic if the teacher doesn't explain it in the English class.
Item 11	I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.
Item 12	I can learn English only with the help of my teacher.
Item 13	My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.
Item 18	I can learn the English grammar on my own/ without needing a teacher.
Item 19	I use my own methods to learn vocabulary in English.
Item 27	I know how I can learn English the best.
Item 36	I only study for the English lesson when the teacher gives homework.

The fourth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was concerned with the roles of a teacher. This dimension aimed to determine the extent to which the students were dependent on their teacher. Table 3.8 illustrates the five items under this dimension.

Table 3.8

*Statements of the Role of Teacher: Explanation, Supervision Dimension*

Item 9	I don't like learning English on my own.
Item 14	While learning English I would like my teacher to repeat grammatical rules.
Item 15	I feel happy when my teacher explains every detail of English.
Item 21	Only my teacher can teach me the English grammar. I cannot learn on my own.
Item 22	I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn.

The fifth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the language learning activities and it was concerned with the collaboration among students and

language activities that students were engaged in outside of the classroom. This dimension had four statements, which can be seen in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9

*Statements of the Language Learning Activities Dimension*

Item 17	In the English lesson I like projects where I can work with other students.
Item 23	I would like to use cassettes/ video/ CD's in the foreign language, outside of the classroom.
Item 24	In fact I like to listen and read in English outside of the classroom.
Item 37	I find it more useful to work with my friends than working on my own for the English lesson.

The sixth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the selection of content, which aimed to reveal the extent to which learners shared responsibility in selecting content of their English lesson. Table 3.10 demonstrates the three items under this dimension.

Table 3.10

*Statements of the Selection of Content Dimension*

Item 25	I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.
Item 26	I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson.
Item 29	I would like to choose the content of what is to be taught in the English lesson.

The seventh dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the objectives and evaluation which aimed to reveal the extent to which the students felt confident in defining their objectives in language learning and to find out how they evaluated their own learning process. There were two items under this dimension, which are shown in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11

*Statements of the Objectives/ Evaluation Dimension*

Item 31	I think my friends are better than me in the foreign language. I want to reach their level of English.
Item 33	I believe that I will reach a good level in the English language.

The eighth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the assessment and motivation which aimed to find out the attitudes of students towards assessment and the effect of assessment on their motivation to study. There were five items under this dimension, which can be seen in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12

*Statements of the Assessment/Motivation Dimension*

Item 30	I don't study the topics after I get a good grade from my test.
Item 34	I study English when we are going to have a test.
Item 38	I do the English lesson activities only when my teacher is going to grade me.
Item 39	I like it when my teacher gives us different test types, other than written tests.
Item 40	I like it when my teacher does a lot of tests in our English lesson.

The ninth and final dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the other cultures which aimed to reveal the extent to which the students showed interest in the culture of the country whose language they were learning. There were four items that indicated independence under this dimension, which are shown in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13

*Statements of the Other Cultures Dimension*

Item 41	I try to understand the jokes and riddles of the foreign language.
Item 42	I also investigate the culture of the foreign language I am learning.
Item 43	I also investigate the idioms and sayings of the foreign language I am learning.
Item 44	I ask people who have lived abroad about the lifestyles of the people living there.

In the study, the questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section included questions to gather demographic information about the participants, and the second section consisted of questions to measure the autonomy level of the participants. The first section of the questionnaire that was added to the questionnaire by the researcher focused on demographic information of the participants such as gender, major field of study and background of English study. In addition, the questionnaire had likert-scale of five items ranging from one to five. The participants were requested to respond to each of the 44 statements by thinking about their own learning process and deciding whether the statement was “always true”, “usually true”, “sometimes true”, “rarely true”, and “never true”. The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements was as follows: “never true” weighed one point, “rarely true” weighed two points, “sometimes true” weighed three points, “usually true” weighed four points, and “always true” weighed five points. After calculating the mean values for each of the 44 statements, the ones who had the highest mean values totally were claimed to be more autonomous than the ones who had lower mean values from the questionnaire.

The items in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire were also translated into Turkish to eliminate any miscomprehension problems in the study. The translated versions of all

the items in the questionnaire were shown to three lecturers and an academician who were all working at Pamukkale University. Before the implementation process, students were asked to assess their autonomy levels through the LAQ, evaluating learners' autonomy levels on different dimensions. After the portfolio-keeping and learning blogging process, students were given the same questionnaire to reveal whether any changes would occur in the learners' autonomy levels (for the learner autonomy questionnaire, see Appendix A).

### 3.6.1.2. self-assessment checklist.

In order to elicit students' self-assessment of their own English proficiency, a checklist was designed by the researcher (for the self-assessment checklist, see Appendix B). The statements used in the checklist were adapted from the "Self-Assessment Grid" based on the common reference levels of the Common European Framework. The Council of Europe (2001) developed common assessment scales for language learners and described the levels of proficiency suitable for any languages in a standard way in order to facilitate assessment in different systems of qualifications. There are six levels in the grid, which are divided into three main levels as basic, intermediate and advanced and each of these levels has two sub-levels which are named as Breakthrough, Waystage, Threshold, Vantage, Effective Operational Proficiency, and Mastery by the Council of Europe (Figure 3.2.).

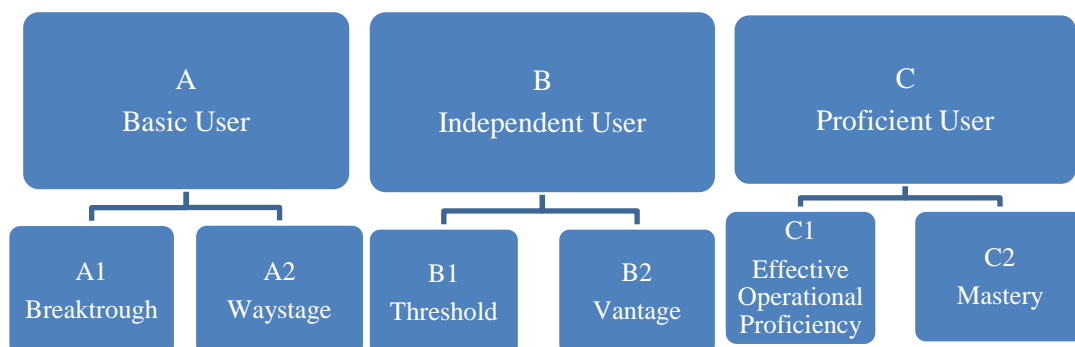


Figure 3.2. Language levels indicated in the Common European Framework of Reference

Breakthrough level is the lowest level of language proficiency and learners at this level can perform very basic and restricted range of tasks including asking and answering simple questions, using basic greetings, writing a simple postcard or making simple purchases (the CoE, 2001). The second level is A2, labelled as Waystage, which is a little more proficient than A1 level. Learners at this level can handle very short social

exchanges, describing personal experiences, activities, habits, plans, likes or dislikes with simple words and they can read very short texts or write simple messages, notes or letters (the CoE, 2001). After learners complete the basic level, the next level is the intermediate level. B1 level, labelled as Threshold, requires that learners maintain interaction in a range of contexts and cope with the problems of everyday life (the CoE, 2001). The next level is B2, called Vantage. Learners at this level can converse naturally, take active part in discussions, read articles or reports or write detailed texts, essays or reports (the CoE, 2001). The last two levels include C1 and C2, which are the highest levels of proficiency at a language. C1, labelled as Effective Operational Proficiency, means learners at this level can have fluent and spontaneous communication, read complex literary texts or write on complex subjects (the CoE, 2001). The highest level at a language is specified with C2, labelled as Mastery. This level requires native-like command of language. Learners at this level can use the language precisely, appropriately and easily (Council of Europe, 2001).

The self-assessment checklist (SAC) was developed from the reference levels given in the Common European Framework (see Appendix C) by the researcher. The participants of the study were chosen from the pre-intermediate level class, which means that they already proved that they were competent at the A1 and A2 levels of the self-assessment grid and they would have a curriculum based on the B1 and B2 levels. They had already studied English at preparatory school for a term and in the second term of the academic year, they would be moving from the B1 level to the B2 level of the CEFR. Therefore, the statements included in the checklist were taken from the B1 and B2 levels of the self-assessment grid. The questionnaire consisted of 23 statements, evaluating four language skills- namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking-spoken interaction and spoken production. The statements of all language skills used in the checklist are given in Table 3.14.

The checklist had likert-scale of five items ranging from one to five. The participants were asked to respond to each of the 23 statements by thinking about their own language skills and deciding whether the statement regarding a specific language skill was “very well”, “well”, “average”, “poor”, and “very poor”. The assignment of the points to the answers was as follows: “very well” weighed five points, “well” weighed four points, “average” weighed three points, “poor” weighed two points, and “very poor” weighed one point. After calculating the mean value for each of the 23 statements, the ones who had the



highest mean values totally were claimed to evaluate their language skills higher than the ones who had lower mean values from the checklist.

Table 3.14

*Self-Assessment Checklist Statements*

<b>LISTENING</b>		1. I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.
		2. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programs on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
		3. I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar.
		4. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programs.
		5. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.
<b>READING</b>		1. I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency every day or job- related language.
		2. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
		3. I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints.
		4. I can understand contemporary literary prose.
<b>WRITING</b>		1. I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.
		2. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.
		3. I can write clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects related to my interests.
		4. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view.
		5. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.
<b>SPEAKING</b>	Spoken Interaction	1. I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.
		2. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
		3. I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible.
		4. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.
<b>SPEAKING</b>	Spoken Production	1. I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions.
		2. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
		3. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
		4. I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest.
		5. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

*Note:* The statements in this table were adapted from the B1 and B2 level statements in the CEFR.

In order to prevent any misunderstanding of the items, the statements in the checklist were translated into Turkish by the researcher and the translated version was reviewed by three lecturers and an academician who were all working at Pamukkale University. Before the implementation process, students were asked to self-evaluate their success in language skills through the Self-Assessment Checklist, evaluating the four language skills. After the portfolio-keeping and learner blogging process, the students were given the same checklist to reveal whether any changes would occur in the learners' perception of their own language skills (for the self-assessment checklist, see Appendix B).

### **3.6.1.3. interviews.**

Interviews play a significant role in qualitative research in order to ensure the results of the questionnaire. They are used so as to obtain information that cannot be observed directly. Interviews can be classified as structured, semi-structured and unstructured. In structured interviews, the content and the direction of an interview are determined by the researcher in advance and the interviewer cannot make any changes during the interview. In semi-structured interviews, the questions are prepared in advance and the interviewer has a general guide for the interview but it is not as rigid as structured interviews. It allows the interviewer flexibility. In unstructured interviews, there is no prior preparation before the interview takes place. It continues according to the responses of the interviewee. In this study, the questions to be asked were determined prior to the interview and each respondent was asked the same series of questions in the same order, however the themes are determined according to the responses of the participants. Therefore, semi-structured-interview technique was applied in this study in order to get the opinions of the learners' on the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping as educational tools to be able to find out whether this process contributed to their language learning in any way.

The respondents of the interview were selected randomly from both of the experimental groups. Fifteen students from the blogging group and 15 students from the portfolio-keeping group were interviewed individually in the researcher's staff room. The researcher aimed to get the general opinions of the learners on the LB and PK. The participants were asked three open-ended questions which were 1) *“After keeping a portfolio/learner blog for 10 weeks, how do you think portfolio-keeping/learner blogging*

*contributed to your English?*”, 2) *“What problems did you encounter while keeping portfolios/learner blogs?”* and lastly 3) *“Did you enjoy keeping portfolios/learner blogs as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If not, why not?”*. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, the interview was conducted in the learners’ mother tongue, Turkish. The participants were numbered randomly for the interviews. Before each interview, the participants were informed that their interview would be recorded and they were asked for consent before each interview was conducted. The interviews were conducted in the third and fourth weeks of May, 2012.

#### **3.6.1.4. language proficiency tests.**

The tool that was adopted to measure the subjects’ scores of English proficiency was a series of exams prepared by the lecturers at the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University. Students had three assessment exams per term, and at the end of the year they had seven exams including one final exam that was conducted in the second term. The written exams tested three language skills- listening, reading, writing- and language use and vocabulary knowledge (For the sample language test, see Appendix H). There were totally two written exams in the first term and three written exams in the second term. The weight of each of the following section is equal in a written exam (See Table 3.15).

Table 3.15

#### *Parts of the Written Exams and Their Percentages*

<b>Parts of the written exams</b>	<b>Percentages of the written exam parts</b>
Listening	%25
Language use and vocabulary knowledge	%25
Reading	%25
Writing	%25

The written exams were carried out on a pre-determined and announced day; students came to take the exam on that day and handed in their exam papers in two hours. In the listening part of the exam, students listened to two listening tracks twice and answered the questions while listening to these tracks. In the language use part of the exam, students answered multiple choice grammar questions and also vocabulary questions. In the reading part, three reading texts were given and students answered the questions of each text. Finally, in the writing part, several writing topics were given and

students were expected to write about one of the topics. Multiple choice questions were evaluated through an answer sheet scanning machine objectively and the written parts of the tests were evaluated by the writing instructors of the students, which brought about a subjective evaluation.

There were also two separate speaking exams that evaluated students' speaking skill per academic year; one was conducted in the first term and the other one was conducted in the second term. The speaking exams were carried out on a pre-determined day for all of the students. Students came to take the speaking exam on that day and each student took the exam individually in a class with two assessors. Each student was given between five and ten minutes and they were expected to answer the questions that were asked from a very wide range of topics like personal preferences, family life, education life, future plans, social media, problems of the society, etc. The exam performance of the students was evaluated by two assessors while the student was speaking, which was also a subjective process. The average of the students' all exam grades determines whether the student will pass or fail the preparatory class.

Our study was carried out in the second term; therefore the average of their three midterm exams-two written exams and one speaking exam- were identified before the study took place. In addition, three language assessment exams-two written exams and one speaking exam- and one final exam were used as a determinant to measure the subjects' scores of English proficiency at the end of the year. In this way, it could be possible for the researcher to see whether there would be any difference among groups in terms of their general language achievement.

### **3.7. Pilot Study**

Before administering the LAQ and the SAC, a pilot study was conducted in order to test the reliability, validity, comprehensibility, and the general flow of the questionnaire and the checklist. Although the LAQ was applied in several studies beforehand, it was also piloted in order to prevent any ambiguity in the translated version. The English versions and translated versions of all the items in the questionnaire and checklist were shown to three lecturers and an academician who were all working at Pamukkale University. They were requested to evaluate the items in the questionnaire carefully in terms of content validity, face validity and clarity of the items. After they revised the

items, necessary changes were made considering their feedback. Wording of some of the items, ambiguous items, unclear instructions and format of some sections were revised. After the revision procedure, the questionnaire and the checklist were piloted with a group of 25 pre-intermediate preparatory school students at Pamukkale University in order to see the potential problems that might occur during the administration process. As Dornyei (2007) points out, “just like theatre performances, a research study also needs a dress rehearsal to ensure the high quality (in terms of reliability and validity) of the outcomes in the specific context” (p.75). The respondents of the pilot study, 25 students from the same population, were selected randomly and were not included in the actual study. The pilot study was carried out in the first and second weeks of December 2011. It took them about 15 to 20 minutes to complete the LAQ and about 10 to 15 minutes to complete the SAC. The administration and collection of the instruments lasted for two weeks. No problems were observed or mentioned during the pilot study and the questionnaire and the checklist were administered to the sample group without any changes.

### **3.8. Validity and Reliability of the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire and Self-Assessment Checklist**

For reliability purposes, the Cronbach-alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient, which indicates an estimate of reliability of a test, was calculated in order to examine the internal consistency of the instruments. The measure of Cronbach-alpha for the LAQ was found as  $\alpha=0.70$  and as  $\alpha=0.80$  for the SAC in the pilot study. Table 3.16 demonstrates the reliability evaluation criteria according to Cronbach-alpha value (Özdamar, 1999, p.522).

Table 3.16

#### *Reliability Evaluation Criteria for $\alpha$ Value*

<b><math>\alpha</math> value</b>	<b>Reliability of the instrument</b>
$0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$	No reliability
$0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$	Low reliability
$0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$	Quite reliability
$0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$	High reliability

As suggested in Table 3.16, while the LAQ was quite reliable ( $\alpha=0.70$ ), the SAC had a high reliability level ( $\alpha=0.80$ ). The reliability scores of the pre-study and post-study LAQ and SAC which were used in three groups were calculated again after the study took place (Table 3.17).

Table 3.17

*Reliability Results of the Questionnaires and the Checklists Applied to the Participants*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Pre-study LAQ Reliability</b>	<b>Post-study LAQ Reliability</b>	<b>Pre-study SAC reliability</b>	<b>Pre-study SAC reliability</b>
Blog users	0.69	0.75	0.92	0.95
Portfolio keepers	0.66	0.77	0.87	0.89
Control group	0.73	0.66	0.91	0.95

According to Table 3.17, it can be seen that the LAQ was quite reliable for all the groups, and the SAC was highly reliable for all the groups in the actual study. Therefore, it can be stated that the questionnaire and the checklist gave reliable results.

### 3.9. Procedure

After the questionnaire and the checklist were piloted, data collection was conducted in the spring semester of the 2011-2012 academic year. Students' written consents were taken before the study. Then, the learner autonomy questionnaire and the self-assessment checklist were administered to both the control and experimental groups. During the research, all the groups continued to have their usual classes. They had ten class hours of main course, four hours of reading course, four hours of writing course and two hours of listening and speaking courses.

As the study was conducted in the second term of the academic year, the students already progressed to some extent in English. In the first term of the academic year, the students in both the experimental groups and the control group at the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University had ten hours of main course, four hours of reading, four hours of writing and two hours of listening and speaking courses. In each of these courses, the students followed a fixed syllabus. In the main course, students learnt and practiced grammar in context, improved their reading and listening skills through informative texts, practiced vocabulary, dealt with communicative tasks, and practiced writing skill with independent writing exercises.

Furthermore, students at the preparatory class also had four hours of reading class in the first term. Every week, learners were to read two reading passages in class, which would help them to develop their reading skills and vocabulary knowledge. Reading passages that students read covered a wide range of real-world topics related to culture, science, social studies, travel, and adventure. What is more, apart from the usual class reading activities, students were required to read story books every two weeks as part of

their usual class teaching. The teacher chose a range of books for the students appropriate for their language levels and offered everybody several books to read such as *Jane Eyre*, *Four Wedding and a Funeral*, *The Berly Coronet*, *Oliver Twist*, *Forest Gump*, and *Frankenstein*. The students could choose any of the books offered to them based on their wish.

In their listening and speaking classes, the students were supposed to listen to a text each week, do the relevant exercises in their books and finally talk about a specific discussion topic within pairs or groups. Listening texts covered a wide range of topics from daily life. In these classes, the purpose was to develop learners' listening and communication skills by teaching the necessary sub-skills to improve their listening and speaking skills.

Finally, the students at the preparatory class had four hours of writing class a week and in these classes they learnt how to write paragraphs. A step-by-step approach was obtained through the process of writing and many model paragraphs at all stages of writing were provided to students. In order to give a chance to the students to revise both their own work and their classmates' works, self-editing and peer-editing practices were carried out during the writing class hours. Learners wrote different types of paragraphs in the first term and their teacher provided feedback on mechanics, grammar, language usage, organization, and development of ideas. The teacher also asked them to write paragraphs and she collected their papers, and distributed these papers to their classmates to get feedback on the paragraphs. In this way, learners both learnt how to develop their own paragraphs and how to read a paragraph critically. Therefore, they started the second term with knowledge of writing a paragraph well.

In the second term, the students also had the same classes; however, as they progressed in English, their syllabi changed and were adapted to their language levels. However, the flow of the classes did not change. Students practiced similar things in each course. The only difference was that the language level of the exercises, reading and listening texts, communication tasks, and writing tasks increased. In their listening and speaking class, the students listened to higher language level texts; in their reading classes the students read higher language level texts. In addition, the students were required to read story books every two weeks as part of their usual class teaching. The teacher chose a range of books for the students appropriate for their language levels and offered to the

students in the second term as well. They could choose any of the books offered to them based on their wish.

The writing syllabus also changed in the second term. The students had four hours of writing class a week again but they started to learn how to write essay in the second term. In this ten-week-process when the implementation phase of this study was carried out, the students were taught different types of essays, namely classification essay, opinion essay, cause-effect essay, comparison-contrast essay and argumentative essay (see Appendix D for the writing syllabus for the second term) and they were assigned to write on different topics practicing the type of essay they learnt and handed them over to their teacher to get feedback.

In short, it can be stated that all the students in each group had the same syllabi and practices in their classes. However, the experimental groups had an additional practice apart from their usual classes during the study and the control group just continued their usual classroom practices, without having an additional implementation.

It is also important to note that both in the first and second term the students had several exams that measured their language achievement levels. The students in all groups had three midterm exams in the first term and three midterm exams and one final exam in the second term.

### **3.9.1. Procedure for the Experimental Groups**

The experimental groups were divided into two groups, one for learner blogging and one for portfolio-keeping. The research project lasted for 10 weeks.

The learners in the blogging group were supposed to keep a personal learner blog during this ten-week period and to post anything relevant to their classroom practices on their learner blogs. Before the implementation, the phases of the study were determined (See Table 3.18).

As the first stage, the pre-study learner autonomy questionnaire and self-assessment checklist were applied to the students on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2012. Next, in the first week of March, 2012 the students were introduced to [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com), which provided free blogging services and was one of the most popular blog providers in Turkey. Being



unaware of blogging, the majority of the students were firstly trained on how to get an account on the blogging website in class. The next step was to train the learners on maintaining their blogs. The researcher created her own blog in class in order to model the process and guided them on how to control the blog page. Finally, the students worked on their own blogs during the next week of March, 2012; each of them got an account and added the other class members in their list. During this week, the students learnt to manage their own blog pages. For example, they practiced choosing a template suitable for their preferences, creating links on their pages, posting something, commenting on their friends' posts, and adding a picture, a text or a video on their personal blog pages. As the pages were all personal, the students could do anything with their learner blogs, however the students were asked to keep their blogs related to their language learning process.

Table 3.18

*Steps of the Research Process for the Blog Users*

<b>STEP</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>
1.	27 <sup>st</sup> February, 2012	Pre-study questionnaire and checklist were applied to the students.
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup> March, 2012	Blogging was introduced to students via <a href="http://www.blogger.com">www.blogger.com</a> and a sample blog page was created by the researcher.
3.	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 5 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> March)	Students created their own blog pages and practiced on it.
4.	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 12 <sup>th</sup> to 22 <sup>th</sup> March)	Students were assigned to write classification essays and share them on their blogs for feedback and they were also assigned to read the first story book of the term and share their opinions on the book on their blog pages.
5.	4 <sup>th</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 23 <sup>rd</sup> to 1 <sup>st</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write opinion essays and share them on their blogs for feedback and they were also assigned to read the second story book of the term and share their opinions on the book on their blog pages.
6.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of April, 2012 (from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write cause-effect essays and share them on their blogs for feedback and they were also assigned to read the third story book of the term and share their opinions on the book on their blog pages.
7.	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of April, 2012 (from 16 <sup>th</sup> to 29 <sup>th</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write comparison-contrast essays and share them on their blogs for feedback and they were also assigned to read the fourth story book of the term and share their opinions on the book on their blog pages.
8.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of May, 2012 (from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> May)	Students were assigned to write argumentative essays and share them on their blogs for feedback and they were also assigned to read the fourth story book of the term and share their opinions on the book on their blog pages.
9.	15 <sup>th</sup> May, 2012	Post-study questionnaire and checklist were applied to the students.
10.	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> weeks of May, 2012	Interviews were carried out with the students.

Since the study was conducted in the second term, the demands made to the students were parallel to the syllabi of the second term. During the study, the students were assigned to write on different topics practicing the type of essay they learnt and finally they were asked to share those essays on their blog pages so that the others could also see what they had written and reflect on each other's essays. From the third week of March till the second week of May, the students learnt different types of essays and were assigned to write essays to practice the essay type that they learnt in the class and to share them on their personal learner blog pages. The number of the students' works varied for each of them, because some of the students were more eager to write than others. The topics that the students would write about were provided to them by the teacher but also if they found a suitable topic, they could also write about it. There were no limitations on students' creativity in this regard. In addition, the researcher told the learners that the teacher would also follow their work and comment on their posts. All of them posted essays on the topics they chose on their personal blog pages. After examining the students' posts, the points that the students commented on their friends' essays were identified. Participants received peer feedback on: essay organization, content of the essays, quality of their statements, language use and so on (For the samples of the students' posts, see Appendix I).

Furthermore, the students in the blogging group were also supposed to use their learner blogs for their reading class assignments. As the students were required to read story books every two weeks as part of their usual class teaching, they were asked to reflect on the book that they read on their learner blogs in order to give other students an idea of the book, which was not part of the usual class practices. After they finished the book, they were asked to critique its content in a blog post about it. They could write anything regarding the book such as summary, their opinions on the book or the characters or they could share the words that they learnt after reading the book. They could do any of these depending on their wish.

Other than the usual class assignments in their writing and reading classes, learners in blogging group were told they were free to share anything they wanted on their personal learner blogs like videos, songs, texts or etc. in this ten-week period. By saying this, the researcher aimed to make the idea of learner blogging in their language learning process fun, to increase students' motivation to use their learner blogs, to assure casual communication in English among the students, and to support the relationship between the

students. To ensure that the students had an audience, the researcher asked the students to read each other's learner blogs and to reflect on their posts regularly. This way, the researcher aimed to motivate the learners to write more, to learn more about their own language learning process while commenting others' works and to be independent learners.

Learners in the portfolio-keeping group were asked to keep the record of what they had done in and out of the classroom through traditional portfolios so that they could track their own language learning progress. Before the implementation, the stages of the study were determined (See Table 3.19).

Table 3.19

*Steps of the Research Process for the Portfolio Keepers*

STEP	DATE	PROCEDURE
1.	20 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Pre-study questionnaire and checklist were applied to the students.
2.	28 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Portfolios were introduced to the students, some examples were shown to them by the researcher.
3.	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 5 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> March)	Students were assigned to write classification essays and read the first story book of the term and write their opinions on the book on the book review form and finally handed them to the teacher for feedback.
4.	4 <sup>th</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 19 <sup>th</sup> March to 1 <sup>st</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write opinion essays and read the second story book of the term and write their opinions on the book on the book review form and finally handed them to the teacher for feedback.
5.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of April, 2012 (from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write cause-effect essays and read the third story book of the term and write their opinions on the book on the book review form and finally handed them to the teacher for feedback. Students were asked to bring their portfolios to the class for the teacher to check them.
6.	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of April, 2012 (from 16 <sup>th</sup> to 29 <sup>th</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write comparison-contrast essays and read the fourth story book of the term and write their opinions on the book on the book review form and finally handed them to the teacher for feedback.
7.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of May, 2012 (from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> May)	Students were assigned to write argumentative essays and read the last story book of the term and write their opinions on the book on the book review form and finally handed them to the teacher for feedback.
8.	14 <sup>th</sup> May, 2012	Post-study questionnaire and checklist were applied to the students.
9.	19 <sup>th</sup> May, 2012	Students handed their portfolios over to the teacher.
10.	3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> weeks of May, 2012	Interviews were carried out with the students.

The students in the portfolio group had the same syllabus as the students in the blogging group both in the first and second term of the academic year. From the second week of March to the second week of May, the students in the portfolio group learnt different types of essays and they were assigned to write on different topics practicing the type of the essay that they learnt in the class and to deliver every piece of work they did to

their teacher to receive feedback for each of their essays. After they got their feedback, they were supposed to revise their feedback and put their works in their portfolios in order to create a log of their language studies.

What is more, the students in the portfolio group were also required to read story books every two weeks as part of their usual class teaching. After they finished the book, they were required to write anything regarding the book like summary of the book, their opinions on the book or the characters, and to deliver it to the teacher for feedback. After receiving feedback; they were required to revise the feedback and put that in their portfolio. Furthermore, the learners were told that they could also form vocabulary lists for the words that they had learnt in or out of the class and put those lists in their portfolios as well.

Apart from the usual class assignments in their writing and reading classes, the learners in the portfolio-keeping group were told they were free to add anything they wanted to their portfolios in this ten-week period. To ensure that their portfolios were followed by the teacher and their classmates, the teacher asked the students to bring their portfolios to the class on a selected day every week. Since the class hours were not enough, only one class hour every week was allotted for the feedback session in class. On that day, the students shared their own works with their classmates and also got their opinions on their works. The teacher put the students in groups of three or four to make them review each student's works together and give feedback to each other. The students were asked to provide feedback to each other in English. This way, the students used English for real communicative purposes with each other, which includes conveying their feedback about their classmates' works. The objective in this process was to create an awareness of audience in the learners. After this process, the students were asked to put all of these works in their portfolios to create a log of their language studies (for the samples of students' works see Appendix J). In this way, they could track their writing process, their weaknesses and strengths. I believed that keeping a portfolio could help learners be more aware of their writing process.

### **3.9.2. Procedure for the Control Group**

The learners in the control group also had the same syllabi with the students in the experimental groups. In this ten-week process when the implementation phase of this study

was carried out, the students were taught English following the syllabus in each course. In their writing class, the students in the control group learnt different types of essays, and they were assigned to write on different topics practicing the type of essay that they learnt in class and to deliver every piece of work they did to their teacher to receive feedback for each essay. In their reading class, apart from the usual class teaching, the students were required to read story books every two weeks as part of their usual class teaching. They were asked to prepare a review for each book that they read. However, they did not have to keep any of their essays or reviews. Also, they did not have to prepare anything regarding the vocabulary they studied. In addition, these students received feedback only from their course instructor, so they did not have any feedback from their peers on their works. As a result, the students did not provide feedback to their peers as well. The students in the control group did not have an awareness of audience other than the teacher. They only wrote for the teacher, which was not the case in the experimental groups. Table 3.20 summarizes the research procedure of the control group.

Table 3.20

*Steps of the Research Process for the Control Group*

<b>STEP</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>PROCEDURE</b>
1.	24 <sup>th</sup> February, 2012	Pre-study questionnaire and checklist were applied to the students.
2.	2 <sup>nd</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 5 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> March)	Students were assigned to write classification essays and read the first story book of the term.
3.	4 <sup>th</sup> week of March, 2012 (from 19 <sup>th</sup> March to 1 <sup>st</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write opinion essays and read the second story book of the term.
4.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of April, 2012 (from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 15 <sup>th</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write cause-effect essays and read the third story book of the term.
5.	3 <sup>rd</sup> week of April, 2012 (from 16 <sup>th</sup> to 29 <sup>th</sup> April)	Students were assigned to write comparison-contrast essays and read the fourth story book of the term.
6.	1 <sup>st</sup> week of May, 2012 (from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> May)	Students were assigned to write argumentative essays and read the last story book of the term.
7.	16 <sup>th</sup> May, 2012	Post-study questionnaire and checklist were applied to the students.

In conclusion, although each group of the students –blogging group, portfolio-keeping group, and control group- had exactly the same syllabi both in the first and second terms of the academic year, the students in the experimental groups went through different implementations as part of this study. The students in the control group did not have any extra implementation other than their usual class practices.

### 3.10. Data Analysis

The study made use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools. Both the pre-application questionnaire and checklist, and the post-application questionnaire and checklist provided the quantitative data. The first section of the pre-learner autonomy questionnaire included items to collect demographic data. These data were transferred into the SPSS program for descriptive analysis. The second part of the data consisted of 44 five-likert scale items to determine learners' autonomy levels before the application. These data were analyzed through the SPSS 16.0 program. The dimensions in the LAQ were also analyzed in detail through the statistical program. The second quantitative tool was the self-assessment checklist, which comprised 23 five-likert scale items to determine the learners' self-assessment level of their language abilities before the implementation. The analysis of these data was also conducted through the SPSS 16.0 program. In addition, the in-depth analyses of the language skills were also realized through the statistical program.

The post-application questionnaire and checklist also gathered the quantitative data. The post-study LAQ consisted of 44 five-likert scale items to determine learners' autonomy levels after the implementation. The post-study SAC comprised 23 five-likert scale items to determine the learners' self-assessment level of their language skills after the application process. The data obtained from both of the instruments were analyzed through the SPSS 16.0 statistical program.

For the interpretation of the data obtained from the items in the questionnaire and checklist, the formula of  $\frac{\text{number of options} - 1}{\text{number of options}}$  was used in order to calculate the score intervals for each level which is as follows:

<u>Score intervals</u>	<u>Questionnaire</u>	<u>Checklist</u>
Between 1.00-1.80	“Never true”	“Very poor”
Between 1.81-2.60	“Rarely true”	“Poor”
Between 2.61-3.40	“Sometimes true”	“Average”
Between 3.41-4.20	“Usually true”	“Well”
Between 4.21-5.00	“Always true”	“Very well”

The next quantitative data collection instrument included language achievement exams both before and after the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications. Data from seven language achievement exams in total, three exams before and four exams after the study process were analyzed; and the learners' average scores were calculated to see their pre-study and post-study language achievement scores. The average scores of the three midterm exams in the first term were accepted as the pre-study success scores and the average scores of the three midterm exams and one final exam were accepted as the post-study success scores of the students.

The last source of data was the semi-structured interviews which provided the qualitative data. There were three fixed open-ended questions in the interview. Fifteen participants from the each experimental group were asked about how learner blogging and portfolio-keeping contributed to their language learning process, whether they came across any problems during the application process, and whether they liked learner blogging and portfolio-keeping implementations. Each interview was transcribed and analyzed thematically. Common thematic codes were identified and frequency tables were developed. The transcripts were also analyzed by another researcher who was working at Pamukkale University in terms of the codes to ensure reliability.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered through a questionnaire, a checklist, an interview, and language achievement exams and the interpretation of the results.

The pre- and post-application questionnaire and checklist applied to the students and the language achievement exams aimed to investigate the effect of learner blogging and portfolio-keeping on EFL learners' level of autonomy, self-assessment, and language achievement scores. In order to examine the impact of learner blogging and portfolio-keeping, the following research questions were asked:

1. Do learner blogging (LB) and portfolio-keeping (PK) applications make any intergroup differences in the autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of EFL learners?
2. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the blog group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
3. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the portfolio group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
4. Are there any differences in the pre-test and post-test results of the control group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?
5. Are there any differences between the participants' perceptions towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications in terms of such variables as:
  - a) gender
  - b) major field of study
  - c) their background in learning a foreign language



## 4.2. Findings

In accordance with the data obtained, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques were used and the results were discussed. Regarding the qualitative data, content analysis technique was used to analyze the qualitative data; and the quantitative data were analyzed by using the SPSS 16.0 statistical program. The descriptive statistics of the questionnaire and the checklist were calculated through the SPSS 16.0 program. The level of significance was determined as  $\alpha=0.05$ . And the mean value for the significant difference was determined as  $p<0.05$  in the present study. The hypotheses for the questionnaire and the checklist were determined as follows:

The Null Hypothesis:  $H_0$ : The mean values of the questionnaire analysis, the checklist analysis, and the success scores are normally distributed.

The Alternative Hypothesis:  $H_1$ : The mean values of the questionnaire analysis, the checklist analysis, and the success scores are not normally distributed.

In order to decide on which tests to use for the interpretation of the data, firstly Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied (Table 4.1) and as a result of this test, it was revealed that the questionnaire and the checklist had a normal distribution ( $p>0.05$ ) and therefore parametric tests were applied to analyze the data.

Table 4.1

*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results for the Pre-study and Post-study Questionnaire, Checklist, and Success Scores*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>sd</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>p</i>
Pre-study autonomy	60	3.17	0.31	0.59	0.87
Post-study autonomy	60	3.17	0.33	0.61	0.85
Pre-study self-assessment	60	2.70	0.52	0.47	0.97
Post-study self-assessment	60	2.87	0.64	0.83	0.48
Pre-study success	60	69.82	9.48	0.69	0.71
Post-study success	60	65.81	10.08	0.48	0.97

a. Test distribution is Normal.

When Table 4.1 is analyzed, it can be seen that  $p>0.05$  for each value, which means that there was a normal distribution for these values. As  $p$  value for all of the variables were higher than the significance level ( $p>0.05$ ), alternative hypotheses were rejected and null hypotheses were accepted and it was concluded that there was a normal distribution for the autonomy scores, the self-assessment scores, and the language success scores. As

they all showed a normal distribution, parametric tests were applied. These tests included One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) Test, Paired Samples T-test, and Tukey's Test. As the study included three groups, One-Way ANOVA test was applied in order to compare their mean values. Then, in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of all the groups, Paired Samples T-test was used. Finally, as groups had differences in their mean values, Tukey's Test was performed in order to find out from which group the difference resulted.

The learner autonomy questionnaire had nine dimensions, which were named as readiness for self-direction, independent work in language learning, importance of class/teacher, role of teacher: explanation/supervision, language learning activities, selection of content, objectives/evaluation, assessment/motivation and other cultures. These dimensions were also examined in detail. In order to analyze the dimensions separately before and after the study for each of the groups, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results for the Pre-study and Post-study LAQ Dimensions*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>n</i>		$\bar{x}$		<i>sd</i>		<i>z</i>		<i>p</i>	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
readiness for self-direction	60	60	3.45	3.50	0.54	0.64	1.05	0.79	0.21	0.55
independent work in language learning	60	60	3.35	3.36	0.57	0.55	0.89	0.85	0.39	0.45
importance of class/teacher	60	60	3.18	3.28	0.63	0.61	0.65	0.69	0.78	0.72
role of teacher	60	60	2.77	3.84	0.83	0.72	1.07	0.70	0.19	0.70
language learning activities	60	60	3.02	2.96	0.64	0.59	0.80	0.98	0.52	0.28
selection of content	60	60	2.81	2.87	0.81	0.83	0.96	1.11	0.30	0.16
objectives/evaluation	60	60	3.61	3.51	0.61	0.68	1.87	1.48	0.00	0.02
assessment/motivation	60	60	3.37	3.12	0.63	0.54	0.79	0.93	0.56	0.34
other cultures	60	60	2.91	2.90	0.83	0.92	0.97	1.08	0.30	0.19

a. Test distribution is Normal.

When Table 4.2 is analyzed, it can be seen that  $p > 0.05$  for the variables in general, which means that there was a normal distribution for all the values, except one dimension. As a result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was concluded that there was a normal distribution for eight out of nine dimensions of the autonomy questionnaire. As a result, for these eight dimensions, parametric tests were applied, and these tests included One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) Test, Paired Samples T-test, and Tukey's Test. As the study included three groups, One-Way ANOVA test was applied in order to compare the

mean values of the groups. Then, in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of all the groups, Paired Samples T-test was used. Finally, as the groups had differences in their mean values, Tukey's Test was performed in order to find out from which group the difference resulted. However, there was not a normal distribution for just one dimension, which was the pre- and post-study objectives and evaluation dimension ( $p < 0.05$ ). As a result, for the dimension of objectives and evaluation, non-parametric tests were applied, and these tests included Kruskal Wallis-H Test and Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test. Since the study included three groups, Kruskal Wallis-H Test was applied in order to compare the mean values of the groups in terms of the dimension of objectives and evaluation. Next, in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of all the groups in terms of the dimension of objectives and evaluation, Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test was applied.

Table 4.3

*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results for the Pre-study and Post-study Language Skills in the Self-Assessment Checklist*

Variables	n		$\bar{x}$		sd		z		p	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Listening skill	60	60	2.47	2.81	0.61	0.71	0.81	0.88	0.52	0.41
Reading skill	60	60	2.83	2.87	0.66	0.81	0.90	0.97	0.39	0.29
Writing skill	60	60	2.70	2.87	0.63	0.84	0.94	1.10	0.32	0.17
Speaking skill	60	60	2.77	2.90	0.54	0.67	0.71	0.70	0.68	0.70

a. Test distribution is Normal.

When Table 4.3 is analyzed, it can be seen that  $p > 0.05$  for all of the variables, which means that there was a normal distribution for all the values. As a result, in order to analyze these four language skills separately, parametric tests were applied, and these tests included One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) Test, Paired Samples T-test, and Tukey's Test. As the study included three groups, One-Way ANOVA test was applied in order to compare the mean values of the groups. Then, in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of all the groups, Paired Samples T-test was used. Finally, as the groups had differences in their mean values, Tukey's Test was performed in order to find out from which group the difference resulted.

As for the semi-structured interviews, content analysis technique was used. Firstly, the recordings of the interviews were transcribed and then the answers of the students were analyzed thematically in order to describe any significant differences between the blogging group and portfolio-keeping group in their perceptions towards the LB and PK.

In the present study, five research questions were investigated regarding the relationship between LB, and PK and autonomy levels, self-assessment levels, and language achievement scores of the students. The results are presented in the same order with the research questions of the study. The hypotheses regarding the research questions were as follows:

The Null Hypothesis:  $H_0$ : There is no significant relation between the variables.

The Alternative Hypothesis:  $H_1$ : There is a significant relation between the variables.

The interpretation of these hypotheses will be as: “If  $p > 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is accepted, however if  $p < 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.”

#### **4.2.1. Do learner blogging (LB) and portfolio-keeping (PK) applications make a significant intergroup difference in the autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of EFL learners?**

The first research question aimed to make a comparison between the three groups regarding their autonomy levels, self-assessment levels and the language success scores based on the type of the application. Firstly, the learners’ pre-study and post-study autonomy levels in each group were evaluated generally in order to find out whether there was an intergroup difference between the three groups in terms of autonomy. Then, the sub-dimensions of the autonomy questionnaire were examined in detail in order to compare the mean values of the students in each group in terms of each sub-dimension. The second point would be investigating the general self-assessment levels of the participants in each group in order to reveal any intergroup differences both before and after the study. After analyzing the total self-assessment levels of the learners’ language skills, self-assessment levels for the each language skill, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing were examined in detail as well. Finally, the language success scores of the students in each group were investigated in general in order to find out any intergroup differences before and after LB and PK. Since there were more than two groups whose mean values to be compared, One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed for each sub-point of the pre- and post-implementation data.

#### 4.2.1.1. *learner autonomy.*

The first part of the first research question focused on the dimension of learner autonomy. The autonomy levels of the students' were determined via a questionnaire. The Learner Autonomy Questionnaire, developed by Egel (2003), comprised 44 items based on nine dimensions which aimed to identify the extent to which learners were autonomous. The LAQ had likert-scale of five items ranging from one to five. The participants were requested to respond to each of the 44 statements by thinking about their own learning process and deciding whether the statement was "always true", "usually true", "sometimes true", "rarely true", and "never true". Some of the statements in the questionnaire indicated students' independence; however some of the statements indicated their dependence in the learning process, which obviously lowers their autonomy. The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements that signalled independence was as follows: "never true" weighed one point, "rarely true" weighed two points, "sometimes true" weighed three points, "usually true" weighed four points, and "always true" weighed five points. The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements that signalled dependence was as follows: "never true" weighed five points, "rarely true" weighed four points, "sometimes true" weighed three points, "usually true" weighed two points, and "always true" weighed one point. After calculating the mean values for each of the 44 statements, the ones who had the highest mean values totally were claimed to be more autonomous than the ones who had lower mean values from the questionnaire.

In order to determine the differences in the pre- and post-application autonomy levels of the learners in our study, the groups' mean values were compared by using One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (See Table 4.4; Table 4.5).

Table 4.4

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study Autonomy Scores*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
Blog	20	3.18	0.29	0.26	0.76*	-
Portfolio	20	3.13	0.29			
Control	20	3.21	0.37			
Total	60	3.17	0.31			

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.4 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-study autonomy scores of the students in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The statistical mean value of the autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.18$  for the 20 students that used blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.13$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.21$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that the pre-study autonomy levels of the groups were close to each other. It was found that students in all the groups stated “sometimes true” while assessing their autonomy levels. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the autonomy scores between the groups before the implementation took place ( $f = 0.26$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This means that the students in all groups sometimes acted autonomously as language learners.

The second part of the analysis aimed to investigate the post-study results of the students regarding their autonomy levels. Since there were more than two groups whose means to be compared, One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5

*Comparison of the Groups' Post-study Autonomy Scores*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
Blog	20	3.20	0.31	0.97	0.38*	-
Portfolio	20	3.22	0.33			
Control	20	3.09	0.33			
Total	60	3.17	0.33			

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.5 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-application autonomy scores of the students in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The mean value of the post-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.20$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.22$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios, and it was  $\bar{x}=3.09$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that the post-study autonomy levels of the groups were close to each other. It was concluded that the students in all the groups stated “sometimes true” for their autonomy levels after the training took place, which meant that they were not totally autonomous, but they sometimes behaved autonomously. According to the result of One-Way ANOVA analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted, and it can be stated that there was no difference

in the autonomy mean values among the groups after the implementation took place ( $f=0.97$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

After comparing the general autonomy levels of the students between the groups before the study and after the study, the sub-dimensions of autonomy questionnaire were also compared between the groups in order to reveal in which dimensions the learners were more autonomous.

#### ***4.2.1.1.1. the analysis of the dimensions of the learner autonomy questionnaire.***

The LAQ consisted of 44 statements based on nine dimensions which aimed to reveal learners' perceptions about their level of autonomy. The dimensions were named as readiness for self-direction, independent work in language learning, importance of class/teacher, role of teacher: explanation/supervision, language learning activities, selection of content, objectives/evaluation, assessment/motivation and other cultures. In order to analyze the dimensions separately before and after the study, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied and it was found out that the eight of the nine dimensions on the learner autonomy questionnaire showed a normal distribution. As a result, parametric tests were applied for the eight dimensions that showed a normal distribution, so One-Way ANOVA test was used to compare the mean values of the groups. However, there was not a normal distribution for just one dimension, which was the pre- and post-study objectives and evaluation dimension ( $p<0.05$ ). As a result, for the dimension of objectives and evaluation, non-parametric tests were applied, so Kruskal Wallis-H Test was applied in order to compare the mean values of the groups.

##### *4.2.1.1.1.1. readiness for self-direction dimension.*

The first dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the readiness for self-direction, which aimed to determine whether the students were ready to direct their learning process or to be involved in self-directed learning activities. There were six statements under this dimension, which were concerned with the independence of learners in the learning process. The statements of this dimension on the learner autonomy questionnaire are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

*Statements of the Readiness for Self-Direction Dimension*

Item 1	When I am learning English, I try to relate the new things I have learned to my former knowledge.
Item 3	When I hear someone talking in English, I listen very carefully.
Item 4	I want to talk in English with my family or friends.
Item 16	In the future, I would like to continue learning English on my own/ without a teacher.
Item 28	If I haven't learnt something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it.
Item 32	I hesitate on the matter of compensating for what I have missed in English lessons.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the readiness for self-direction dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA test analysis (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Readiness for Self-Direction Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.56	3.59	0.46	0.51	0.73	2.68	0.48*	0.07*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	3.43	3.68	0.63	0.64						
Control	20	20	3.35	3.25	0.53	0.69						

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.7 shows the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-study and post-study readiness for self-direction levels of the students in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The statistical mean value of the pre-application readiness for self-direction level was  $\bar{x}=3.59$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.43$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.35$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found that students in all the groups stated "sometimes true" while assessing their readiness for self-direction level prior to the applications. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no differences in the mean values of the pre-study readiness for self-direction scores among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.73$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This means that the students in all groups were not completely ready to engage in self-directed learning; they were averagely ready for self-direction.

According to Table 4.7, when the mean values of the post-readiness for self-direction were examined, it was found that there was not a difference among the groups after the implementation in terms of their readiness for self-directed learning ( $f=2.68$ ;



$p>0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of the post-study readiness for self-direction level was  $\bar{x}=3.59$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.68$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.25$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there was not a significant difference between the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and the control groups. The mean values of the students in all groups showed that they were averagely ready for self-direction. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all of the groups were sometimes involved in self-directed learning while learning a language.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.2. *independent work in language learning dimension.*

The second dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the independent work in language learning, which aimed to find out whether the students preferred to learn a language on their own or with the help of a teacher. The statements of this dimension were related with the independent learning of the students. The seven items of this dimension on the learner autonomy questionnaire are demonstrated in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8

#### *Statements of the Independent Work in Language Learning Dimension*

Item 2	I use other English books and resources on my own will.
Item 5	It is my own preference to read English books written in basic English.
Item 6	While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on my own.
Item 7	I like trying new things while I am learning English.
Item 10	If I cannot learn English in the classroom, I can learn working on my own.
Item 20	I like learning English words by looking them up in a dictionary.
Item 35	I think that I learn English better when I work on my own.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the independent work in language learning dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 reveals the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-study and post-study independent work in language learning levels of the students in the blogging group, portfolio-keeping group, and control group. The statistical mean value of the pre-study independent work in language learning level was  $\bar{x}=3.41$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.22$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.43$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that the post-study

autonomy levels of the groups were close to each other. It was found that students in all the groups stated “sometimes true” while assessing their level of independent work in language learning prior to the applications. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the pre-study independent work in language learning level among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.82$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). This means that the students in all groups were not completely independent in their language learning; they stated that they sometimes acted independently in their learning, but they also sometimes needed the presence of a teacher.

Table 4.9

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Independent Work in Language Learning Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.41	3.49	0.49	0.52	0.82	3.11	0.44*	0.052*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	3.22	3.48	0.50	0.51						
Control	20	20	3.43	3.12	0.71	0.51						

\*( $p>0.005$ )

According to Table 4.9, when the mean values of the post- independent work in language learning were examined, it was found that there was not a difference between the groups after the study in terms of their independent work in language learning ( $f=3.11$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of the post-study independent work in language learning level was  $\bar{x}=3.49$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.48$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.12$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the blogging, portfolio-keeping and control groups. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all of the groups were almost equally involved in independent work in language learning after the implementation process.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.3. importance of class and teacher dimension.

The third dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the importance of class and teacher. This dimension was concerned with the students' evaluation of the importance of the role of the teacher and classroom setting in language learning. There were eight statements under this dimension and the scoring of these eight items was

assigned differently. There were three items that indicated independency (item 18, item 19, item 27) and five items that indicated dependency (item 8, item 1, item 12, item 13, item 36). The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements that signalled independence was as follows: “never true” weighed one point, “rarely true” weighed two points, “sometimes true” weighed three points, “usually true” weighed four points, and “always true” weighed five points. The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements that signalled dependence was as follows: “never true” weighed five points, “rarely true” weighed four points, “sometimes true” weighed three points, “usually true” weighed two points, and “always true” weighed one point. The eight items of this dimension on the learner autonomy questionnaire are as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

*Statements of the Importance of Class and Teacher Dimension*

Item 8	I am afraid that I won't learn a topic if the teacher doesn't explain it in the English class.
Item 11	I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.
Item 12	I can learn English only with the help of my teacher.
Item 13	My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.
Item 18	I can learn the English grammar on my own/ without needing a teacher.
Item 19	I use my own methods to learn vocabulary in English.
Item 27	I know how I can learn English the best.
Item 36	I only study for the English lesson when the teacher gives homework.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the importance of class/teacher dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.11).

Table 4.11

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Importance of Class and Teacher Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	Pre*	Post*	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.06	3.14	0.62	0.49	0.66	0.79	0.51	0.45	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	3.20	3.31	0.40	0.55						
Control	20	20	3.29	3.38	0.81	0.76						

\*(p>0.005)

Table 4.11 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-study and post-study level of the importance of class/teacher of the students in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The statistical mean value of the importance of class/teacher level before the study was  $\bar{x}=3.06$  for the 20

students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.20$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.29$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found that students in all the groups stated “sometimes true” while assessing the importance of class/teacher for them prior to the applications. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there was not a statistically significant difference in the mean values of the importance of class/teacher level among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.66$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The students in all groups stated to be sometimes independent and to give average importance to the presence of a teacher in their learning before the study.

According to Table 4.11, when the mean values of the post-study level of importance of class/teacher dimension were examined, it was found that there was not also a difference among the groups after the implementation in terms of the importance they gave to the class/teacher ( $f=0.79$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of the post-study importance of class/teacher level was  $\bar{x}=3.14$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.31$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.38$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups after the application process. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all groups gave almost equal importance to the classroom setting and teacher roles, so their autonomy levels were similar to each other.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.4. *role of teacher: explanation, supervision.*

The fourth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was concerned with the roles of a teacher. This dimension aimed to determine the extent to which the students were dependent on their teacher. This dimension had five items, whose the scoring was assigned reversely. The items of this dimension on the learner autonomy questionnaire are as illustrated in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

#### *Statements of the Role of Teacher: Explanation, Supervision Dimension*

Item 9	I don't like learning English on my own.
Item 14	While learning English I would like my teacher to repeat grammatical rules.
Item 15	I feel happy when my teacher explains every detail of English.
Item 21	Only my teacher can teach me the English grammar. I cannot learn on my own.
Item 22	I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the role of teacher dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.13).

Table 4.13

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding Role of Teacher: Explanation, Supervision Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	2.66	2.82	0.71	0.64	0.40	0.15	0.66*	0.98*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	2.90	2.84	0.60	0.61						
Control	20	20	2.76	2.86	1.12	0.90						

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.13 shows the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the students' pre- and post-evaluation of the dimension of role of teacher in the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and control groups. The statistical mean value of their pre-study level of independence of teacher was  $\bar{x}=2.66$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.90$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.76$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found that students in all the groups stated "sometimes true" while evaluating their dependence on the teacher prior to the study. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the pre-study evaluation of dependence on teacher among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.40$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The students in all groups believed they were sometimes independent of the teacher prior to the implementation. However, they also wanted their teachers to be around them and to explain details of English to them.

According to Table 4.13, when the mean values of the post-study level of their evaluation of the role of teacher were examined, it was found that there were also no differences among the groups after the study in terms of the roles of teacher in their learning ( $f=0.15$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of the independence of teacher was  $\bar{x}=2.82$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.84$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.86$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there were no differences between the groups after the application process. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all groups expressed almost equal need for a teacher after the application process.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.5. *language learning activities.*

The fifth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the language learning activities, which was concerned with the collaboration among students and language activities that students were engaged in outside of the classroom. This dimension had four statements which are displayed in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14

#### *Statements of the Language Learning Activities Dimension*

Item 17	In the English lesson I like projects where I can work with other students.
Item 23	I would like to use cassettes/ video/ CD's in the foreign language, outside of the classroom.
Item 24	In fact I like to listen and read in English outside of the classroom.
Item 37	I find it more useful to work with my friends than working on my own for the English lesson.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the language learning activities dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.15).

Table 4.15

#### *Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding Language Learning Activities Dimension*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>Mean</i>		<i>SD</i>		<i>F</i>		<i>P</i>		<i>D</i>	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.08	3.05	0.67	0.51	0.41	0.42	0.66*	0.65*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	2.91	2.97	0.66	0.56						
Control	20	20	3.06	2.87	0.62	0.70						

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.15 reveals the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the students' pre-study and post-study evaluation of the dimension of language learning activities in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The statistical mean value of their pre-study level of language learning activities was  $\bar{x}=3.08$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.91$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.06$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found that students in all the groups stated "sometimes true" while evaluating their level of language learning activities prior to the study. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no differences in the mean values of the pre-study evaluation of the language learning activities among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.41$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The students in all groups believed they were

sometimes engaged in language activities outside the classroom prior to the implementation.

According to Table 4.15, when the mean values of the post-study evaluation of the language learning activities were examined, it was found that there were also no differences among the groups after the implementation in terms of the language learning activities ( $f=0.42$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of the language learning activities is  $\bar{x}=3.05$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.97$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.87$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there were no differences between the groups after the application process in terms of the language activities. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all groups expressed that they were sometimes involved in language activities outside the classroom after the application process.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.6. *selection of content dimension.*

The sixth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the selection of content, which aimed to reveal the extent to which learners shared responsibility for selecting content of their English lesson. This dimension had three items. These items are given in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16

#### *Statements of the Selection of Content Dimension*

Item 25	I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.
Item 26	I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson.
Item 29	I would like to choose the content of what is to be taught in the English lesson.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the selection of content dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.17).

Table 4.17 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the students' pre-application and post-application evaluation of the dimension of selection of content in the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and control groups. The statistical mean value of their pre-study level of selection of content was  $\bar{x}=2.76$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.71$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.95$  for

the 20 students in the control group. It was found out that students in all the groups stated “sometimes true” while evaluating their level of selection of content prior to the study. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no differences in the mean values of the pre-study evaluation of the selection of content among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.44$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The students in all groups stated that they sometimes wanted to share responsibility for their learning by choosing material or deciding on what to learn.

Table 4.17

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding Selection of Content Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	2.76	2.88	0.81	0.76	0.44	0.09	0.64*	0.90*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	2.71	2.93	0.58	0.62						
Control	20	20	2.95	2.81	1.01	1.07						

\*( $p>0.005$ )

According to Table 4.17, when the mean values of the post-study evaluation of the dimension of selection of content were examined, it was found that there were also no statistically significant differences among the groups after the study ( $f=0.09$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The statistical mean values of the selection of content was  $\bar{x}=2.88$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.93$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.91$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups after the application process in terms of the dimension of selection of content. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all groups expressed that they were sometimes willing to undertake responsibility for choosing materials or deciding on what to learn in their learning after the application process.

*4.2.1.1.1.7. objectives/ evaluation.*

The seventh dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the objectives and evaluation which aimed to reveal the extent to which the students felt confident in defining their objectives in language learning and to find out how they evaluated their own learning process. There were two items under this dimension, which are presented in Table 4.18.



Table 4.18

*Statements of the Objectives/ Evaluation Dimension*

Item 31	I think my friends are better than me in the foreign language. I want to reach their level of English.
Item 33	I believe that I will reach a good level in the English language.

According to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, this dimension did not show a normal distribution. The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the objectives and evaluation dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through Kruskal Wallis-H Test (See Table 4.19).

Table 4.19

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding Objectives/ Evaluation Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		$\chi^2$		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.55	3.55	0.48	0.60	4.46	2.38	0.10*	0.30*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	3.45	3.67	0.62	0.65						
Control	20	20	3.85	3.32	0.67	0.76						

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.19 reveals the results of Kruskal Wallis-H Test analysis regarding the pre-application and post-application objectives in language learning levels of the students in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The statistical mean value of the objectives dimension before the study was  $\bar{x}=3.55$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.45$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.85$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found out that students in all the groups stated "usually true" for the statements that aimed to find out their motivation for learning language prior to the study. According to the results of Kruskal Wallis-H Test,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the pre-study objectives level among the groups before the study took place ( $\chi^2=4.46$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This means that the students in all the groups highly believed that they would reach a good level in English.

According to Table 4.19, when the mean values of the post-study objectives in language learning were examined, it was found that there was not also a difference among the groups after the implementation in terms of their objectives ( $\chi^2=2.38$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The

statistical mean value of the post-study objectives was  $\bar{x}=3.55$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.67$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.32$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there was not a statistically significant difference between the application groups and the control group. However, although the students in the blogging and portfolio-keeping groups maintained their level of autonomy for the dimension of objectives after the study, there was a decrease in the autonomy level of the students for the present dimension. It was revealed that the students in the experimental groups usually believed in themselves while learning a language, and the students in the control group sometimes believed in themselves.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.8. *assessment/ motivation.*

The eighth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the assessment and motivation which aimed to find out the attitudes of the students towards assessment and the effect of assessment on their motivation to study. There were five items under this dimension and one of these items indicated independency (item 39) and four of these items indicated dependency (item 30, item 34, item 38, item 40). The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements that signalled independence was as follows: “never true” weighed one point, “rarely true” weighed two points, “sometimes true” weighed three points, “usually true” weighed four points, and “always true” weighed five points. The assignment of the points to the answers of the statements that signalled dependence was as follows: “never true” weighed five points, “rarely true” weighed four points, “sometimes true” weighed three points, “usually true” weighed two points, and “always true” weighed one point. The five items of this dimension in the learner autonomy questionnaire are illustrated in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20

#### *Statements of the Assessment/Motivation Dimension*

Item 30	I don't study the topics after I get a good grade from my test.
Item 34	I study English when we are going to have a test.
Item 38	I do the English lesson activities only when my teacher is going to grade me.
Item 39	I like it when my teacher gives us different test types, other than written tests.
Item 40	I like it when my teacher does a lot of tests in our English lesson.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the assessment and motivation dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.21).

Table 4.21

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding Assessment/Motivation Dimension*

Variables	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.48	3.26	0.57	0.63	0.64	4.06	0.52	0.02	-	1-3; 2-3
Portfolio	20	20	3.38	3.25	0.63	0.38						
Control	20	20	3.25	2.85	0.71	0.51						

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.21 shows the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the students' pre-study and post-study evaluation of the dimension of assessment and motivation in the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and control group. The statistical mean value of their pre-study level of assessment/motivation was  $\bar{x}=3.48$  for the 20 students that used a blog; it was  $\bar{x}=3.38$  for the 20 students that kept a portfolio and it was  $\bar{x}=3.25$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found out that students in the blogging group stated "usually true" for the statements under the assessment dimension, but the students in the portfolio-keeping and control groups stated "sometimes true" while evaluating the assessment/motivation statements prior to the applications. Although there was not a significant difference among the groups for the dimension of assessment, it was revealed that the blog users had the highest autonomy level for this dimension before the study. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no differences in the mean values of the pre-study evaluation of the assessment/motivation dimension among the groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.64; p>0.05$ ).

However, Table 4.21 illustrates that when the mean values of the post-study evaluation of the dimension of assessment/motivation were examined, it was found out that there was a significant difference among the groups after the implementation in terms of the assessment/motivation dimension ( $f=4.06; p<0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of the dimension of assessment and motivation was  $\bar{x}=3.26$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.25$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.85$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that although the students stated "sometimes true" for the statements in this dimension, there was a meaningful difference between the groups after the application process in terms of their attitudes towards external assessment. According to the Tukey's analysis, the students in the blogging group and

portfolio-keeping group displayed higher autonomy than the students in the control group in terms of the dimension of assessment/motivation.

#### 4.2.1.1.1.9. *other cultures.*

The ninth dimension of the learner autonomy questionnaire was the other cultures which aimed to reveal the extent to which the students showed interest in the culture of the country whose language they were learning. There were four items that indicated independence under this dimension and these items were given in Table 4.22.

Table 4.22

#### *Statements of the Other Cultures Dimension*

Item 41	I try to understand the jokes and riddles of the foreign language.
Item 42	I also investigate the culture of the foreign language I am learning.
Item 43	I also investigate the idioms and sayings of the foreign language I am learning.
Item 44	I ask people who have lived abroad about the lifestyles of the people living there.

The mean values of the answers that the participants gave to the statements under the other cultures dimension were analyzed and each group's pre-study and post-study results were compared through One-Way ANOVA analysis (See Table 4.23).

Table 4.23

#### *Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding Other Cultures Dimension*

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>Mean</i>		<i>SD</i>		<i>F</i>		<i>P</i>		<i>D</i>	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	2.96	2.92	0.76	0.92	0.26	1.56	0.76*	0.21*	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	2.80	2.63	0.73	0.90						
Control	20	20	2.97	3.15	1.01	0.91						

\*(p>0.005)

Table 4.23 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the students' pre-study and post-study evaluation of their attitudes towards other cultures while learning a language in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The statistical mean value of their pre-study level of other cultures was  $\bar{x}=2.96$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.80$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.97$  for the 20 students in the control group. It was found out that the students in all the groups stated "sometimes true" while evaluating their attitudes towards other cultures while learning a language prior to the study. According to the

results of One-Way ANOVA Test analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the pre-study evaluation of the attitudes towards other cultures among the groups ( $f=0.26$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The students in all groups believed they sometimes gave importance to learning the culture of the target language prior to the study.

According to Table 4.23, when the mean values of the post-study level of their attitudes towards other cultures were examined, it was found out that there were also no statistically significant differences among the groups after the implementation in terms of their attitudes towards other cultures ( $f=1.56$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The statistical mean value of their attitudes towards other cultures after the study was  $\bar{x}=2.92$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.63$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=3.15$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups after the application process. The students in all of the groups stated “sometimes true” for the statements in this dimension. As a result, it can be stated that the students in all groups expressed almost equal interest in learning the culture of the target language after the application process.

As a result, after the learner autonomy dimensions were examined, it was found out that the students’ attitudes towards none of the dimensions, except one dimension-assessment/motivation- changed after the study. The analyses revealed that there were no mean value differences for eight of the dimensions on the learner autonomy questionnaire among the groups both before and after the study ( $p>0.05$ ). However, a significant difference was found out for the dimension of assessment and motivation ( $p<0.05$ ). The mean values for this dimension showed a meaningful difference among the groups. The statistical mean value of the assessment and motivation level after the study was  $\bar{x}=3.26$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=3.25$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.85$  for the 20 students in the control group. These results indicated a significant difference between the application groups and the control group. The Tukey’s analysis illustrated that the mean values of the students in the blogging and portfolio-keeping groups showed a significant difference from those of the control group. The autonomy levels of the bloggers and portfolio-keepers for the dimension of assessment/ motivation were higher than those of the control group. As a result, it can be stated that the students in the blog group and portfolio group were more autonomous in

terms of testing and learning a language. They stated that they studied English not to get good grades from the exams and that they were more open to new kinds of assessment.

#### **4.2.1.2. self-assessment of language skills.**

The second part of the first research question aimed to investigate the participants' pre- and post-application results regarding their self-assessment levels based on the type of the application and compare the results between the groups. In order to elicit the students' self-assessment of their English proficiency, a checklist was designed by the researcher. The Self-Assessment Checklist (SAC) was developed from the reference levels given in the Common European Framework by the researcher (for the self-assessment checklist, see Appendix B). The participants of the study were chosen from the pre-intermediate level; therefore the statements included in the questionnaire were taken from the B1 and B2 levels of the self-assessment grid. The questionnaire consisted of 23 statements, evaluating four language skills- listening, reading, writing, and speaking -spoken interaction and spoken production. The checklist had likert-scale of five items ranging from one to five. The participants were asked to respond to each of the 23 statements by thinking about their own language skills and deciding whether the statement regarding a specific language skill was "very well", "well", "average", "poor", and "very poor". The assignment of the points to the answers was as follows: "very well" weighed five points, "well" weighed four points, "average" weighed three points, "poor" weighed two points, and "very poor" weighed one point. After calculating the mean value for each of the 23 statements, the ones who had the highest mean values totally were claimed to evaluate their language skills higher than the ones who had lower mean values from the checklist.

In order to answer the second part of the first research question, the students' pre-study and post-study results regarding their self-assessment levels based on the application were compared among the groups. Since there were more than two groups whose mean values to be compared, One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed. Table 4.24 illustrates the pre-study self-assessment levels of the groups.

Table 4.24

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study Self-Assessment Levels*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
Blog	20	2.93	0.49	4.10	0.02	1-3
Portfolio	20	2.69	0.38			
Control	20	2.47	0.59			
Total	60	2.70	0.52			

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.24 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-study self-assessment scores of the students that used learner blogs, portfolios and neither learner blogs nor portfolios. The mean value of the self-assessment scores is  $\bar{x}=2.93$  for the 20 students that kept learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.69$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.47$  for the 20 students that used neither learner blogs nor portfolios. According to these mean values, it was found that students in the experimental groups stated “average” while assessing their own language skills ( $\bar{x}=2.93$  for the bloggers,  $\bar{x}=2.69$  for the portfolio-keepers), however the students in the control group stated “poor” for their language skills ( $\bar{x}=2.47$ ). The analysis revealed that the mean values of the self-assessment scores of the blog users and of the students in the control group showed a significant difference before the implementation process ( $f=4.10$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In order to find out which group the difference was in, the researcher applied Tukey’s test and according to the results of Tukey’s test, there was a meaningful difference between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who did not keep either learner blogs or portfolios. The results indicated that mean values of the self-assessment levels of the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=2.93$ ) were higher than the mean values of the self-assessment levels of the students who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.47$ ). This difference could result from the fact that it was the first time the students used a self-assessment checklist to evaluate their skills. They might have made misjudgements about their skills by overrating or underrating their language skills. However, there were no differences between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who kept portfolios; and between the students who kept portfolios and the students in the control group.

The second part of the analysis aimed to investigate the post-study results of the students regarding their self-assessment levels based on the application. Since there were

more than two groups whose mean values to be compared, One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed (see Table 4.25).

Table 4.25

*Comparison of the Groups' Post-study Self-Assessment Levels*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
Blog	20	3.31	0.65	9.85	0.00	1-2; 1-3
Portfolio	20	2.75	0.44			
Control	20	2.54	0.58			
Total	60	2.87	0.64			

1= Blog use, 2= Portfolio Use, 3= No blog/portfolio

Table 4.25 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-study self-assessment scores of the students that used learner blogs, portfolios and neither learner blogs nor portfolios. The mean value of the self-assessment scores is  $\bar{x}=3.31$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.75$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.54$  for the 20 students that did not have any applications. It was concluded that the students' self-assessment level mean values showed a significant difference after the implementation took place ( $f=9.85$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which signalled a significant difference between the variables, was accepted. In order to find out which group the difference was in, the researcher applied Tukey's test and according to the results of Tukey's test, there was a meaningful difference in the self-assessment mean values between the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ ) and the students who kept portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.75$ ), and the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ ) and the students in the control group ( $\bar{x}=2.54$ ). In both cases, the self-assessment levels of the students who kept learner blogs were higher than the ones in other two groups.

**4.2.1.2.1. analysis of each language skill on the self-assessment checklist.**

After the learners' general self-assessment levels were evaluated, each language skill was examined in detail in order to determine at which skill the learners evaluated themselves as better. According to the results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, each language skill had normal distribution. Therefore, since there were more than two groups whose mean values to be compared, One-Way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was



performed for each sub-point of the pre-study and post-study data (See Table 4.26; Table 4.27; Table 4.28; Table 4.29).

Table 4.26

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre- and Post-study Listening Skills*

Groups	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	2.90	3.29	0.44	0.57	12.2	11.25	0.00	0.00	1-2, 1-3	1-2, 1-3
Portfolio	20	20	2.43	2.80	0.54	0.68						
Control	20	20	2.08	2.36	0.58	0.60						
Total	60	60	2.47	2.81	0.61	0.71						

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.26 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA Test analysis regarding the pre- and post-study listening skills of the students in the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and control groups. The mean values of the pre-study listening skill is  $\bar{x}=2.90$  for the 20 students who used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.43$  for the 20 students who kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.08$  for the 20 students who did not use learner blogs or portfolios. According to these mean values, it was found that students in the blogging group stated “average” while assessing their pre-study listening skills ( $\bar{x}=2.90$ ), however the students in the portfolio and control groups stated “poor” for their pre-study listening skills ( $\bar{x}=2.43$  for the portfolio-keepers,  $\bar{x}=2.08$  for the control group). The analysis revealed that the mean values of the blog users' pre-study listening skills and those of the students in the portfolio group and control group showed a significant difference before the implementation process ( $f=12.2$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In order to find out which group the difference was in, the researcher applied Tukey's test and according to the results of Tukey's test, there was a meaningful difference between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who kept portfolios and also between the students who kept learner blogs and the ones in the control group. The results indicated that pre-study listening skill levels of the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=2.90$ ) were higher than those of the students who kept portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.43$ ) and who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.08$ ). However, there were no statistically significant differences between the students who kept portfolios and the students in the control group in terms of pre-study listening skill.

Table 4.26 also reveals the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-study listening skills of the students in the blogging group, the portfolio-keeping group, and the control group. The mean values of the post-study listening skill is  $\bar{x}=3.29$  for the 20 students who used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.80$  for the 20 students who kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.36$  for the 20 students who did not use either learner blogs or portfolios. According to these mean values, it was found out that students in the blogging and portfolio-keeping groups stated “average” while assessing their post-study listening skills ( $\bar{x}=2.90$  for the blog users,  $\bar{x}=2.80$  for the portfolio-keepers), however the students in the control group stated “poor” for their post-study listening skills ( $\bar{x}=2.36$ ). The analysis revealed that the mean values of the blog users’ post-study listening skills and those of the students in the portfolio group and control group showed a significant difference after the implementation process ( $f=11.25$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In order to find out which group the difference was in, Tukey’s test was applied and according to the results of the Tukey’s test, a significant difference was found between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who kept portfolios and also between the students who kept learner blogs and the ones in the control group. The results indicated that post-study listening skill levels of the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=3.29$ ) were higher than those of the students who kept portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.80$ ) and who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.36$ ). However, there were no differences between the students who kept portfolios and the students in the control group.

Table 4.27

*Comparison of the Groups’ Pre- and Post-study Reading Skills*

Groups	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	3.10	3.47	0.75	0.57	11.25	4.26	0.01	0.00	1-3	1-2, 1-3
Portfolio	20	20	2.88	2.53	0.52	0.58						
Control	20	20	2.52	2.60	0.78	0.71						
Total	60	60	2.87	2.83	0.81	0.66						

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.27 reveals the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre- and post-study reading skills of the students in the blog group, the portfolio group and the control group. The mean value of the pre-study reading skill is  $\bar{x}=3.10$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.88$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios, and it was

$\bar{x}=2.52$  for the 20 students who did not have any kind of applications. According to these mean values, it was found out that students in the blogging and the portfolio groups stated “average” while assessing their pre-reading skills ( $\bar{x}=3.10$  for the blog users,  $\bar{x}=2.88$  for the portfolio keepers). However the students in the control group stated “poor” for their pre-study reading skills ( $\bar{x}=2.52$ ). Their mean values of pre-reading skill varied from  $\bar{x}=2.52$  to  $\bar{x}=3.10$ . According to the result of One-Way ANOVA analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected, so it was concluded that the mean values of the pre-study reading skills of the students in the three groups showed a significant difference before the implementation took place ( $f=4.26$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). In order to determine which group the difference was in, the researcher applied Tukey’s test and the results of Tukey’s test showed that there was a meaningful difference between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who did not keep either learner blogs or portfolios. The results indicated that pre-study reading skill levels of the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=3.10$ ) were higher than those of the students who kept portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.43$ ) and who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.08$ ). However, no statistically significant differences were revealed between the students who used learner blogs and the ones who kept portfolios and between the students who kept portfolios and the ones in the control group.

Table 4.27 also displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-reading skills of the students in the blog group, the portfolio group and the control group. The mean value of the post-study reading skill was  $\bar{x}=3.47$  for the 20 students who used blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.53$  for the 20 students who kept portfolios, and it was  $\bar{x}=2.60$  for the 20 students who did not have any kind of implementation. According to these mean values, it was found out that students in the blogging group stated “average” while assessing their post-study reading skills ( $\bar{x}=3.47$ ), however the students in the portfolio and control groups stated “poor” for their post-reading skills ( $\bar{x}=2.53$  for the portfolio keepers,  $\bar{x}=2.60$  for the control group). Their mean values of the post-study reading skill varied from  $\bar{x}=2.53$  to  $\bar{x}=3.47$ . According to the result of O-One-Way ANOVA analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected, so it was concluded that the mean values of the post-reading skills of the students in the three groups showed a statistically significant difference after the implementation took place ( $f=11.25$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). In order to determine which group the difference was in, the researcher applied Tukey’s test and the results of the Tukey’s test indicated a significant difference between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who kept portfolios and also between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who did

not keep either learner blogs or portfolios. The results indicated that post-study reading skill levels of the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=3.47$ ) were higher than those of the students who kept portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.53$ ) and who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.60$ ). However, no differences were revealed between the students who kept portfolios and the students in the control group.

Table 4.28

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre- and Post-study Writing Skills*

Groups	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	2.84	3.21	0.69	0.86	0.91	2.44	0.40	0.09	-	-
Portfolio	20	20	2.70	2.72	0.50	0.64						
Control	20	20	2.57	2.70	0.67	0.93						
Total	60	60	2.70	2.87	0.63	0.84						

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.28 shows the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-and post-study writing skills of the students in the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and control groups. The mean value of the pre-study writing skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.84$  for the 20 students who used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.70$  for the 20 students who kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.57$  for the 20 students who did not use learner blogs or portfolios. It was found out that the students in all the groups stated “average” when they self-assessed their pre-study writing skills. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the pre-study writing skill scores among groups before the implementation took place ( $f=0.91$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

Table 4.28 also shows the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-study writing skills of the students in the blogging, portfolio-keeping and control groups. The mean value of the post-study writing skill level was  $\bar{x}=3.21$  for the 20 students who used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.72$  for the 20 students who kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.70$  for the 20 students who did not use learner blogs or portfolios. It was revealed that the students in all the groups stated “average” when they self-assessed their post-study writing skills. According to the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis,  $H_0$  was accepted, which means that there were no statistically significant differences in the mean values of the post-study writing skill scores among the groups after the implementation took place ( $f=2.44$ ;  $p>0.05$ ).

Table 4.29

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre- and Post-study Speaking Skills*

Groups	N		Mean		SD		F		P		D	
	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post	pre	post
Blog	20	20	2.92	3.32	0.55	0.65	1.52	8.52	0.22	0.00	-	1-2, 1-3
Portfolio	20	20	2.76	2.84	0.38	0.50						
Control	20	20	2.62	2.54	0.65	0.62						
Total	60	60	2.77	2.90	0.54	0.67						

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.29 displays the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre- and post-study speaking skills of the students in the blogging, portfolio-keeping and control groups. The mean value of the pre-study speaking skill was  $\bar{x}=2.92$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.76$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.62$  for the 20 students that did not have any implementations. It was concluded that students' pre-study speaking skill mean values did not show a statistically significant difference before the implementation took place ( $f=1.52$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). Generally, the students in each group self-assessed their pre-study speaking skills as "average." In this case, the null hypothesis was accepted, which supported that there was not a relationship between the pre-speaking skill and the application. The results indicated that the mean values of the students did not show a statistically significant difference between all groups.

Table 4.29 also shows the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-study speaking skills of the students in the blogging, portfolio-keeping, and control groups. The mean value of the post-study speaking skill was  $\bar{x}=3.32$  for the 20 students who used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=2.84$  for the 20 students who kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=2.54$  for the 20 students who did not use either learner blogs or portfolios. According to these mean values, it was found out that students in the blogging and portfolio-keeping groups stated "average" while assessing their post-study speaking skills ( $\bar{x}=3.32$  for the blog users,  $\bar{x}=2.84$  for the portfolio keepers), however the students in the control group stated "poor" for their post-study speaking skills ( $\bar{x}=2.54$ ). The analysis revealed that the mean values of the blog users' post-study speaking skills and those of the students in the portfolio group and control group showed a statistically significant difference after the implementation process ( $f=8.52$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In order to find out which group the difference was in, Tukey's test was applied and according to the results of the Tukey's test, a significant difference

was found between the students who kept learner blogs and the students who kept portfolios and also between the students who kept learner blogs and the ones in the control group. The results indicated that post-study speaking skill levels of the students who kept learner blogs ( $\bar{x}=3.32$ ) were higher than those of the students who kept portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.84$ ) and who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios ( $\bar{x}=2.54$ ). However, there were no statistically significant differences between the students who kept portfolios and the students in the control group.

#### **4.2.1.3. *language achievement of the students.***

The third and last part of the first research question aimed to investigate the language success scores of the students in each group before and after the study and to reveal any differences in their success scores between the groups. The tool that was adopted to measure the participants' scores of English proficiency was a series of exams prepared by the lecturers at the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University. Students had three assessment exams per term, and at the end of the year they had seven exams including one final exam that was conducted in the second term. The written exams tested three language skills- listening, reading, writing- and language use and vocabulary knowledge (For the sample language test, see Appendix H or you can also find a copy of the sample exam on the web page of the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University). There were also two speaking exams that evaluated students' speaking skill per term; one was conducted in the first term and the other one was conducted in the second term. The average of the students' all exam grades determined whether the student would pass or fail the preparatory class. Our study was carried out in the second term; therefore the average of their three midterm exam grades-two written exams and one speaking exam- were identified before the study took place. In addition, three language assessment exams-two written exams and one speaking exam- and one final exam were used as a determinant to measure the participants' scores of English proficiency at the end of the year. Table 4.30, Table 4.31, and Table 4.32 display the exam results of the students in each group.

Table 4.30 demonstrates the exam grades of the students in the blogging group. The first three midterms, which were conducted in the first term of the academic year, indicate the exam performances of the students before the study. The last three midterms and the

final exam, which were conducted in the second term of the academic year, indicate their post-study exam performances.

Table 4.30

*Exam Grades of the Students in the Blogging Group*

Students	Pre-study Exams			Post-study Exams			
	Midterm 1	Midterm 2	Midterm 3	Midterm 4	Midterm 5	Midterm 6	Final Exam
Student 1	61	69	100	52	100	57	69
Student 2	45	49	80	73	92	48	68
Student 3	47	58	64	33	88	47	44
Student 4	60	81	100	63	100	48	59
Student 5	49	50	84	52	92	56	63
Student 6	72	70	60	49	100	92	88
Student 7	37	49	76	46	60	36	54
Student 8	55	69	64	59	64	51	59
Student 9	41	59	64	54	80	36	49
Student 10	48	74	72	60	88	64	71
Student 11	48	61	88	35	80	45	52
Student 12	43	60	72	46	100	53	63
Student 13	70	73	100	58	88	63	59
Student 14	47	67	96	49	96	74	78
Student 15	41	69	88	54	80	57	64
Student 16	64	76	80	61	100	73	79
Student 17	43	63	72	61	80	54	65
Student 18	54	71	64	52	92	61	54
Student 19	36	53	60	45	68	43	52
Student 20	59	71	72	70	92	55	70

Table 4.31

*Exam Grades of the Students in the Portfolio-keeping Group*

Students	Pre-study Exams			Post-study Exams			
	Midterm 1	Midterm 2	Midterm 3	Midterm 4	Midterm 5	Midterm 6	Final Exam
Student 1	57	56	88	40	60	58	49
Student 2	62	57	84	56	64	52	51
Student 3	42	62	84	52	88	52	62
Student 4	76	88	88	75	100	78	75
Student 5	66	90	92	82	100	77	77
Student 6	69	79	100	69	100	69	74
Student 7	59	67	88	47	88	61	58
Student 8	56	66	88	65	96	78	61
Student 9	65	57	76	55	68	64	54
Student 10	57	70	72	55	56	56	56
Student 11	67	66	100	55	84	49	58
Student 12	55	75	88	48	96	59	58
Student 13	75	72	92	72	92	65	67
Student 14	60	52	88	53	80	56	56
Student 15	67	69	80	56	92	57	65
Student 16	52	61	92	51	88	50	50
Student 17	74	75	92	76	72	70	80
Student 18	56	59	88	67	63	56	50
Student 19	47	67	92	54	96	79	65
Student 20	56	54	92	49	92	47	46

Table 4.31 illustrates the exam grades of the students in the portfolio-keeping group. The first three midterms, which were conducted in the first term of the academic year, indicate the students' pre-study exam performances and the last three midterms and the final exam, which were conducted in the second term of the academic year, indicate their post-study exam performances.

Table 4.32

*Exam Grades of the Students in the Control Group*

Students	Pre-study Exams			Post-study Exams			
	Midterm 1	Midterm 2	Midterm 3	Midterm 4	Midterm 5	Midterm 6	Final Exam
Student 1	51	49	92	44	68	29	54
Student 2	77	85	100	73	88	77	76
Student 3	48	56	80	41	92	71	70
Student 4	42	49	76	46	60	46	50
Student 5	81	83	100	79	100	78	76
Student 6	77	79	96	57	92	58	68
Student 7	81	80	76	85	100	54	74
Student 8	75	69	72	66	96	63	68
Student 9	79	61	88	70	100	68	67
Student 10	46	47	88	35	84	47	59
Student 11	62	70	92	52	92	54	55
Student 12	65	71	96	69	92	65	64
Student 13	88	93	100	81	100	85	82
Student 14	51	53	92	36	92	42	46
Student 15	48	45	72	33	60	37	49
Student 16	63	67	92	64	80	48	73
Student 17	70	59	92	65	80	46	56
Student 18	67	84	88	75	88	73	71
Student 19	65	71	76	56	72	55	67
Student 20	49	57	96	26	88	43	56

Finally, Table 4.32 presents the exam grades of the students in the control group. The first three midterms, which were conducted in the first term of the academic year, indicate the exam performances of the students before the study and the last three midterms and the final exam, which were conducted in the second term of the academic year, indicate their post-study exam performances.

The researcher used the results of all these seven exams in order to determine the language achievement scores of the students in each group. In this way, it could be possible for the researcher to see whether there would be any differences between the groups in terms of their general language achievement scores before and after the study. After analyzing the exam grades of the students, the pre-study and post-study language achievement scores of the students can be compared between the groups through One-Way ANOVA Test analysis (see Table 4.33 and 4.34).



Table 4.33

*Comparison of the Groups' Pre-study Success Scores*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
Blog	20	64.46	8.63	5.58	0.00	1-2, 1-3
Portfolio	20	72.06	6.60			
Control	20	72.94	10.73			
Total	60	66.88	8.65			

1= Blog use, 2= Traditional Portfolio, 3= No Blog/Portfolio

Table 4.33 reveals the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the pre-study success scores of the students who used learner blogs, kept portfolios and did not use either learner blogs or portfolios. The mean value of the success scores was  $\bar{x}=64.46$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=72.06$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios, and it was  $\bar{x}=72.94$  for the 20 students who did not have any kinds of applications. Their mean values of success scores varied from 64.46 to 72.94. Table 4.33 revealed that the most successful learners were the control group learners and the least successful learners were the blogging group learners. According to the result of One-Way ANOVA analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, so it was concluded that the mean values of success scores of the students in the three groups showed a significant difference before the implementation took place ( $f=5.58$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). In order to find out which groups showed differences, Tukey's test was applied, and according to the results of Tukey's test analysis, there was a statistically significant difference in the pre-study success scores of the students in the blogging group and the portfolio-keeping group, and between the students in the blogging group and the ones in the control group. As a result, at the beginning of the study, the success level of the students varied significantly. This difference could result from the fact that the students in each group were not of the same major field of study. This difference could affect their success level in the exams.

Table 4.34

*Comparison of the Groups' Post-study Success Scores*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>D</b>
Blog	20	64.81	9.06	0.14	0.86*	-
Portfolio	20	66.41	9.18			
Control	20	66.21	12.14			
Total	60	63.52	11.58			

\*( $p>0.005$ )

Table 4.34 reveals the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis regarding the post-study success scores of the students who used learner blogs and portfolios and did not keep either learner blogs or portfolios. The mean value of the success scores was  $\bar{x}=64.81$  for the 20 students that used learner blogs; it was  $\bar{x}=66.41$  for the 20 students that kept portfolios and it was  $\bar{x}=66.21$  for the 20 students who did not use either learner blogs or portfolios. The students' mean values of success scores varied from  $\bar{x}=64.81$  to  $\bar{x}=66.41$ . These results indicated that the null hypothesis was accepted ( $p>0.05$ ) which means that no statistically significant differences were revealed between the groups after the study. According to the result of One-Way ANOVA analysis, it was concluded that success scores of the students in three groups did not show a significant difference after the study took place ( $f=0.14; p>0.05$ ).

#### **4.2.2. Are there any differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the blog group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?**

The second research question aimed to explore the differences in the blog users' pre-study and post-study results regarding their autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores. Since the students' pre-study and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed.

##### **4.2.2.1. *autonomy levels of the blog users.***

The first comparison of the blog users' pre-study and post-study results involves the dimension of learner autonomy. The learners' pre- and post-study autonomy levels were compared using Paired Samples T-test. Table 4.35 demonstrates the results of the Paired Samples T-test for the blogging group.

Table 4.35

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results regarding the Autonomy Scores of the Blog Users*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Autonomy	Pre	20	3.18	0.29	-0.53	0.59*
	Post	20	3.20	0.31		

\*( $p>0.005$ )

Table 4.35 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept learner blogs. The mean value of the students'

pre-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.18$  and post-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.20$ , which meant that the students stated they were “sometimes” autonomous while learning English both before and after the application process. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted and so there were statistically no significant differences between pre-study and post-study mean values of the blog users in terms of autonomy level ( $t= -0.53$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). It means that the ten-week practice of learner blogging did not make any significant differences on the learners’ autonomy levels.

#### **4.2.2.1.1. analysis of the dimensions in the LAQ for the blog users.**

Since the autonomy questionnaire involves nine dimensions, pre-study and post-study results for each dimension were also analyzed in order to find out how the evaluation of the blog users for their autonomy levels changed at the end of the study. According to the results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, eight dimensions out of nine dimensions in the learner autonomy questionnaire showed a normal distribution. Therefore, Paired-Samples T-test, which is a parametric test, was applied for eight of the dimensions in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users regarding their autonomy levels on each dimension. However, only one of the nine dimensions, objectives and evaluation, did not show a normal distribution. Therefore, Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test, was applied in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users regarding their autonomy levels on that specific dimension. Table 4.36 demonstrates the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept learner blogs for eight of the dimensions and Table 4.37 illustrates the results of Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept learner blogs for the dimension of objectives and evaluation.

Table 4.36 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the blog users’ pre-study and post-study data about the eight out of nine autonomy dimensions on the learner autonomy questionnaire. The results showed that the mean values of the blog users after the LB process did not show a difference for any of the eight dimensions of the autonomy questionnaire ( $p>0.05$ ). For the dimension of readiness for self-direction, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=3.56$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.59$  after the study. According to these results, there was not a statistically significant difference in the pre-study and post-study results regarding this dimension ( $t= -$

0.26;  $p>0.05$ ). The learners believed that they usually felt ready to take control of their learning both before and after the study. Although there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study results for the dimension of readiness for self-direction, the mean values of the students were high both before and after the study.

Table 4.36

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Blog Users Regarding the Dimensions in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Readiness for self-direction	Pre	20	3.56	0.46	-0.26	0.79*
	Post	20	3.59	0.51		
Independent work in language learning	Pre	20	3.41	0.49	-0.82	0.42*
	Post	20	3.49	0.52		
Importance of class/teacher	Pre	20	3.06	0.62	-0.79	0.43*
	Post	20	3.14	0.49		
Role of the teacher	Pre	20	2.66	0.71	-1.24	0.22*
	Post	20	2.82	0.64		
Language learning activities	Pre	20	3.08	0.67	0.29	0.76*
	Post	20	3.05	0.51		
Selection of content	Pre	20	2.76	0.81	-1.07	0.29*
	Post	20	2.88	0.76		
Assessment and motivation	Pre	20	3.48	0.57	1.60	0.12*
	Post	20	3.26	0.63		
Other cultures	Pre	20	2.96	0.76	0.24	0.80*
	Post	20	2.92	0.92		

\*( $p>0.005$ )

In addition, Table 4.36 reveals that the second dimension where there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users was the dimension of independent work in language learning. The mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=3.41$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.49$  after the study. According to these results, no statistically significant differences were revealed for this dimension after the study ( $t= -0.82$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The learners believed that they usually studied independently and were usually involved in independent studies while learning English before the study, but they rarely needed the presence of a teacher. According to the post-study results, at the end of the ten-week LB process, the students' independence in studying did not increase or decrease significantly. The next dimension where there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-

study results of the blog users was the importance of class and teacher, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the teacher and class while learning a language. For the dimension of importance of class and teacher, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=3.06$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.14$  after the study. According to these mean values, no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the importance of teacher and class in language learning were revealed after the study ( $t= -0.79$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The students gave almost equal importance to the presence of a teacher in their learning and they believed that they could sometimes learn without the assistance of a teacher both before and after the study. The next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users was the role of teacher, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the teacher explanation and supervision in class. For the dimension of role of teacher, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=2.66$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.88$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of the teacher were revealed after the study ( $t= -1.24$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed that they sometimes gave importance to the existence of teacher to explain things and to supervise them both before and after the study.

Table 4.36 also shows that the next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users was the language learning activities, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students were engaged in language learning activities outside the classroom. For the dimension of language learning activities, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=3.08$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.05$  after the study. The results for this dimension were too close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the language activities outside the classroom were revealed after the study ( $t=0.29$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they were sometimes involved in language activities outside the classroom both before and after the study. In addition, the next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users was the selection of content, which aimed to investigate the attitudes of the students' towards sharing responsibility for deciding what was to be taught in class and for choosing the materials to be used. For the dimension of selection of content, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=2.76$  prior to the

study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.88$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' beliefs about the selection of content were revealed after the study ( $t= -1.07$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes took responsibility of what they would learn and how they would learn both before and after the study.

In addition, Table 4.36 reveals that another dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users was the assessment and motivation, which aimed to investigate the importance of assessment in motivating the learners. For the dimension of assessment and motivation, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=3.48$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.26$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of assessment for motivation to study were revealed after the study ( $t=1.60$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners usually believed that assessment was not a significant factor for their study and showed a high autonomy level for this dimension before the study. However, although their autonomy levels decreased a little bit, there was not a significant difference in the results and they sometimes believed that assessment was also not an important motive for them to study after the study. Therefore it can be stated that the learners in the blogging group were not in favour of using tests to make them study and also they stated that they rarely studied English or were involved in language activities just for tests both before and after the study. This result is clearly the proof of autonomous behaviour for the blog users.

According to Table 4.36, the final dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users was the other cultures, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the culture of other countries while learning a language. For the dimension of other cultures, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x}=2.96$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.92$  after the study. The results for this dimension were too close, therefore no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of other cultures in language learning were revealed after the study ( $t=0.24$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes gave importance to the culture of the language they were learning both before and after the study. Therefore, it can be stated that the students in the blogging group were not interested with the cultural items in the language learning process.

Table 4.37

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Blog Users Regarding the Objectives and Evaluation Dimension in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	Z	P
Objectives and evaluation	Pre	20	3.55	0.48	-0.12	0.90*
	Post	20	3.55	0.60		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.37 illustrates the results of Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept learner blogs for the dimension of objectives and evaluation. According to the results, there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the blog users in terms of the objectives and evaluation dimension, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students felt confident in defining their objectives in language learning and how they evaluated their learning process. For the dimension of objectives and evaluation, the mean value of the participants in the blogging group was  $\bar{x} = 3.55$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x} = 3.55$  after the study. The results for this dimension were exactly the same, therefore no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the objectives and evaluation were revealed after the application ( $z = -0.12$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). The students usually believed they could reach a good level in language learning both before and after the application.

#### 4.2.2.2. *self-assessment levels of the blog users.*

The second part of the second research question aimed to explore the differences in the blog users' pre-study and post-study results regarding their self-assessment level. As the students' pre-study and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed (See Table 4.38).

Table 4.38

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Blog Users Regarding the Self-Assessment Scores*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Self-assessment	Pre	20	2.93	0.49	-4.13	0.00*
	Post	20	3.31	0.65		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.38 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study self-assessment levels of the students who kept learner blogs. The mean value of the

students' pre-study self-assessment level was  $\bar{x}=2.93$  and the mean value of the students' post-study self-assessment level was  $\bar{x}=3.31$ . These mean values revealed that the learners in the blogging group assessed their language skills as "average" both before and after the LB process, however with different mean values. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the blog users in terms of self-assessment level ( $t=4.13$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This meant that the ten-week practice of LB made a significant difference on the learners' self-assessment levels. At the end of the ten-week LB program, the mean values of the learners' self-assessment levels increased, which meant that they saw themselves better at English.

#### **4.2.2.2.1. analysis of each language skill in the self-assessment checklist for the blog users.**

After examining the blog users' general assessment of their language skills, each skill was investigated separately in order to reveal the changes that occurred in their language skills. The blog users' pre-study and post-study results regarding all language skills were analyzed in detail. Since the students' pre-study and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed for each skill separately. (See Table 4.39, Table 4.40, Table 4.41, Table 4.42).

Table 4.39

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Listening Skills of the Blog Users*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Listening	Pre	20	2.90	0.44	-3.78	0.00*
	Post	20	3.29	0.57		

\*( $p<0.005$ )

Table 4.39 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study listening skills of students who kept learner blogs. The mean value of the students' pre-study listening skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.90$  and the mean value of the students' post-study listening skills was  $\bar{x}=3.29$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their listening skill level both before and after the study, however with different mean values. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected



and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the blog users in terms of their listening skill ( $t = -3.78$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This meant that the ten-week practice of LB made a significant difference on the learners' listening skills. At the end of the ten-week LB program, the mean values of the learners' listening skills increased, which meant that they believed their listening skills were much better at the end of the LB process.

Table 4.40

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Reading Skills of the Blog Users*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Reading	Pre	20	3.10	0.57	-3.52	0.00*
	Post	20	3.47	0.75		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.40 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study reading skills of the students in the blogging group. The mean value of the students' pre-study reading skill was  $\bar{x} = 3.10$  and the mean value of the students' post-study reading skills was  $\bar{x} = 3.47$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their reading skills both before and after the study, however with different mean values. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the blog users' listening skills ( $t = -3.52$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This meant that at the end of the LB process, the mean values of the learners' reading skills increased. It can be stated that the ten-week practice of LB made a significant difference on the learners' reading skills.

Table 4.41

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Writing Skills of the Blog Users*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Writing	Pre	20	2.84	0.69	-2.36	0.02*
	Post	20	3.21	0.86		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.41 reveals the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study writing skills of the students in the blogging group. The mean value of the students' pre-study writing skills was  $\bar{x}=2.84$ , and the mean value of the students' post-study writing skills was  $\bar{x}=3.21$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their writing skills both before and after the study, however with different mean values. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the blog users' writing skills ( $t= -2.36$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This meant that at the end of the LB process, the mean values of the learners' writing skills increased and they assessed their writing skills higher after the LB. As a result, it can be stated that the ten-week practice of LB made a significant difference on the learners' writing skills.

Table 4.42

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Speaking Skills of the Blog Users*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Speaking	Pre	20	2.92	0.55	-4.59	0.00*
	Post	20	3.32	0.65		

\*( $p<0.005$ )

Table 4.42 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study speaking skills of the students in the blogging group. The mean value of the students' pre-study speaking skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.92$  and the mean value of the students' post-study speaking skills was  $\bar{x}=3.32$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their speaking skill level both before and after the study, however with different mean values. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the blog users in terms of their speaking skill ( $t= -4.59$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This meant that the ten-week practice LB made a significant difference on the learners' speaking skills. At the end of the ten-week LB program, the mean values of the learners' speaking skills increased, which meant that they believed their speaking skills improved after the LB process.

#### 4.2.2.3. *language achievement scores of the blog users.*

The last part of the second research question aimed to explore the difference in the blog users' pre-study and post-study results regarding language achievement scores. As the students' pre and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed (See Table 4.43).

Table 4.43

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Success Scores of the Blog Users*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Success	Pre	20	64.46	8.63	-0.19	0.84*
	Post	20	64.81	9.06		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.43 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study success scores of the students who kept learner blogs in order to find out whether there were any changes in the learners' language success levels. The mean value of the students' pre-study success scores was  $\bar{x}=64.46$  and the mean value of post-study success scores was  $\bar{x}=64.81$ , which were very close to each other. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there were no statistically significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the learners' success scores ( $t = -0.19$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This meant that that the ten-week LB did not increase the learners' success scores.

#### **4.2.3. Are there any differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?**

The third research question aimed to explore the differences in the portfolio keepers' pre-study and post-study results regarding their autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores. Since the students' pre-study and post-results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-test was performed (See Table 4.44).

#### 4.2.3.1. *autonomy levels of the portfolio keepers.*

The first comparison of the portfolio keepers' pre- and post-study results involves the dimension of learner autonomy. The learners' pre- and post-study autonomy levels were compared using Paired Samples T-test. Table 4.44 demonstrates the results of the Paired Samples T-test for the portfolio-keeping group.

Table 4.44

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Autonomy Scores of Portfolio Keepers*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Autonomy	Pre	20	3.13	0.29	-2.04	0.055*
	Post	20	3.22	0.33		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.44 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of the students who kept portfolios. The mean value of the students' pre-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.13$  and the mean value of the students' post-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.22$ , which meant that they stated they were "sometimes" autonomous while learning English both before and after the PK process. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted; therefore there were statistically no significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the portfolio keepers in terms of autonomy level ( $t = -2.04$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). It means that the ten-week training of PK program did not make any significant differences on the learners' autonomy levels.

#### 4.2.3.1.1. *analysis of the dimensions in the LAQ for the portfolio keepers.*

Since the autonomy questionnaire involves nine dimensions, pre-study and post-study results for each dimension were also analyzed in order to find out how the evaluation of the portfolio keepers for their autonomy levels changed at the end of the PK program. According to the results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, eight dimensions out of nine dimensions on the learner autonomy questionnaire showed a normal distribution. Therefore, Paired-Samples T-test, which is a parametric test, was applied for eight of the dimensions in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers regarding their autonomy levels on each dimension. However, only one of the nine dimensions, objectives and evaluation, did not show a normal distribution.

Therefore, Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test, was applied in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers regarding their autonomy levels on that specific dimension. Table 4.45 demonstrates the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept portfolios for eight of the dimensions and Table 4.46 illustrates the results of Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept portfolios for the dimension of objectives and evaluation.

Table 4.45

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Portfolio Keepers Regarding the Dimensions in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Readiness for self-direction	Pre	20	3.43	0.63	-2.55	0.01**
	Post	20	3.68	0.64		
Independent work in language learning	Pre	20	3.22	0.50	-2.84	0.01**
	Post	20	3.48	0.51		
Importance of class/teacher	Pre	20	3.20	0.40	-1.24	0.22*
	Post	20	3.31	0.55		
Role of the teacher	Pre	20	2.90	0.60	0.60	0.55*
	Post	20	2.84	0.61		
Language learning activities	Pre	20	2.91	0.66	-0.50	0.62*
	Post	20	2.97	0.56		
Selection of content	Pre	20	2.71	0.58	-1.53	0.14*
	Post	20	2.93	0.62		
Assessment and motivation	Pre	20	3.38	0.63	0.94	0.35*
	Post	20	3.25	0.38		
Other cultures	Pre	20	2.80	0.73	0.92	0.36*
	Post	20	2.63	0.90		

\*( $p > 0.005$ ); \*\* ( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.45 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the portfolio keepers' pre-study and post-study data about the autonomy dimensions in the learner autonomy questionnaire. The results showed that the mean values of the portfolio keepers after the portfolio-keeping process did not show a difference for most of the dimensions, except the dimensions of readiness for self-direction and independent work in language learning. No significant differences were found for the dimensions of importance of class and teacher, role of teacher, language learning activities, selection of content, objectives

and evaluation, assessment and motivation, and finally other cultures. The first dimension where a difference was revealed between the pre-study and post-study results was the dimension of readiness for self-direction, which aimed to investigate whether students felt ready to manage their learning without the need for a teacher. For the dimension of readiness for self-direction, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=3.43$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.68$  after the study. A significant difference in the students' beliefs about the readiness for self-direction was revealed after the study ( $t= -2.55$ ;  $p <0.05$ ). The learners believed that they usually felt ready to take control of their learning both before and after the study. However, the learners mean values increased, which indicated an increase in the learners' autonomy levels. The second dimension where there was a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers was the independent work in language learning. For the dimension of independent work in language learning, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping was  $\bar{x}=3.22$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.48$  after the study. A significant difference in the students' beliefs about the independent work in language learning was revealed after the study ( $t= -2.84$ ;  $p <0.05$ ). The learners believed they sometimes studied independently and do language activities independently before the study. However, the learners' autonomy levels increased for this dimension and they stated that they were usually involved in independent studies after the study.

According to Table 4.45, the first dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers was the importance of class and teacher, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the teacher and class while learning a language. This dimension required a reverse scoring because the statements measured students' dependence. For the dimension of importance of class and teacher, the mean values of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=3.20$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.31$  after the study. According to these mean values, no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the importance of teacher and class in language learning were revealed after the study ( $t= -1.24$ ;  $p >0.05$ ). The students gave more importance to the presence of a teacher in their learning and they believed they could sometimes learn without the assistance of a teacher before the study. The importance that the students gave to the teacher in their learning decreased after the study, which supported autonomous behaviours. The next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the

portfolio keepers was the role of teacher, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the teacher explanation and supervision in class. For the dimension of role of teacher, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=2.90$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.84$  after the study. The results for this dimension were too close, therefore no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of the teacher were revealed after the study ( $t=0.60$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes gave importance to the existence of a teacher to explain things and to supervise them both before and after the study. The next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers was the language learning activities, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students were engaged in language learning activities outside the classroom. For the dimension of language learning activities, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=2.91$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.97$  after the study. The results for this dimension were too close, therefore no significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the language activities outside the classroom were revealed after the study ( $t= -0.50$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they were sometimes involved in language activities outside the classroom both before and after the study.

Table 4.45 displays that the next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers was the selection of content, which aimed to investigate the attitudes of the students' towards sharing responsibility for deciding what was to be taught in class and for choosing the materials to be used. For the dimension of selection of content, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=2.71$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.93$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the selection of content were revealed after the study ( $t= -1.53$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes took responsibility for what they would learn and how they would learn both before and after the study. Next, another dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers was the assessment and motivation, which aimed to investigate the importance of assessment in motivating the learners. For the dimension of assessment and motivation, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=3.38$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.25$  after the study.

The results for this dimension were close, therefore no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of assessment for motivation to study were revealed after the study ( $t=0.94$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). These results signalled an average autonomy level for the learners both before and after the study. The mean values indicated that the learners stated that they sometimes believed assessment was a significant factor for their study. Therefore, it can be stated that the learners in the portfolio-keeping group sometimes felt that it could be a good idea to use tests to motivate them both before and after the study. The final dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers was the other cultures, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the culture of other countries while learning a language. For the dimension of other cultures, the mean value of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=2.80$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.63$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of other cultures in language learning were revealed after the study ( $t=0.92$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes gave importance to the culture of the language they were learning before and after the study. Therefore, it can be stated that the students in the portfolio-keeping group were not interested in the cultural items in the language learning process very much.

Table 4.46

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Portfolio Keepers Regarding the Objectives and Evaluation Dimension in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	Z	P
Objectives and evaluation	Pre	20	3.45	0.62	-2.49	0.01*
	Post	20	3.67	0.65		

\*( $p<0.005$ )

Table 4.46 illustrates the results of Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept portfolios for the dimension of objectives and evaluation, which was the last dimension of the LAQ. According to the results, there was a significant difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio keepers in terms of the objectives and evaluation dimension, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students felt confident in defining their objectives in language learning and to find out how they evaluated their learning process. For the dimension of objectives and evaluation, the mean value of the participants in the



portfolio-keeping group was  $\bar{x}=3.45$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.67$  after the study. The results indicated that there were significant differences in the students' beliefs about the objectives and evaluation dimension ( $z = -2.49$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The students usually believed they could reach a good level in language learning both before and after the study, however with different mean values. It can be stated that PK contributed to their self-confidence in language learning and they believed they would reach a good level in English.

#### 4.2.3.2. *self-assessment levels of the portfolio keepers.*

The second part of the third research question aimed to explore the differences in the portfolio keepers' pre-study and post-study results regarding their self-assessment level. Since the variables showed a normal distribution and the students' pre-study and post-results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-test was performed (See Table 4.47).

Table 4.47

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Self-Assessment Scores of the Portfolio Keepers*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Self-assessment	Pre	20	2.69	0.38	-0.48	0.63*
	Post	20	2.75	0.44		

\*( $p>0.005$ )

Table 4.47 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study self-assessment levels of the students who kept portfolios. The mean value of the students' pre-study self-assessment level was  $\bar{x}=2.69$  and the mean value of the students' post-study self-assessment level was  $\bar{x}=2.75$ , which meant that they assessed their language skills as "average" both before and after the PK process. This finding supported the null hypothesis ( $p>0.05$ ). According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, there were statistically no significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the portfolio keepers in terms of self-assessment level ( $t=0.48$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). It meant that the mean values of the learners' self-assessment levels did not show any difference in this ten-week PK process.

**4.2.3.2.1. analysis of each language skill in the self-assessment checklist for the portfolio keepers.**

After examining the portfolio keepers' general assessment of their language skills, each skill was investigated separately in order to find out the changes that occurred in their language skills. The portfolio keepers' pre- and post-study results regarding all language skills were analyzed in detail. Since the variables showed a normal distribution and the students' pre- and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed for each skill separately. (See Table 4.48, Table 4.49, Table 4.50, Table 4.51).

Table 4.48

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Listening Skills of the Portfolio Keepers*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Listening	Pre	20	2.43	0.54	-2.16	0.04*
	Post	20	2.80	0.68		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.48 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study listening skills of students who kept portfolios. The mean value of the students' pre-study listening skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.43$  and the mean value of the students' post-study listening skills was  $\bar{x}=2.80$ , which meant that the students stated "poor" for their pre-study listening skills, but "average" for their post-study listening skills. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the portfolio users in terms of their listening skill ( $t = -2.16$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This meant that the ten-week practice of portfolio-keeping made a significant difference on the learners' listening skills. At the end of the ten-week portfolio-keeping program, the mean values of the learners' listening skills increased, which meant that the students in the portfolio group believed that their listening skills improved at the end of the portfolio-keeping process.

Table 4.49

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Reading Skills of the Portfolio Keepers*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Reading	Pre	20	2.69	0.38	1.85	0.07*
	Post	20	2.75	0.44		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.49 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study reading skills of the students in the portfolio group. The mean value of the students' pre-study reading skill was  $\bar{x}=2.69$  and the mean value of their post-study reading skill was  $\bar{x}=2.75$ , which meant that the students self-assessed their reading skill as "average" both before and after the training process. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted and so there were statistically no significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the portfolio-keepers in terms of reading skill ( $t = 1.85$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). It means that the ten-week practice of PK did not make any significant differences on the learners' reading skills.

Table 4.50

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Writing Skills of the Portfolio Keepers*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Writing	Pre	20	2.70	0.50	-0.10	0.91*
	Post	20	2.72	0.64		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.50 reveals the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study writing skills of the students in the portfolio group. The mean value of the students' pre-study writing skills was  $\bar{x}=2.70$ , and the mean value of the students' post-study writing skills was  $\bar{x}=2.72$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their writing skills both before and after the study. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted, so there was no significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the portfolio keepers' writing skills ( $t = -0.10$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This meant that at the end of the portfolio-keeping process, the mean values of the learners' writing skills did not change a lot. As a result, it can be stated that the ten-week practice of portfolio-keeping did not make a significant difference on the learners' writing skills.

Table 4.51

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Speaking Skills of the Portfolio Keepers*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Speaking	Pre	20	2.76	0.38	-0.61	0.54*
	Post	20	2.84	0.50		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.51 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study speaking skills of the students in the portfolio group. The mean value of the students' pre-study speaking skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.76$  and the mean value of the students' post-study speaking skills was  $\bar{x}=2.84$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their speaking skill level both before and after the study. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted, therefore a statistically significant difference was not revealed between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the portfolio keepers in terms of their speaking skill ( $t = -0.61$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This meant that the ten-week practice of the PK did not make a significant difference on the learners' speaking skills. At the end of the ten-week PK program, the mean values of the learners' speaking skills remained almost the same.

#### 4.2.3.3. *language achievement scores of the portfolio keepers.*

The last part of the third research question aimed to explore the difference in the portfolio keepers' pre-study and post-study results regarding language achievement scores. Since the variables had a normal distribution and the students' pre- and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed (See Table 4.52).

Table 4.52

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Success Scores of the Portfolio Keepers*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Success	Pre	20	72.06	6.60	4.41	0.00*
	Post	20	66.41	9.18		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.52 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study success scores of students who kept portfolios in order to find out whether there were any changes in learners' language success levels. The mean value of the students' pre-

study success scores was  $\bar{x}=72.06$  and the mean value of the post-study success scores was  $\bar{x}=66.41$ . According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the learners' success scores ( $t=4.41; p<0.05$ ). As a result, it can be said that the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted ( $p<0.05$ ). At the end of the ten-week training process, the mean value of the learners' language success scores decreased from 72.06 to 66.41. This meant that the learners were more successful at the beginning of the study, and the mean value of their success scores decreased at the end of the ten-week PK process.

#### **4.2.4. Are there any differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the control group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants?**

The fourth research question aimed to explore the differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group regarding their autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores. As the students' pre-study and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-test was performed.

##### **4.2.4.1. *autonomy levels of the learners in the control group.***

The first comparison of the control group's pre- and post-study results involves the dimension of learner autonomy. The learners' pre- and post-study autonomy levels were compared using Paired Samples T-test. Table 4.53 demonstrates the results of the Paired Samples T-test for the control group.

Table 4.53

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Autonomy Scores of the Students in the Control Group*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Autonomy	Pre	20	3.21	0.37	1.57	0.13*
	Post	20	3.09	0.33		

\*( $p>0.005$ )

Table 4.53 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of the students who did not keep learner blogs or portfolios. The mean value of the students' pre-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.21$  and the mean value of

the students' post-study autonomy level was  $\bar{x}=3.09$ , which meant that they stated they were “sometimes” autonomous while learning English both before and after the study. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted and so there were statistically no significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the students in the control group in terms of autonomy level ( $t=1.57$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). It means that the mean values of the learners' autonomy levels in the control group did not show any differences in this ten-week process.

#### **4.2.4.1.1. *analysis of the dimensions in the LAQ for the control group.***

Since the autonomy questionnaire involves nine dimensions, pre-study and post-study results for each dimension were also analyzed in order to find out how the evaluation of the students in the control group for their autonomy levels changed at the end of the study. According to the results of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, eight dimensions out of nine dimensions in the learner autonomy questionnaire showed a normal distribution. Therefore, Paired-Samples T-test, which is a parametric test, was applied for eight of the dimensions in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group regarding their autonomy levels on each dimension. However, only one of the nine dimensions, objectives and evaluation, did not show a normal distribution. Therefore, Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test, was applied in order to compare the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group regarding their autonomy levels on that specific dimension. Table 4.54 demonstrates the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept neither learner blogs nor portfolios for eight of the dimensions and Table 4.55 illustrates the results of Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept neither learner blogs nor portfolios for the dimension of objectives and evaluation.

Table 4.54 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the control group learners' pre- and post-study data about the autonomy dimensions in the LAQ. The results showed that the mean values of the learners in the control group after ten weeks did not show a difference for most of the dimensions, except the dimensions of independent work in language learning, objectives and evaluation, and assessment and motivation. No significant differences were found for the dimensions of importance of class and teacher, role of teacher, language learning activities, selection of content, and finally other cultures.

According to Table 4.54, the first dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the readiness for self-direction. For the dimension of readiness for self-direction, which aimed to investigate whether students felt ready to manage their learning, the mean value of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=3.35$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.25$  after the study. According to these results, there was not a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group ( $t=0.82$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The learners believed they sometimes felt ready to take control of their learning both before and after the study.

Table 4.54

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Control Group Regarding the Dimensions in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Readiness for self-direction	Pre	20	3.35	0.53	0.82	0.42*
	Post	20	3.25	0.69		
Independent work in language learning	Pre	20	3.43	0.71	2.45	0.02**
	Post	20	3.12	0.57		
Importance of class/teacher	Pre	20	3.29	0.81	-0.52	0.60*
	Post	20	3.38	0.76		
Role of the teacher	Pre	20	2.76	1.12	-0.41	0.68*
	Post	20	2.86	0.90		
Language learning activities	Pre	20	3.06	0.62	1.06	0.29*
	Post	20	2.87	0.70		
Selection of content	Pre	20	2.95	1.01	0.58	0.56*
	Post	20	2.81	1.07		
Assessment and motivation	Pre	20	3.25	0.71	2.85	0.01**
	Post	20	2.85	0.51		
Other cultures	Pre	20	2.97	1.01	-0.71	0.48*
	Post	20	3.15	0.91		

\*( $p>0.005$ ); \*\* ( $p<0.005$ )

According to Table 4.54, the next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the importance of class and teacher, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the teacher and class while learning a language. This dimension required a reverse scoring because the statements measured students' dependence. For the dimension of importance of class and teacher, the mean value of the

participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=3.29$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.38$  after the study. According to these mean values, no significant differences in the students' beliefs about the importance of teacher and class in language learning were revealed after the study ( $t= -0.52$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The students gave more importance to the presence of teacher in their learning and they believed they could sometimes learn without the assistance of a teacher before the study. However, the importance that the students gave to the teacher in their learning decreased after the study, which supported autonomous behaviours, but not at a significant level. The next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the role of teacher, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the teacher explanation and supervision in class. For the dimension of role of teacher, the mean value of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=2.76$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.86$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of the teacher were revealed after the study ( $t= -0.41$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes gave importance to the existence of a teacher to explain things and to supervise them both before and after the study. As a result, the students showed an average autonomy for this dimension.

According to Table 4.54, the next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the language learning activities, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students were engaged in language learning activities out of the classroom. For the dimension of language learning activities, the mean value of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=3.06$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.87$  after the study. The results for this dimension were also close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' attitudes towards the language activities outside the classroom were revealed after the study ( $t=1.06$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they were sometimes involved in language activities outside the classroom both before and after the study. The next dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the selection of content, which aimed to investigate the attitudes of the students' towards sharing responsibility for deciding what was to be taught in class and for choosing the materials to be used. For the dimension of selection of content, the mean value of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=2.95$



prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.81$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' beliefs about the selection of content were revealed after the study ( $t=0.58$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes took responsibility for what they would learn and how they would learn both before and after the study. The final dimension where there was not a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the other cultures, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students gave importance to the culture of other countries while learning a language. For the dimension of other cultures, the mean value of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=2.97$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.15$  after the study. The results for this dimension were close, therefore no statistically significant differences in the students' beliefs about the role of other cultures in language learning were revealed after the study ( $t= -0.71$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes gave importance to the culture of the language they were learning before and after the study. Therefore, it can be stated that the students in the control group were not interested in the cultural items in the language learning process very much.

According to Table 4.54, the mean values of the learners in the control group showed a significant difference for the dimensions of independent work in language learning, and assessment and motivation. The first dimension where there was a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the independent work in language learning. For the dimension of independent work in language learning, the mean value of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=3.43$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.12$  after the study. According to these results, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group ( $t=2.45$ ;  $p <0.05$ ). The learners believed they usually studied independently before the study, and they rarely needed the presence of the teacher in their learning. The results indicated that the mean values of the learners decreased for this dimension after ten weeks, so it can be stated that learners' independence in learning language also decreased at a significant level. After the ten-week process, the students felt they sometimes studied independently. The final dimension where there was a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group was the assessment and motivation, which aimed to investigate the importance of assessment in motivating the learners. For the dimension of assessment and motivation, the mean value

of the participants in the control group was  $\bar{x}=3.25$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 2.85$  after the study. According to these results, a statistically significant difference in the students' beliefs about the role of assessment for motivation to study was revealed after the study ( $t=2.85$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The mean values indicated that the learners believed they sometimes believed that assessment was a significant factor for their study both before and after the study, however with different mean values. Therefore, it can be stated that the learners' autonomy levels decreased for this dimension after a period of ten weeks.

Table 4.55

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results of the Control Group Regarding the Objectives and Evaluation Dimension in the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	Z	P
Objectives and evaluation	Pre	20	3.85	0.67	-2.19	0.02*
	Post	20	3.32	0.76		

\*( $p<0.005$ )

Table 4.55 illustrates the results of Wilcoxon Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test regarding the pre- and post-study autonomy levels of students who kept neither learner blogs nor portfolios for the dimension of objectives and evaluation. According to the results, there was a difference between the pre-study and post-study results of the learners in the control group regarding the objectives and evaluation dimension, which aimed to investigate the extent to which the students felt confident in defining their objectives in language learning and to find out how they evaluated their learning process. The mean value of the participants for this dimension in the control group was  $\bar{x}=3.85$  prior to the study and it was  $\bar{x}= 3.32$  after the study. A statistically significant difference in the students' beliefs about the objectives and evaluation was revealed after the study ( $z = -2.19$ ;  $p <0.05$ ). The students usually believed they could reach a good level in language learning before the study and after ten weeks they sometimes believed they could attain a good level of English. The results indicated that after the study the students' belief in attaining a good level of English decreased significantly, which obviously caused a decrease in their autonomy levels as well.

#### 4.2.4.2. *self-assessment levels of the control group.*

The second part of the fourth research question aimed to explore the differences in the control group's pre-study and post-study results regarding their self-assessment level. Since the variable had a normal distribution and the students' pre- and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed (See Table 4.56).

Table 4.56

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Self-Assessment Scores of the Students in the Control Group*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Self-assessment	Pre	20	2.47	0.59	-1.07	0.29*
	Post	20	2.54	0.58		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.56 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study self-assessment levels of the students in the control group. The mean value of the students' pre-study self-assessment level was  $\bar{x}=2.47$  and the mean value of the students' post-study self-assessment level was  $\bar{x}=2.54$ , which meant that they assessed their language skills as "poor" both before and after the study. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, there were statistically no significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the students in the control group in terms of self-assessment level ( $t=1.078$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). This result supported the null hypothesis, which indicated no significant differences between the variables ( $p > 0.05$ ). It meant that the mean values of the learners' self-assessment levels did not show any differences in this ten-week process.

##### 4.2.4.2.1. *analysis of each language skill in the self-assessment checklist for the control group.*

After examining the control group's general assessment of their language skills, each skill was investigated separately in order to find out the changes that occurred in their language skills. The control group's pre- and post-study results regarding all language skills were analyzed in detail. Since the variables showed a normal distribution and the students' pre- and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed for each skill separately. (See Table 4.57, Table 4.58, Table 4.59, Table 4.60).

Table 4.57

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Listening Skills of the Students in the Control Group*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Listening	Pre	20	2.08	0.58	-2.83	0.01*
	Post	20	2.36	0.60		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.57 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study listening skills of students in the control group. The mean value of the students' pre-study listening skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.08$  and the mean value of the students' post-study listening skills was  $\bar{x}=2.36$ , which meant that the students self-assessed their listening skills as "poor" both before and after the study, but with different mean values. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which supported a difference between the variables, was accepted, therefore it can be stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the students in the control group in terms of their listening skill ( $t = -2.83$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). According to the mean values of their self-assessment of their listening skills, it can be stated that learners believed their listening skills improved within ten-week period, but without much increase in the mean values.

Table 4.58

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Reading Skills of the Students in the Control Group*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Reading	Pre	20	2.52	0.71	-0.63	0.53*
	Post	20	2.60	0.78		

\*( $p > 0.005$ )

Table 4.58 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study reading skills of the students in the control group. The mean value of the students' pre-study reading skill was  $\bar{x}=2.52$  and the mean value of their post-study reading skill was  $\bar{x}=2.60$ , which meant that the students self-assessed their reading skill as "poor" both before and after the study. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted and so there were statistically no significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the students in the control group in terms of reading skill ( $t = -0.63$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ). It means that learners' reading skills did not improve a lot in this ten-week period.

Table 4.59

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Writing Skills of the Students in the Control Group*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Writing	Pre	20	2.57	0.67	-0.95	0.35*
	Post	20	2.70	0.93		

\*( $p>0.005$ )

Table 4.59 reveals the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study writing skills of the students in the control group. The mean value of the students' pre-study writing skills was  $\bar{x}=2.57$ , and the mean value of the students' post-study writing skills was  $\bar{x}=2.70$ , which meant that the students self-assessed their writing skill as "average" before and after the study, however the mean values were very close to each other. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted, so there were no statistically significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the control group students' writing skills ( $t= -0.95$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). This meant that within the ten-week period, the mean values of the learners' writing skills did not change a lot. As a result, it can be stated that at the end of the study, the control group learners' writing skills did not improve a lot.

Table 4.60

*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Speaking Skills of the Students in the Control Group*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Speaking	Pre	20	2.62	0.65	0.96	0.34*
	Post	20	2.54	0.62		

\*( $p>0.005$ )

Table 4.60 shows the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study speaking skills of the students in the control group. The mean value of the students' pre-study speaking skill level was  $\bar{x}=2.62$  and the mean value of the students' post-study speaking skills was  $\bar{x}=2.54$ , which meant that the students stated "average" for their pre-speaking skill level, but "poor" for their post-speaking skill level. According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, the null hypothesis was accepted, therefore a statistically significant difference was not revealed between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the students in the control group in terms of their speaking skill ( $t=0.96$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). This meant that the ten-week period did not make a significant difference on the learners'

speaking skills. In fact, at the end of the ten-week period, the mean values of the learners' speaking skills decreased a little bit.

#### 4.2.4.3. *language achievement scores of the control group.*

The last part of the fourth research question aimed to explore the differences in the control group's pre-study and post-study results regarding language achievement scores. Since the variable had a normal distribution and the students' pre- and post-study results were to be compared, Paired Samples T-Test was performed (See Table 4.61).

Table 4.61

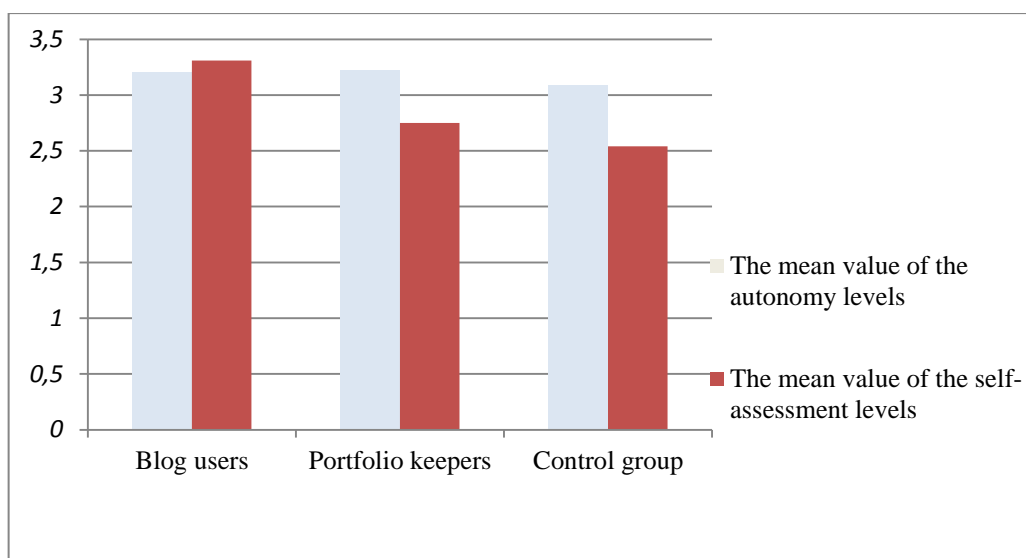
*Comparison of the Pre-study and Post-study Results Regarding the Success Scores of the Students in the Control Group*

Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	T	P
Success	Pre	20	72.94	10.73	5.10	0.00*
	Post	20	66.21	12.14		

\*( $p < 0.005$ )

Table 4.61 displays the results of Paired Samples T-test regarding the pre- and post-study success scores of the students in the control group in order to find out whether there were any changes in the learners' language success levels. The mean value of the students' pre-study success scores was  $\bar{x}=72.94$  and the mean value of post-study success scores was  $\bar{x}=66.21$ . According to the results of Paired Samples T-test analysis, there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the learners' success scores ( $t=5.10$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted ( $p < 0.05$ ). At the end of the ten-week period, the mean value of the learners' language success scores decreased from  $\bar{x}=72.94$  to  $\bar{x}=66.21$  in the control group. This meant that the learners were more successful at the beginning of the study, and the mean values of their success scores decreased after ten weeks.

After examining all the quantitative research questions, the effect of a ten-week learner blogging and portfolio-keeping program on EFL learners' autonomy, self-assessment and language achievement scores can be summarized as follows (See Figure 4.1).



*Figure 4.1.* The Mean values of the groups' autonomy levels and self-assessment levels

Figure 4.1 shows the mean values of the questionnaire and checklist for the three groups in order to find out whether there were any differences between the groups' autonomy levels and self-assessment levels after the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping programs. From Figure 4.1, there appears to be a weak correlation between the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping and the autonomy levels of the groups. When the hypotheses were analyzed, it can be stated that the null hypothesis, which supported no differences between the variables, was accepted for the learners' autonomy levels. That is, there were no meaningful differences between the blogging group ( $\bar{x}=3.20$ ), portfolio-keeping group ( $\bar{x}=3.22$ ), and the control group ( $\bar{x}=3.09$ ) in terms of their autonomy levels after the study. According to the analyses of the learner autonomy questionnaires, the learners in all the groups sometimes behaved autonomously after the study. In addition, the autonomy levels of the groups did not show significant differences in each group between the pre-study and post-study results. However, although there weren't any differences between the groups in terms of their general autonomy levels, there were some differences between the groups in terms of one of the dimensions on the autonomy questionnaire, which was the assessment and motivation dimension. The blog users behaved more autonomously than the portfolio keepers and the students in the control group regarding the assessment and motivation dimension.

When the average self-assessment levels were considered, it was seen that there were no meaningful differences between the portfolio-keeping group and the control group. However, as revealed in Figure 4.1 there could be a correlation between the learner

blogging and the students' self-assessment of language skills. When the hypotheses were analyzed, it can be stated that the alternative hypothesis, which supported a meaningful difference between the variables, was accepted for the learners' self-assessment levels. The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the blogging group and the portfolio-keeping group, and between the blogging group and the control group. This meant that the learners who used learner blogs had higher mean values of self-assessment levels ( $\bar{x}=3.31$ ) compared to the portfolio keepers ( $\bar{x}=2.75$ ) and the learners in the control group ( $\bar{x}=2.54$ ). The blog users believed they were better at language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking than the students in the portfolio-keeping group and the control group. Therefore, it can be stated that when all of the groups were taken into consideration, it was the group in which learners used learner blogs for a ten-week period that had the highest level of self-assessment. In addition, when each skill was analyzed separately, it was found out that there were differences between the groups in terms of the three language skills which were listening, reading, and speaking. However, there were no differences between the groups in terms of the writing skill, which was a very surprising result. What is more, there were significant differences in the self-assessment levels of the blog users for the listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills between the pre-study and post-study checklist results. However there were significant differences in the self-assessment levels of the portfolio keepers and the learners in the control group for only listening skills.

The last point to be compared was the learners' success levels. The analyses of the exam results of the students revealed that there were no meaningful differences between the groups in terms of language achievement after the study. The mean values of the students' exam grades were similar in the blogging group ( $\bar{x}=64.81$ ), portfolio-keeping group ( $\bar{x}=66.41$ ), and control group ( $\bar{x}=66.21$ ) at the end of the study. Consequently, it can be stated that the learners' success scores in language exams and learner blogging or portfolio-keeping did not have any correlation or the learners' success scores in language exams did not show any significant differences depending on the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping.



#### **4.2.5. Are there any differences between the participants' perceptions towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping according to different variables such as gender, major field of study, and their background in learning a foreign language?**

The last research question of the study aimed to investigate the participants' perceptions towards the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping according to different variables such as gender, department, and their background in learning English. This research question presents the qualitative analysis of the post-study interviews with totally 30 participants from the experimental groups. The purpose was to collect the participants' views on the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping in order to provide data triangulation to the quantitative results. Fifteen participants from the each experimental group were selected randomly and interviewed individually in the researcher's staff room on different days at the end of the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping process. Each interview lasted from five to ten minutes.

The interview consisted of three open-ended questions and all the respondents were asked the same three open-ended questions to be able to get their ideas about their own application. While preparing these three questions, the researcher consulted three lecturers and an academician who were working at Pamukkale University in order to provide content validity. After the researcher got their opinions on the questions, few changes were made in the wording of the questions and finally, the interview questions took their final form. The three questions that were asked in the interviews were as follows: 1) *"After keeping a portfolio/learner blog for 10 weeks, how do you think portfolio-keeping/learner blogging contributed to your English?"*, 2) *"What problems did you encounter while keeping portfolios/learner blogs?"* and lastly 3) *"Did you enjoy keeping portfolios/learner blogs as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If not, why not?"*.

The first question searched for the learners' views on the advantages of using learner blogs/portfolios as educational tools. The second question investigated the problems that the learners encountered during the learner blogging or portfolio-keeping process. The last question aimed to obtain information about whether the learners enjoyed the learner blogging or portfolio-keeping. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, the interview was conducted in the learners' mother tongue, Turkish. The respondents were numbered from 1 to 15 randomly for the interviews. Before each interview, each

participant was informed that the interview would be recorded, the reasons of this recording were clearly explained, and they were asked for consent before each interview was conducted. The interviews were completed in the third and fourth weeks of May, 2012 (For the transcripts of the interviews see Appendix E and Appendix F).

After all of the interviews ended, each of them was transcribed. In the next step, each question was thematically analyzed and the responses were classified under related categories. In order to ensure reliability and face validity, the transcriptions were sent to another researcher and this researcher was asked to analyze the data thematically. Both analyses were compared and a common classification was specified.

In order to answer this question, first of all the participants' answers to all three questions in the experimental groups were analyzed separately for each group. Then the feelings of the participants towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping were compared based on their gender, department, and language learning background.

#### **4.2.5.1. *analysis of the interview questions on learner blogging.***

The interview results revealed that many students considered the learner blogging as an educational tool advantageous for their language learning process. In general, the respondents found the learner blogging effective for the writing skill by enabling to receive and give feedback on their classmates' works and by improving their vocabulary knowledge. In addition, they believed it was a beneficial way to spend their free time and contributed to their personal development. However, some found it hard to use, time consuming, and boring. The following analyses demonstrate the positive effects of the learner blogging, the problems encountered while using learner blogs and lastly the participants' feelings towards the learner blogging as an educational tool.

Table 4.62 presents the views of the participants towards the contributions of the LB to their language learning process, the drawbacks which they encountered in the learner blogging process, and finally the feelings of the participants towards the learner blogging implementation.

Table 4.62

*Participants' Views on Learner Blogging*

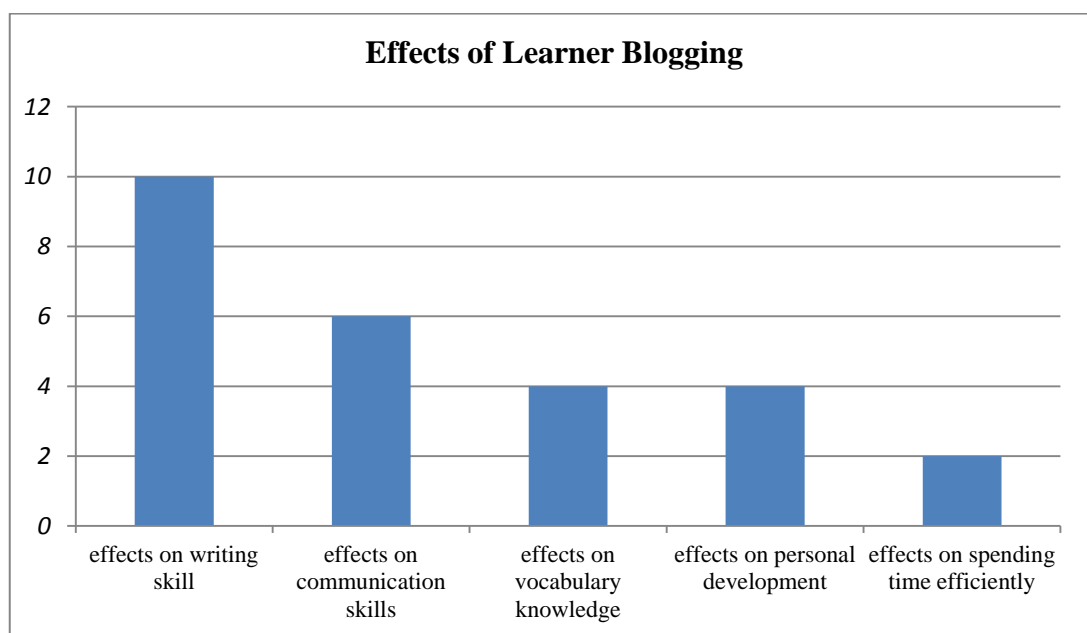
	<b>Advantages of LB</b>	<b>Problems encountered during LB</b>	<b>Feelings about LB</b>
Inf.01	Beneficial for language skills Development in writing skill and increase in vocabulary knowledge	No problem	Pretty fun Like internet share
Inf.02	Seeing others' essays Being aware of my mistakes Development in essay writing Increased desire for writing	No problem	Interesting Fun
Inf.03	Learn new words Connect to the others Share essays	No problem	Fun
Inf.04	Different way to study Improvement in English Good opportunity to spend free time	No previous experience in blog use Lack of continuous internet facility	Fun
Inf.05	Read different essays Increase in computer skills Share work with each other	Difficult to use Complex	Boring
Inf.06	Learn by reading others' works Get feedback from peers	Lack of internet facility	Fun
Inf.07	Learn more easily Useful for learning Connection to friends	No problem	Spend enjoyable time Will use in the future
Inf.08	Connect to each other in English Have personal space Use only English Improve writing skill Get both teacher and peer feedback Assessment by the teacher	Complicated Difficult to use No previous experience in blog use Limited time	Fun
Inf.09	Use English all the time Improvement in English Spend time with friends	Complicated Difficult to use No previous experience in blog use	Fun
Inf.10	Learn new words Learn to write essays Read others' works Communication in English Improvement in English	No problem	Fun No regret to use blog
Inf.11	Get information on a topic from different angles Help each other about the weak points	Limited time	Fun
Inf.12	See my differences from others Read essays and learn more about essay writing Improve writing skill	Limited time	Fun Will continue to use
Inf.13	Have information about others' language levels	No problem	Fun
Inf.14	Read others' works Get information about different topics Give feedback	Lack of internet facility	Not fun
Inf.15	Learn new words Give feedback	Difficult to use No previous experience in blog use	Fun

#### 4.2.5.1.1. *positive effects of learner blogging.*

The first question that was asked to the respondents was related to the contributions of the LB as part of their language learning process. The students were asked the following question:

*Q1. After keeping a learner blog for 10 weeks, how do you think learner blogging contributed to your English?*

The answers given to this question were analyzed. Following this step, the categories mentioned by the respondents most were determined as “the benefits for writing skill”, “the benefits for vocabulary knowledge”, “the benefits for communication skills”, “spending time efficiently” and “personal development” (See Figure 4.2).



*Figure 4.2.* The number of students that reported different effects of LB on their language learning process

Figure 4.2 illustrates that in the interviews ten students reported that the learner blogging application had effects on their writing skills and six of the interviewees stated that the learner blogging affected their communication skills positively. In addition, the effects of the learner blogging on the students’ vocabulary knowledge and personal development were expressed by four of the participants. Finally, two of the participants reported the positive effects of the learner blogging on their efficient time use.

4.2.5.1.1.1. *effects of learner blogging on writing skill.*

The respondents perceived learner blogging as beneficial in general and reported that it contributed to their language skills, especially writing skill. They stated that their own writing skill improved by writing essays, reading, and commenting on their classmates' essays. The respondents benefited from each other's essays in order to get some tips on how to write essay, to think about a topic from different angles, and simply to learn new grammatical structures. Moreover, the majority of the interviewees reported that they had a chance to get feedback from their friends on their essays and to give feedback to their friends about their essays. The Inf.02 explained how learner blogging application affected her writing skill as follows:

I could see my friends' essays or anything they shared. While I was reading their essays, I had a chance to examine them closely. I could see what they did right and what they did wrong. Therefore, I could be aware of my mistakes, as well. Moreover, after I had seen my friends' essays, I wanted to publish more essays. Before I set up my blog, my essay writing was really poor. However, thanks to my blog, it developed. In addition I got a chance to get feedback from my friends on my essays. With the help of this feedback, I could work on my weak points (Interview, inf.02).

This can also be illuminated in the following response by the Inf.10:

Another advantage was that I learnt how to write essay. I could see different examples of essays from my friends. I learnt to give feedback to my friends on their essays. By this way, I learnt how to write essay better, because while reading others' essays, I could look from a different window. In addition, they also wrote comments on my essays. In this way, I could get other people's views on my work. This was so useful, because I might not comment on my work thoroughly by myself (Interview, inf.10).

Similar ideas about the impact of learner blogging on the improvement of writing skill were stated by info.11, too:

My learner blog helped me see the things my friends shared, so we had more information about different topics. For example, we had many different essays as an example for us. If we wanted to write about a topic, we could remember their views and get benefit from them. In this way, we had more ideas about the topic while writing essay. Also, my learner blog helped me write better essays by seeing all these examples (Interview, inf.11).

The Inf.14 explained the contribution of learner blogs to the writing skill by stating that "The first advantage of learner blogs was getting feedback from my friends. As a

result of this feedback, everybody had some ideas about different essay topics. At the same time, we learnt how to comment on essays” (Interview, inf.14).

Shortly, it can be seen that the majority of the students that were interviewed at the end of the study found the LB useful for the development of their writing skill.

#### *4.2.5.1.1.2. effects of learner blogging on vocabulary knowledge.*

Another point that the respondents emphasized in their interviews was that the learner blogging improved their vocabulary knowledge. They stated that they could visit their classmates’ blog pages, read what they shared on their blog pages and enrich their vocabulary knowledge. The Inf.15 explained the relation between the LB and their vocabulary knowledge as in the following:

I think learner blogs are very useful. Being able to read what everybody had written improved our vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, we also shared the new words we learnt or read in a book on our pages. Therefore, we could learn more vocabulary together (Interview, inf.15).

The Inf.04 also mentioned the positive effects of learner blogging on their vocabulary knowledge with the following statements:

Blog is a different way where I could study or practice. I began to write the words I learnt in lessons. Thus, I could keep those words in my mind. Also, my friends could read my word lists, so they would have a chance to enrich their vocabulary knowledge (Interview, inf.04).

Shortly, it was mentioned in the interview that learner blogging contributed to the learners’ vocabulary enhancement.

#### *4.2.5.1.1.3. the effects of learner blogging on communication skills.*

Another significant advantage of learner blogs reported by six of the interviewees was the opportunity to communicate with each other in English via their learner blogs. They stated that they had a chance to communicate with each other using only English outside the classroom. As pointed by the Inf.09’s statement, communicating in English helped their language improve and gave them a chance to use their English.

Thanks to my learner blog, my English improved. It was great that everybody used English to communicate or to give their opinions on anything. Thus, I could speak English with my friends. As a result, learner blogs were good for our communication skills (Interview, inf.09).

Regarding the relation between learner blogging and communication, Inf.07 states the following idea:

With the help of our learner blogs, we had connection with each other, so we could talk to our friends and discuss anything we wanted in English. Moreover, we could make comments on the things we shared (Interview, inf.07).

The positive effects of learner blogging on communication skills were also stated by the Inf.08 with the statement “We could continuously connect to each other thanks to learner blogs. Besides, we used only English in our learner blogs” (Interview, inf.08).

As it is seen, the learner blogging in the language learning process enabled learners to communicate with each other in English beyond the classroom walls and provided the learners with a genuine communication context where they could use English.

#### *4.2.5.1.1.4. effects of learner blogging on spending time efficiently.*

Two of the respondents reported that thanks to learner blogs they spent their free time in a beneficial way. The Inf.04 expressed: “I had a good opportunity to spend my free time. I began to spend my free time on English.”

Similar ideas about the effects of learner blogging on spending time efficiently were stated by the Inf.05, as “I also started to use computer to improve my English” (Interview, inf.05).

In conclusion, these responses indicated that the participants believed that they used their learner blogs to spend their time more effectively outside the classroom.

#### *4.2.5.1.1.5. effects of learner blogging on personal development.*

Several respondents reported in the interview that they developed themselves in different ways thanks to learner blogs. The first point stated by the interviewees was getting aware of their language process. While using their learner blogs, they had a chance to see each other's level of English, and strength and weaknesses. Thus, they could learn from their friends and develop their own weak points. The Inf.02 highlighted the importance of learning from their friends' mistakes by stating "I could see my friends' essays or anything they shared. Therefore, I could be aware of my mistakes." This can also

be seen in the Inf.11's answer which is "In addition, we could also see each other's weaknesses and helped each other to overcome the points we were not successful."

Another personal development point that was reported by the respondents was related to technology. Some of the respondents stated that using learner blogs improved their technology knowledge. Relevant to this, the Inf.05 said that "My computer knowledge also developed. I also started to use computer to improve my English". The Inf.12 highlighted the contribution of learner blogging on their technology knowledge during the interview.

In short, the learners became more aware of themselves as a language learner through their learner blogs by reading their classmates' posts and receiving comments from them in their language learning process. In addition, as learner blogs provided the learners with a more technological side of language learning, the participants' relations with technology also increased.

#### **4.2.5.1.2. *drawbacks of learner blogging.***

The second interview question aimed to reveal the problems that the learners encountered during the learner blogging process. The question that was asked to the respondents was as follows:

*Q2. What problems did you encounter while keeping learner blogs?*

The analysis of the answers given to this question revealed that 40% of the participants reported no drawbacks of learner blogging. However, 60% of the participants stated they encountered several problems while using their learner blogs. As a result of these problems, they felt they could not benefit the learner blogging as much as they wished (See Figure 4.3).



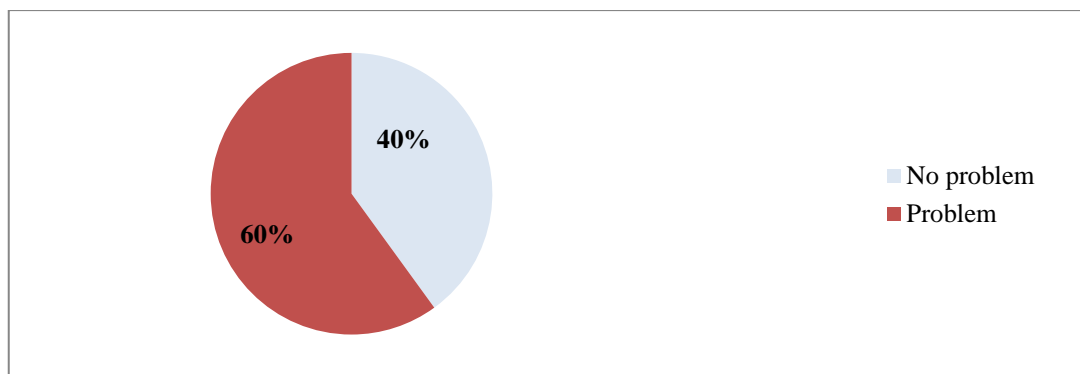


Figure 4.3. The percentage of the participants who encountered problems in learner blogging process

The analysis of the responses revealed some categories of problems which were “the lack of the internet facility”, “the lack of previous experience or knowledge in blog use”, “the complexity of blogs” and “the time constraint of the application” (See Figure 4.4).

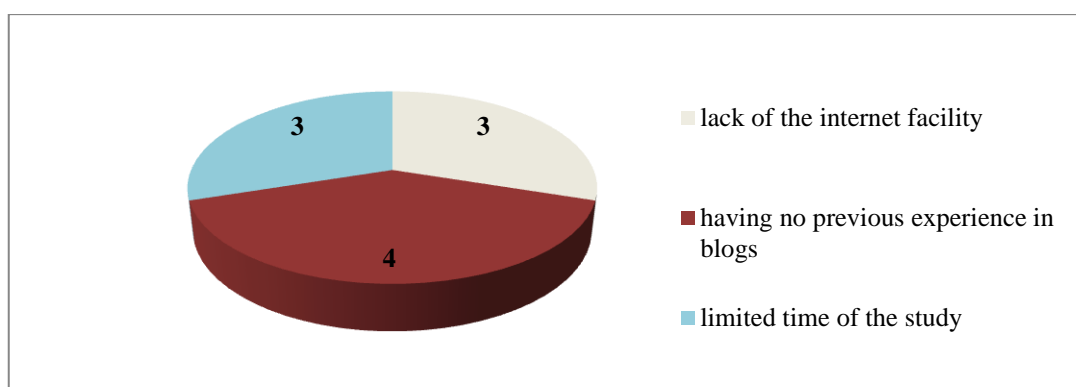


Figure 4.4. Types of the problems the students encountered in learner blogging process

#### 4.2.5.1.2.1. *the problem of “lack of the internet facility”.*

The respondents reported in the interview that since they did not have a continuous internet connection, they experienced some problems using their learner blogs or they could not use their learner blogs as efficiently as they wished. Inf.08 explains how he had trouble with the internet by stating:

I had some problems with the Internet. I could have shared much more things, however as a result of having no continuous internet facility; I couldn’t use it that much. I do not have a personal computer and I had to go to an internet café to use my learner blog. As this was not very easy, I couldn’t use my learner blog as much as I liked. Moreover, lack of the internet facility led me understand how blogs function more slowly (Interview, inf.08).

Inf.04 holds a similar view about the negative effects of the internet facility on LB as follows:

Lack of the internet facility was another problem I encountered during the learner blog application. I didn't have so many opportunities to use the Internet. I could only get connected to the Internet at school or in an internet café. Having no personal computer prevented me using my learner blog effectively (Interview, inf.04).

However, the Inf.07 had a different perspective on the relation between the internet facility and learner blogging. He stated: "The internet was not a problem, I think, because I believe every university student should have a personal computer. It is a necessity" (Interview, inf.07).

4.2.5.1.2.2. *the problem of "lack of previous experience or knowledge in blog use".*

Another problem reported by the interviewees was that they were not familiar with blog use beforehand. Thus, they found blogs very complicated and not user-friendly. Inf.08 expressed:

Blogs were complicated, because we hadn't used blogs before. Our teacher showed us how to use, but it took some time to explore the site. For example, I had some difficulty in creating my learner blog. I couldn't create the categories as I wanted (Interview, inf.08).

Another similar view was stated by inf.15:

It was difficult to use. I had difficulty in creating sections for my works. I wanted to have different part for each of my work such as essays, vocabulary etc. However, as it was the first time I had a blog, I had trouble with using my blog easily (Interview, inf.15).

4.2.5.1.2.3. *the problem of "time constraint".*

The last problem reported by three of the respondents was the time-constraint of the implementation. Since they used their learner blogs for a semester, they stated this was not enough for them both to be able to explore how to use the learner blogs and to personalize it. The Inf.08 explained her opinion on the effect of the duration of the application on learner blogging:

Blogs were complicated, because we hadn't used blogs before. I had some difficulty in creating my blog. I couldn't create the categories as I wanted. The time was limited for using our blogs. I didn't know anything about blogs before. Our teacher showed us how to use, but it took some time to explore the site. Thus, it wasn't easy for me to understand the site thoroughly. If we had more time, we could use learner blogs more effectively. (Interview, inf.08).

This view is supported by Inf.11's statement: "I wish we could have started using learner blogs earlier so that we could benefit more" (Interview, inf.11).

#### 4.2.5.1.3. *the participants' feelings towards learner blogging.*

The last question asked in the interview aimed to obtain information about the feelings of the learners towards the LB. The question is as follows:

*Q3. Did you enjoy keeping learner blogs as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If not, why not?"*

The last point to reveal about the blog use was the participants' feelings towards LB. The answers given to this question were analyzed and the results revealed that the majority of the respondents stated they had fun while using learner blog for different reasons. While 87% of the respondents reported that they enjoyed LB, only 13% of them disliked LB and found it boring (See Figure 4.5).

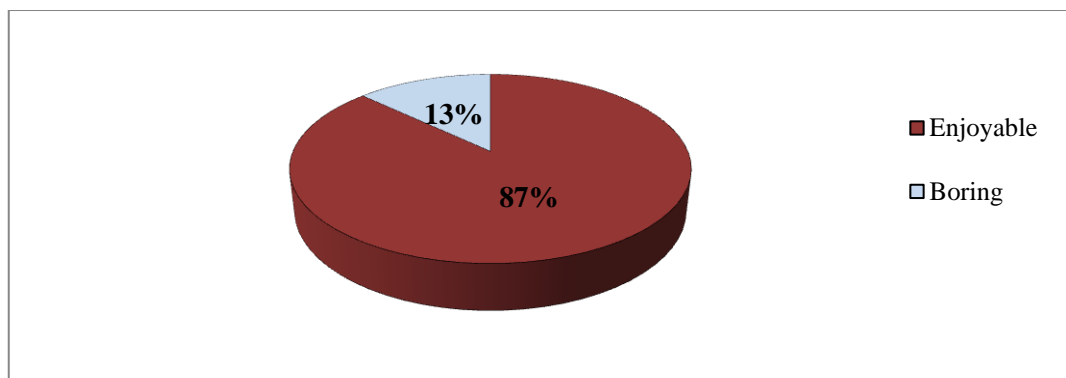


Figure 4.5. The feelings of the students towards learner blogging

Inf.01 expressed how he felt about using a personal learner blog by stating that "Learner blog was pretty fun, because I like sharing information on the internet. Moreover, I am accustomed to sites like these blogs. Therefore, I think it was an enjoyable experience for all of us" (Interview, inf.01).

This can also be illuminated in the response by Inf.02, which is “I enjoyed blog use, because we could post anything we were interested in. While we were giving feedback about each others’ works, I had lots of fun” (Interview, inf.02).

Inf.07 also mentioned his feelings about learner blogging with the statement “I enjoyed having a learner blog. It provided me lots of enjoyable time. I had a chat with my friends. I love blog and I will go on to use my blog in the future as well” (Interview, inf.07).

However, there were two participants who stated they did not enjoy learner blogging. Inf.14 explains her negative attitude towards LB with the statement “I didn’t enjoy it. I did not have internet facility, so I did not like it.” Inf.05 stated the difficulty of LB and as a result, she did not enjoy using learner blogs and stated “If it hadn’t been that complicated, I would have certainly had more fun” (Interview, inf.05).

#### **4.2.5.2. *analysis of the interview questions on portfolio-keeping.***

The interview results regarding the portfolio-keeping revealed that many participants considered the utilization of portfolios as an advantageous educational tool for their language learning process. The majority of the learners stated that the portfolio-keeping offered many benefits for their language learning process, especially in terms of enhancement in vocabulary knowledge and contribution to their writing skill. In addition, they believed the portfolio-keeping process was beneficial to make them more self-confident and organized, which indicates personal development. However, the majority of the participants also found it boring. The following analysis demonstrates the positive effects of portfolio-keeping, the problems encountered while using portfolios and lastly the participants’ feelings towards the portfolio-keeping as an educational tool. (For the views of the portfolio-keepers, see Table 4.63).

Table 4.63 presents the views of the participants towards the contributions of the portfolio-keeping to their language learning process, drawbacks which they encountered in the portfolio-keeping process, and finally the feelings of the participants towards the portfolio-keeping application.

Table 4.63

*Participants' Views on Portfolio-Keeping*

	<b>Advantages of PK</b>	<b>Problems encountered in PK</b>	<b>Feelings about PK</b>
Inf.01	Beneficial for teachers to follow their students' development Making students well-organized Improving vocabulary knowledge Improving learner performance	No problem	Boring
Inf.02	Seeing their own development Collecting everything learners do	No problem	Boring
Inf.03	Providing resource for exams Increasing self confidence Making learners more productive Learning from mistakes	Hard to file everything we do	Enjoyable
Inf.04	Making learners more organized and responsible Developing language skills	No problem	Boring
Inf.05	Improving vocabulary knowledge Making information more permanent Beneficial for grammar	No problem	Enjoyable
Inf.06	Keeping all the vocabulary learnt in a folder	No problem	Boring
Inf.07	Making learners more organized Beneficial for writing skill Good for vocabulary practice	No problem	Boring
Inf.08	Improvement in writing skill Learning from mistakes Being aware of our learning	No problem	Enjoyable
Inf.09	Improvement in English	No problem	Boring
Inf.10	Good for vocabulary practice Improvement in English Increasing self-confidence	No problem	Enjoyable
Inf.11	Good for vocabulary practice	Limited time	Boring
Inf.12	Improving writing skill Learning from mistakes	Limited time	Enjoyable Will continue to use
Inf.13	Collecting everything learners do	No problem	Boring
Inf.14	Beneficial for teachers to follow their students' development	No problem	Boring
Inf.15	Learning from mistakes Seeing their own development	No problem	Boring

**4.2.5.2.1. positive effects of portfolio-keeping.**

The first question that was asked to the respondents in the interview was related to the contributions of the utilization of portfolios as part of their language learning process. The students were asked the following question:

*Q1. After keeping a portfolio for 10 weeks, how do you think portfolio-keeping contributed to your English?*

The answers given to this question were analyzed thematically. Following this step, the categories reported most were determined as “the benefits for the writing skill”, “the benefits for vocabulary knowledge” and “the benefits for the learners' personality” (See Figure 4.6).

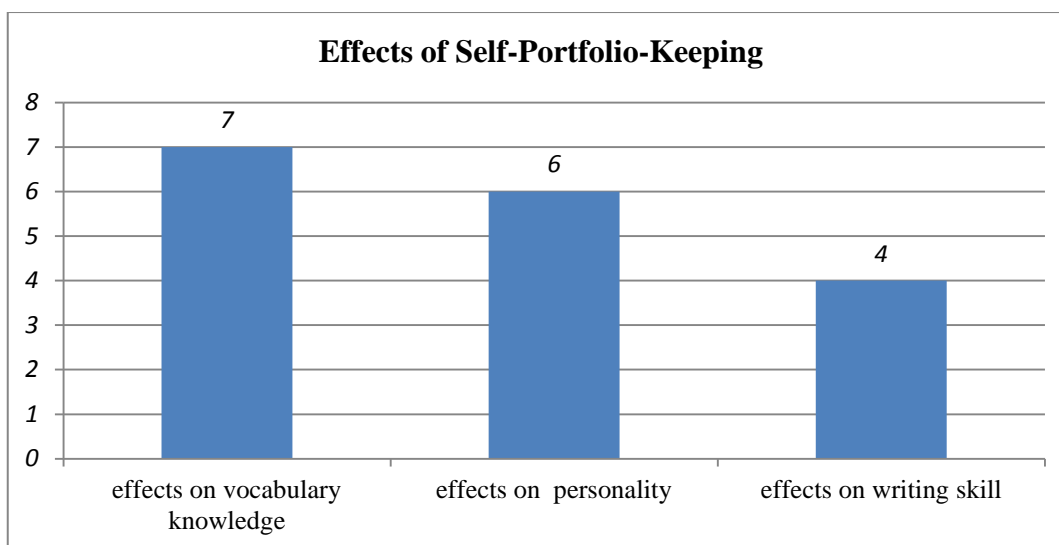


Figure 4.6. The number of the students who reported different effects of portfolio-keeping

Figure 4.6 illustrates that in the interviews seven students reported that the v implementation had effects on the students' vocabulary knowledge and six of the interviewees stated that the portfolio-keeping had positive effects on their personal development. Finally, four of the participants reported the positive effects of the portfolio-keeping on their writing skills.

#### 4.2.5.2.1.1. *effects of portfolio-keeping on writing skill.*

The respondents perceived portfolio-keeping as beneficial in general and reported that it contributed to their language skills, especially writing skill, and vocabulary knowledge. They stated that writing essays and getting feedback from the teacher and keeping their works in their portfolios helped their writing skill improve, because they expressed that they could see their mistakes in their essays with the help of the feedbacks and that they learnt from their mistakes, which was claimed to be beneficial for their future

essays. In addition, they stated that keeping their essays in a portfolio helped them to remember different types of essays even if they were studying a different type of essay. Thus, they did not forget the essay types they studied for a whole term. The Inf.07 emphasized the positive effects of portfolio-keeping on the writing skill by stating “It is beneficial for writing, because I kept all my essays in my portfolio and studied them later. As the teacher gave feedback on my essays, I could be better at writing” (Interview, inf.07).

The Inf.08 explained how the portfolio-keeping affected her writing skill as follows:

With the help of my portfolio, I kept all my essays in a folder. Whenever I needed, I could go back to one type of essay and study it. In addition, I could also learn from my mistakes. As the teacher gave feedback to my essays in terms of organization, content and accuracy; I learnt the right way to write different types of essays and different grammatical structures (Interview, inf.08).

This can also be displayed in the following response by the Inf.12:

By keeping a portfolio, I learnt how to write essay better, because the teacher corrected my mistakes. I got aware of my mistakes thanks to the comments of the teacher and my friends. In addition, I kept all my essays in my portfolio, so I could see the difference between the essays I had written at the beginning and at the end of the term. It was nice to be able to keep track of my development in writing thanks to my portfolio (Interview, inf.12).

In short, it can be seen that the majority of the students that were interviewed at the end of the study found the portfolio-keeping useful for the development of their writing skill. They believed they could write better by being aware of their mistakes with the help of the feedbacks they received from their classmates and the teacher.

#### 4.2.5.2.1.2. *effects of portfolio-keeping on vocabulary knowledge.*

Another advantage of portfolio-keeping which the participants emphasized was on their vocabulary knowledge. They stated that they kept vocabulary lists in their portfolios, so they learnt new words more easily. Inf.01 explained the relation between portfolio-keeping and their vocabulary knowledge as follows:

Portfolios improved my vocabulary knowledge. I know more words now, because I could study vocabulary from my lists. I did not have to be at home to study; I could study even when I was on bus, because I kept vocabulary lists in my portfolio (Interview, inf.01).

Similar ideas regarding the positive effects of portfolio-keeping on the vocabulary knowledge were stated by the inf.05, too:

I think there are many advantages of portfolio-keeping. Firstly, we could study our words which we had learned beforehand repeatedly. Secondly, in the future, our portfolios could be used again for the purpose of remembering English words I learnt. Thus, my vocabulary knowledge could be permanent (Interview, inf.05).

Inf.07 also held a similar view:

In my portfolio, I had many vocabulary lists that I prepared to study for exams. Thanks to my portfolio, I did not lose any of these vocabulary lists; I kept all of them in a folder. Thus, when I needed them, I could study easily and my vocabulary knowledge developed as I studied (Interview, inf.07)

Inf.11 also reported the positive effects of portfolio-keeping on vocabulary knowledge by expressing that “When I needed to study vocabulary, I used the lists in my portfolio. By this way, I could learn the meanings of many words and see their usage in example sentences.” (Interview, inf.11).

To conclude, it can be stated that the utilization of portfolios in the language learning process contributed to the learners’ vocabulary enhancement.

#### 4.2.5.2.1.3. *effects of portfolio-keeping on learners' personality.*

Another significant advantage of the portfolio-keeping stated by five of the interviewees was related to their personalities. They put forward that portfolios made them more organized and increased their self-confidence. The respondents expressed that with the help of portfolios they became more organized and self-confident. This positive impact can be illustrated by the inf.01’s statement:

Portfolio-keeping made me well-organized and it provided me to work regularly. It helped me to keep everything I did in a folder. In addition, the teacher could also follow our development, thus it increased my self-confidence as a learner. It gave me a sense of achievement (Interview, inf.01).

Inf.03 also mentioned the positive effects of portfolio use by stating:

With the help of my portfolio, I gained self-confidence. I added many works to my portfolio, and later I saw all the things I did during one term and this made me feel contented and more successful. In addition, I felt myself productive and I started to see myself good at English (Interview, inf.03).



This can also be illuminated in the Inf.04's statement which is "There are some advantages of portfolio-keeping. Firstly, it made me more organized and responsible. Then, I could follow my works regularly" (Interview, inf.04).

The Inf.07 also reported the benefit of portfolios for making learners more organized in the interview.

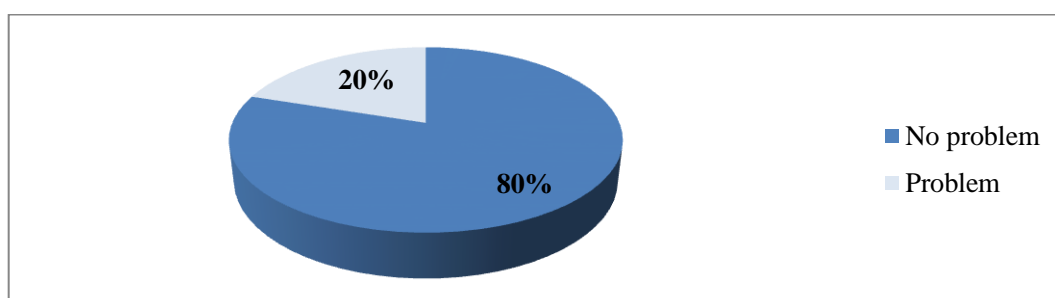
In short, learners became more organized and self-confident with the help of portfolios because they got the habit of collecting all their works and used those pieces of works later while studying.

#### 4.2.5.2.2. *drawbacks of portfolio-keeping.*

The second question in the interview aimed to reveal the problems that the learners encountered during the portfolio-keeping process. The question that was asked to the respondents was as follows:

*Q2. What problems did you encounter while keeping portfolios?*

The answers given to this question were analyzed. As a result of the analysis, it was seen that most of the participants reported no drawbacks of portfolio-keeping. However, only three participants reported that they encountered several problems while keeping portfolios. While 80% of the respondents did not report any problems in the process of portfolio-keeping, 20% of them stated several problems during the portfolio-keeping process (See Figure 4.7).



*Figure 4.7.* The percentage of the participants who encountered problems in portfolio-keeping

The analysis of the responses revealed some categories of problems, which were "limited time of the study" and "difficulty in filing" (See Figure 4.8).

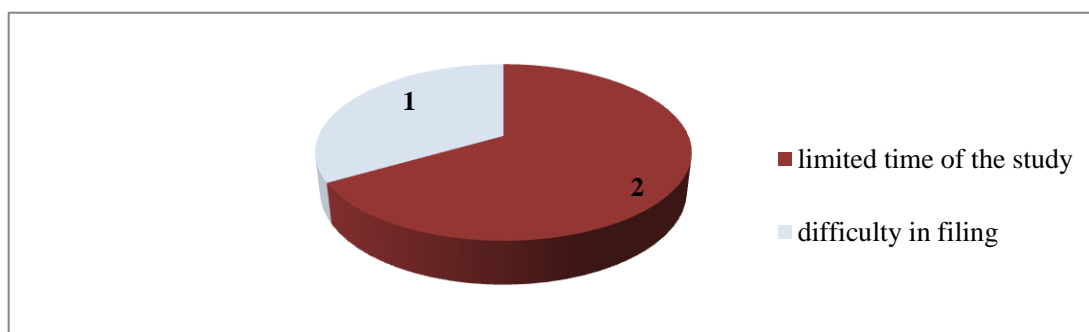


Figure 4.8. The number of the students who reported problems in portfolio-keeping

The Inf.11 and Inf.12 reported that time was not enough for the implementation and it could have gone on for a longer period.

The Inf.03 also stated that sometimes it was difficult to file everything.

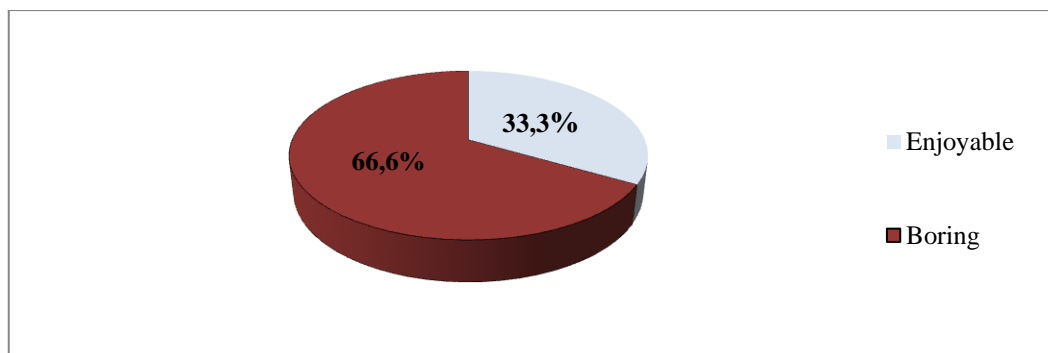
Other than these three participants, the other participants expressed it was easy to keep a portfolio and they had no problems during the implementation phase of the study.

#### 4.2.5.2.3. *the participants' feelings towards portfolio-keeping.*

The last question asked in the interview aimed to obtain information about the feelings of the learners towards the portfolio-keeping in their language learning process. The question was as follows:

*Q3. Did you enjoy keeping portfolios as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If not, why not?"*

The last question related to portfolio-keeping was the participants' feelings towards the use of portfolios as an educational tool. Most of the participants stated they got bored while keeping portfolios mostly for similar reasons. While 66.6% of the respondents did not enjoy portfolio-keeping, 33.3% of them reported that they enjoyed portfolio-keeping (See Figure 4.9).



*Figure 4.9.* The feelings of the participants towards portfolio-keeping

Inf.06 explains why PK was boring with the following sentences “I did not enjoy keeping a portfolio, because it is boring to put essays in a folder. I think there was no meaning to collect our works like that. It was time consuming” (Interview, inf.06).

Inf.09 also mentioned his feelings about portfolio-keeping by stating that “I did not enjoy it. I think there was no need to do such a thing. I don't think I will go on keeping it later” (Interview, inf.09).

This can also be illuminated in the following response by Inf.14 which is “I think it was not enjoyable. I got bored while collecting everything I did. In my opinion, it was not necessary for students” (Interview, inf.14).

Inf.15 supports other participants' views by stating that “I think it was very boring. I did not like it, because it was hard to do it for a long time” (Interview, inf.15).

However there were five participants who stated they enjoyed the portfolio-keeping. Inf.03 explains her positive attitude towards the portfolio-keeping:

I think keeping a portfolio was enjoyable, because I showed what I did to the teacher and my friends. If there were any mistakes, the teacher and my friends corrected it and I saw my mistakes. As I saw my progress, I got happier. Thus, I liked it (Interview, inf.03).

This can also be illuminated in the following response by Inf.05:

Yes, I enjoyed it so much, because, I think it was very good way for exercising. I could take advantage of my portfolio and this way increased my word capacity and grammar information day by day (Interview, inf.05).

Inf.10 also mentioned his feelings about portfolio-keeping by expressing that “I think, keeping a portfolio was enjoyable, because you could see what you did in a term. Also, it was beneficial. So, I liked it” (Interview, inf.10).

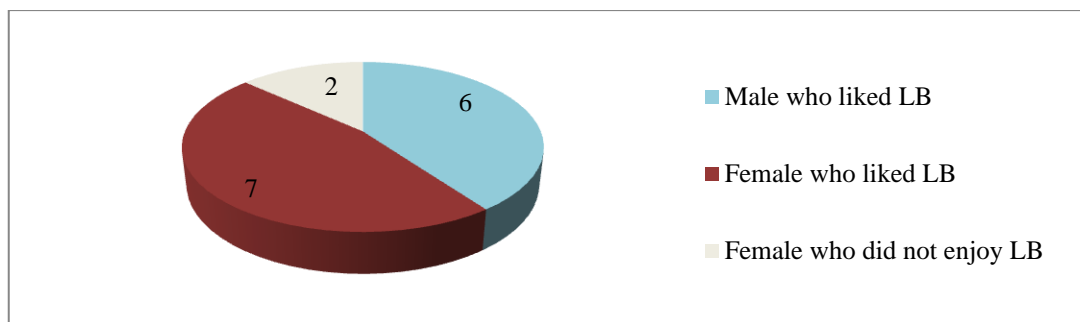
Inf.12 also explains her feelings concerning portfolio-keeping as “Yes, I did. Thanks to my portfolio, I could understand the topics easily. Doing this kind of works improved my English skills. I think I will continue to keep a portfolio later” (Interview, inf.12).

#### **4.2.5.3. differences between the perceptions of the learners towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping.**

The last research question aimed to find out the learners’ perceptions towards the LB and PK. The final research question was “Are there any differences between the participants’ perceptions towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping according to different variables such as gender, major field of study, and background in learning a foreign language?”. This question investigated whether there were any relations between the learners’ feelings towards learner blogging, and portfolio-keeping and their gender, major field of study, and background in learning a foreign language. The answer of this question was obtained through semi-structured-interviews. This question includes three sub-points; which are gender, major field of study, and their background in learning English, therefore the results are presented in the same order with the sub-points.

##### ***4.2.5.3.1. the perceptions of the participants towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping based on gender.***

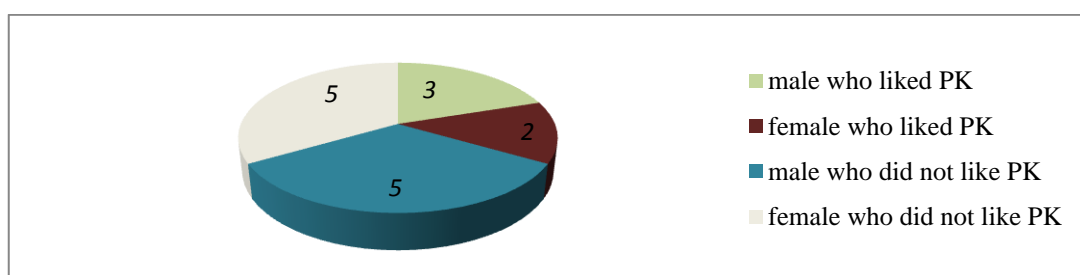
The interviews were carried out with both the experimental groups involving 15 students in each experimental group. In the blogging group in which the learners were required to use learner blogs for a ten-week period, there were six male and nine female students. In the portfolio-keeping group in which the learners were required to keep portfolios for a ten-week period there were eight male and seven female students. When the recordings of the interviews with the blogging group were analyzed, all of the students of both gender believed the learner blogging contributed to their learning in a way. However, there was a slight difference in their feelings towards the learner blogging as an educational tool based on gender (See Figure 4.10).



*Figure 4.10.* Perceptions of the learners towards learning blogging based on gender

As shown in Figure 4.10, there was not a significant difference between the male and female students who liked learner blogging in terms of gender. All of the male participants reported that they enjoyed using learner blogs and 77.7% of the female participants said they took pleasure in having a learner blog. However, there was a slight difference between the male and female students who did not enjoy learner blogging in terms of gender. Although there were no male students who did not like learner blogging, there were two female students who disliked learner blogging. However, as the number of the students was not equal in terms of gender, it was not possible to make generalizations for the relationship between the students' feelings about learner blogging and their gender.

When the recordings of the interviews with the portfolio-keeping group were analyzed, it was revealed that all of the students of both gender believed portfolio-keeping contributed to their learning in a way. The analysis also showed there was not a meaningful difference between the perceptions of genders towards portfolio-keeping (See Figure 4.11).



*Figure 4.11.* Perceptions of the learners towards portfolio-keeping based on gender

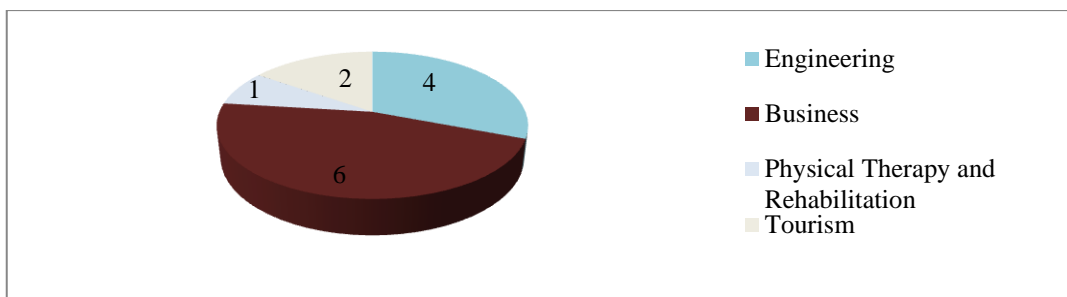
As Figure 4.11 reveals, the number of the male and female students who liked portfolio-keeping was very close. In addition, as a result of the analysis of Figure 4.12, it was found out that the number of male and female students who disliked portfolio-keeping was equal and their percentages were also very close with 62.5% and 71% respectively.

That is, out of the eight male learners, 62.5% of them did not like portfolio-keeping, and out of the seven female learners, 71% of them did not enjoy portfolio-keeping. Therefore, it can be stated that there were no significant differences between the perceptions of the learners towards the portfolio-keeping in terms of their gender.

***4.2.5.3.2. the perceptions of the participants towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping based on their major field of study.***

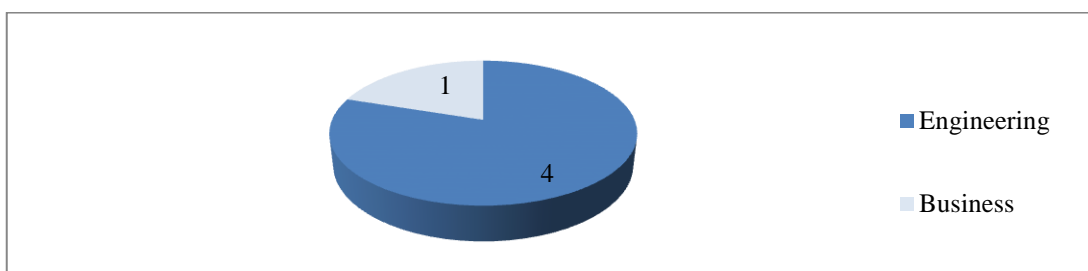
Majority of the participants in the blogging group would study at the Faculty of Engineering and the Faculty of Business, eight and seven participants respectively. The rest of the participants would study at the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Tourism and the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation. In the portfolio-keeping group, most of the participants were students at the Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Engineering, with six students in each faculty. The rest of the participants would study at the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Tourism, the Faculty of Science and Letters and the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation.

When the recordings of the interviews with the students in the blogging group were analyzed, it was found out that only two students whose major field of study was engineering did not enjoy learner blogging. It was found that all of the students who would study at Faculty of Business, the Faculty of Tourism, and the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation enjoyed learner blogging. When the percentages of the students who enjoyed learner blogging were examined, it was seen that 46.1% of the students would study at the Faculty of Business, 30.8% of the students would study at the Faculty of Engineering, 15.4% of the students would study at the Faculty of Tourism and 7.7% of the students would study at the School of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation (See Figure 4.12). However, on the basis of the fact that the students who did not like LB belonged to the Faculty of Engineering, it cannot be suggested that the students of Engineering Faculty did not like learner blogging practice. The reason for this is that 66% of the Engineering Department students that were interviewed reported that they liked learner blogging. In addition, the number of the students is not enough to make generalizations about the relation between having positive feelings towards learner blogging and the major field of study.



*Figure 4.12.* The number of the learners who liked learner blogging based on their departments

After analyzing the recordings of the interviews with the students in the portfolio group, it can be stated that only five students (33%) reported they enjoyed the ten-week portfolio-keeping. Four of the students who liked portfolio-keeping would study at the Engineering Faculty and one of them would study at the Faculty of Business (see Figure 4.13).

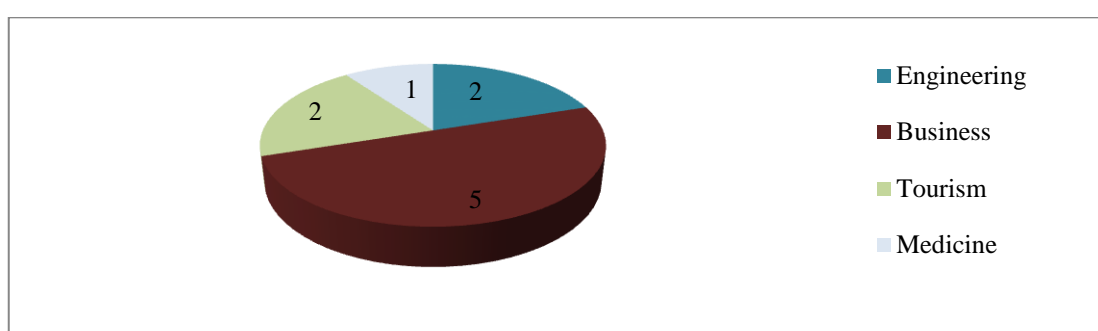


*Figure 4.13.* The number of the learners who enjoyed portfolio-keeping based on their departments

Figure 4.13 illustrates that the students who reported that they enjoyed the portfolio-keeping were found to be of two different departments. When the percentages of the students who liked the portfolio-keeping as part of their classroom practices were analyzed, it was observed that totally five students liked the portfolio-keeping process. Four out of these five students would study at the Faculty of Business and only one of them would study at the Faculty of Engineering.

Figure 4.14 displays that the students who reported that they did not like portfolio-keeping were found to be of four different departments. When the percentages of the students who did not enjoy keeping portfolios as part of their classroom practices were analyzed, it was observed that 50% of the students who disliked portfolios would study at the Faculty of Business, 20% of the students would study at the Faculty of Engineering, 20% of the students were the students of Tourism Faculty and 10% of the students were at the Faculty of Medicine. The analysis of the students of each faculty indicated that totally

83% of the students studying at the Faculty of Business stated that they did not enjoy keeping portfolios for different reasons. Among the Engineering Faculty students only 33% of them disliked portfolio-keeping. In addition, the rest of the students studying both at the Medicine, and Tourism Faculties reported that they did not like keeping portfolios (See Figure 4.14). Since the number of the students in each major field of study was not equal, it is difficult to make generalizations. Because the numbers of the students in the faculties of Tourism and Medicine were only two and one respectively, it would not be right to say that the students of the Faculty of Tourism and the Faculty of Medicine did not like portfolio-keeping.



*Figure 4.14.* The number of the learners who did not enjoy portfolio-keeping based on their departments

In short, since the number of the students in each major field of study was not equal, making generalizations based on the findings would not be right. In addition, the number of the students was not many in each major field of study, so the students who liked and disliked portfolio-keeping could not be differentiated very clearly based on their major field of study.

#### ***4.2.5.3.3. the perceptions of the participants towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping based on their background in learning a foreign language.***

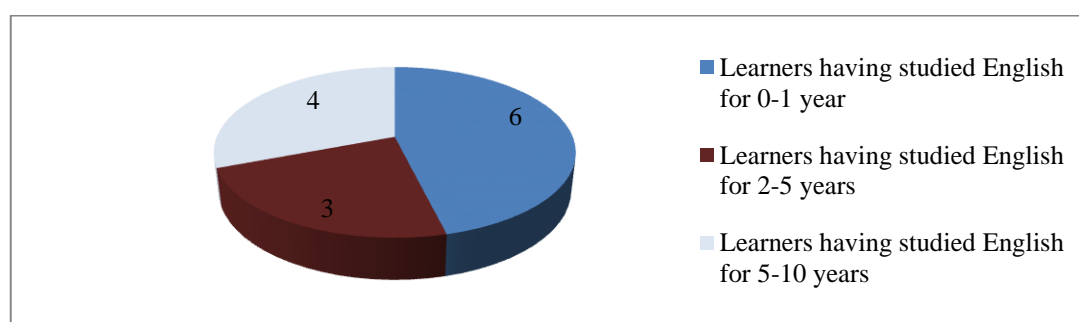
The study included participants from various English learning backgrounds changing from 0-1 year to 2-5 years, and to 5-10 years. Totally 35% of the participants in the blog group had received 0-1 year of English instruction before they started the preparatory class at Pamukkale University. The study included participants from various English learning backgrounds changing from 0-1 year to 2-5 years, and to 5-10 years. Totally 35% of the participants in the blog group had received 0-1 year of English instruction before they started the preparatory class at Pamukkale University. In addition,



30% of them reported 2-5 years of English instruction and 35% of the participants reported 5-10 years of English instruction. Most of the participants (70%) in the portfolio group had received 5-10 years of English instruction. In addition, 10% of the participants studied English for 0-1 year (2 students) and 20% of them reported 2-5 years of English instruction.

When the recordings of the interviews with the participants in the blog group were analyzed, it was found that only two of the participants, one student who had been studying English for 2-5 years and one student that had been studying English for 5-10 years, reported they did not enjoy having a learner blog. The rest of the participants (86.6%) of different language learning backgrounds reported they liked LB for various reasons. Among the students who were in favour of using blogs as part of their classroom practices, 46.1% of the students had been learning English for 0-1 years; 23.1% of them had been learning English for 2-5 years, and finally 30.8% of the students had been learning English for 5-10 years.

The detailed analysis suggested that 100% of the students who had been studying English for 0-1 year reported that they liked using learner blogs. In addition, among the students who had been learning English between 5 and 10 years, 80% of them took pleasure in learner blogging. Finally, 75% of the students who had been learning English for 2-5 years stated that they enjoyed having their own learner blogs. As a result, it can be stated that most of the students enjoyed using their own learner blogs no matter how long they had been learning English (See Figure 4.15).

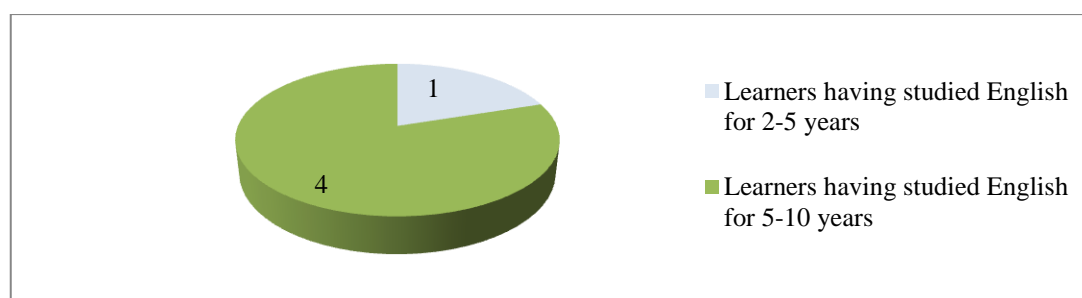


*Figure 4.15.* The number of the learners who liked learner blogging based on their background in learning English

As a result, it can be stated that since the number of the students was not equal in terms of the length of English instruction, it is not possible to make generalizations based

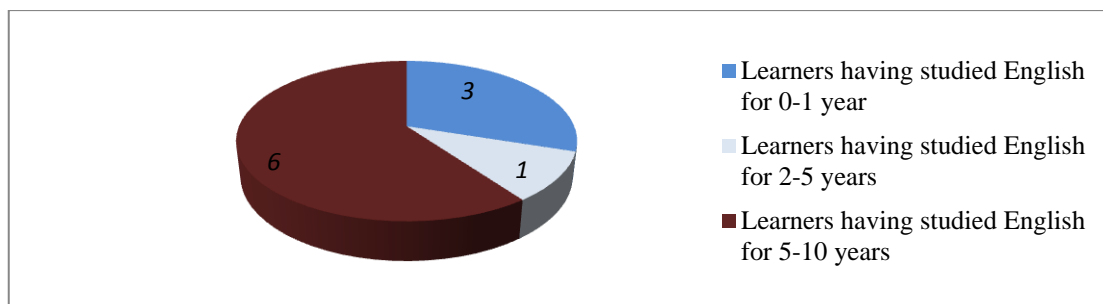
on these findings. In addition, as the number of the students in each language learning period was not many, it made it harder to reach a conclusion for the relationship between the feelings for learner blogging and length of English instruction. Therefore, it cannot be suggested that the learners with an exact period of language learning background had positive or negative feelings towards learner blogging.

When the recordings of the interviews of the participants who kept portfolios were analyzed, it was identified that only 33% of them enjoyed keeping portfolios and their language backgrounds were mostly similar. Totally 80% of the participants who loved using portfolios during their language learning process reported that they had been learning English for 5-10 years. Only one student who had been learning English for 2-5 years also liked keeping a portfolio (See Figure 4.16).



*Figure 4.16.* The number of the learners who enjoyed portfolio-keeping based on their background in learning English

However, 66.6% of the participants in the portfolio group reported that they had not enjoyed keeping portfolios for a ten-week period for different reasons. When the interviews with the participants were analyzed, it was revealed that none of the learners that had been studying English for 0-1 year liked portfolio-keeping. All of them expressed their dislike towards portfolio-keeping. And half of the students that were interviewed reported that they had been learning English for 2-5 years and did not take pleasure in portfolio-keeping. In addition, 60% of the learners who had been learning English between 5 and 10 years of time stated that they did not like portfolio-keeping. When the total English instruction years and dislike for portfolio-keeping were analyzed in detail, it was revealed that 10% of the learners who did not like portfolio-keeping had been learning English for 2-5 years, 30% of them had an English instruction for 0-1 year; and finally 60% of the learners who did not like portfolio-keeping had been learning English for 5-10 years (See Figure 4.17).



*Figure 4.17.* The number of the learners who did not enjoy portfolio-keeping based on their background in learning English

The number of the students with different language learning backgrounds was not many, so it was difficult to make generalizations based on the findings. Although it was revealed that the students who enjoyed portfolio-keeping had learnt English for 5-10 years, it was also found out the students who did not enjoy portfolio-keeping had learnt English for 5-10 years. In addition, the same number of the students whose language learning backgrounds were between 2 and 5 years liked and disliked portfolio-keeping. As a result, the analysis of the students' feelings and their length of English instruction did not reveal a significant relation.

As a result of the data analyses, it can be stated that the participants' language learning backgrounds were also not a determinant of the learners' perceptions concerning the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping. The learners of different language learning backgrounds were found to like or dislike using learner blogs or keeping portfolios.

### **4.3. Discussion of the Results**

This section discusses the results of the data gathered through the learner autonomy questionnaire, self-assessment checklist, language proficiency exams, and interviews; and identifies whether the learners in both the experimental and control groups have become more autonomous, more successful, and better at assessing their language skills after the LB and PK implementations.

#### **4.3.1. The Effect of Learner Blogging and Portfolio-Keeping on Learner Autonomy**

The study of the relevant literature reveals the importance of learner autonomy in the field of language learning. Although the definition of autonomy has varied for many researchers such as Holec (1981), Dickinson (1993), Benson (2001) and Little (2004), there is no doubt that learners should be autonomous in language learning in order to be

successful at learning a language. Researchers conducted different studies on learner autonomy in relation to learning strategies, motivation, autonomous activities, language skills, and so on. Some of the prominent names in the field of autonomy include Benson (2001), Cotteral (1999), Dickinson (1987, 1993), Dörnyei (2001), Little (1991, 2002, 2004), Littlewood (1996), Oxford (1990, 2008), and Wenden (1991). The research issue that scholars have mostly focused on has been the promotion of autonomy. Thus this study takes its roots from the promotion of autonomy. Since the participants in this particular study were adults and since they were more interested in technology, blogging was chosen as one of the ways to promote learner autonomy. Because the students willingly used the Internet and technology in their life, it was thought that they would also use the Internet for language learning via blogs enthusiastically, which would obviously promote their autonomy. Another tool that was utilized in this study was portfolios, which were useful tools to show learners' progress in language learning in the field of education. As data collection tools, learner autonomy questionnaire, self-assessment checklist, language exam results, and interview technique were utilized.

To find out whether there was a significant change in the participants' level of autonomy in the experimental and control groups after the LB and PK applications, each group's mean values of the pre-application and post-application autonomy levels, which were obtained by the learner autonomy questionnaire, were computed. The mean values of the learners in the blogging group indicated that the participants' level of autonomy fell in the 2.61-3.40 scale range, which means that they were neither autonomous nor non-autonomous both before and after the LB application ( $\bar{x}=3.18$  and  $\bar{x}=3.20$  respectively). According to the statistical results, the students in the blogging group sometimes behaved autonomously before and after the LB application. There was not a meaningful difference in the pre-study autonomy level of the blog users and their post-study autonomy levels. When each dimension in the learner autonomy questionnaire was analyzed in detail, it was found out that the blog users' autonomy levels did not show any increase in the sub-dimensions of the LAQ after the study. The reason why the learners' autonomy levels did not show a significant difference before and after the study could be due to various factors. A number of factors were suggested by the participants in the interview like the students did not know much about blogs beforehand, they needed more practice, and they had problems with internet connection. The limited time of the study and students' not having previous knowledge about blogging technology were in line with the results of a study

conducted by Aliweh (2011) on autonomy and the use of electronic portfolios, which were also similar with blogs in function. As a result of his study, Aliweh (2011) found that electronic portfolios did not enhance the learners' autonomy levels at a significant level due to various factors such as teacher dominant, exam-centred, and textbook-based Egyptian education context, time limitation of the study, and the lack of technology knowledge of the learners. Another parallel result in regard to the challenges of using blogs to promote autonomous learning was obtained in the study of Arikan and Bakla (2011). The findings of their study suggested that learners enjoyed keeping personal blogs and believed it contributed to their autonomy; however the results also showed that some of the learners encountered problems using technology and this might have hindered the increase in the learners' autonomy levels. In addition, Moffat (2008) examined the effectiveness of e-portfolios on the development of autonomy in learners and the results indicated that several issues which appeared during the project such as inadequate training sessions and time constraints of the project led to challenges in enhancing autonomy in learners. The results related to the negative effects of the limited time of the study on the development of autonomy in learners were similar to the findings of the present study. However, apart from the aforementioned problems of using learner blogs in our study, there could be other reasons that might have caused the learners not to become more autonomous as follows, too.

The first probable reason for the stability in the learners' autonomy levels could be related to lack of motivation. As the study was carried out in the second term of the academic year, the learners might have got bored with studying English for a year and started to have lots of absenteeism in class, which might have affected also their motivation in studying English outside the class as well. In addition, they could have been affected by their success scores in English, which means that some learners might have felt that whatever they did, they would become unsuccessful; as a result, they did not do much with their learner blogs. Similarly, lack of motivation was also found as a factor that hindered the development of learner autonomy in a study of Borg and Al-Busaidi, (2012). The results of their study indicated that teachers believed some factors such as lack of motivation, limited experience of independent learning and fixed curriculum prevented the development of learner autonomy, which could be the case in our study as well.

Even if the mean values of the learners' autonomy levels did not increase significantly in this particular study, the learners stated in the interviews that they believed their English improved from different aspects and they became better language learners as well. One interpretation of this finding is that the learners who had a learner blog became better language learners who shared works with other learners, communicated with each other and who were able to criticise other learners' works consciously. Noytim (2010) supported this by stating that using blogs can enhance learners' analytical and critical thinking skills, encourage them to read and write for communicative purposes, help them construct knowledge collaboratively, and create social interaction between students and students, and students and teachers. Through blogs, learners benefited from one another's knowledge, which helped them become better learners. Dickinson (2013) conducted a study on how a class blog was used to promote language awareness and learner autonomy and found out that blogging certainly made learners more independent in their learning and provided opportunities to communicate in English in a genuine context by stating that blogging developed learners' both interpersonal and language skills. In our study, the students stated the positive effects of learner blogging on their communication skills emphasizing that they had genuine purposes to speak English with each other. Similarly, Alm (2009) expressed that having personal blog spaces provided learners with a sense of ownership and audience with whom learners could freely interact. Also with the help of their own blogs and their friends' blogs, learners could assess their English in a more conscious way and would become more aware of what they could and could not do. All of these were essential skills for learner autonomy, so it is clear that having a blog is an effective way to increase learner autonomy.

With regard to the relation between blogging and autonomy, Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010) claimed that blogging triggered motivation and cognitive skills, making students more autonomous in an innovative way. Also, the responses given to the interview questions in our study supported the positive relation between learner blogging and learner autonomy. The learners that kept learner blogs stated in the interview that having a learner blog upgraded their language skills, especially writing skill, enhanced their vocabulary knowledge and also developed their personality. More importantly, they expressed that they became more aware of their language learning process and became more self-confident of their abilities, which is a significant step towards autonomy. This statement of the learners clearly shows that learners could realize their language learning process and

assess the contributions of learner blogging to their language learning process. Another positive effect of the utilization of learner blogs as part of the learners' language learning process is that the learners could also use their time outside the class more efficiently. All of these statements can be interpreted in a way that the responses of the participants indicated the positive effects of using learner blogs as part of the language learning process. This is also supported by a myriad of research findings in literature which indicated that there was a significant increase in learners' autonomy levels after using online portfolios or blogs (Wang and Fang, 2005; Lida, 2009; Bhattacharya and Chauhan, 2010; Harwood, 2010; Khoosf and Khosravani, 2014; Jafari, Rahgozaran and Shokri, 2014; Baghernezhad and Nemat Tabrizi, 2015).

Some scholars carried out studies using e-portfolios, which are similar to blogs in function, as well. Moffat (2008) conducted a study on the effectiveness of e-portfolios in increasing learner autonomy in the context of a language learning programme and the results of the study indicated that the e-portfolio integration into the curriculum seemed promising to promote autonomous learning. Lopez-Fernandez and Rodriguez-Illera (2009) also carried out a study on students' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours while using digital learner portfolios to support their learning and assessment; and they found out that learners' autonomy levels could be partly enhanced by using a digital learner portfolio. Dickinson (2013) investigated the effects of a class blog on learner awareness and autonomy, and the researcher concluded that despite the problems, blogs could be used to assist learner autonomy. All these studies suggest that the use of blogs has a potential to enhance autonomy in learners. The present study does not support the findings of the studies of Moffat (2008), Lopez-Fernandez and Rodriguez-Illera (2009) and Dickinson (2013) clearly in that the mean values of the learners' autonomy levels did not increase significantly. Although there were no significant differences in the learners' autonomy levels according to the statistical analyses in our study, the fact that learners tended to show autonomous behaviours can be interpreted from the interview results in a way that there is a potential for blogs to make learners more autonomous.

In addition, the mean values of the learners in the portfolio-keeping group demonstrated that the participants' level of autonomy fell in the 2.61-3.40 scale range, which means that they were neither autonomous nor non-autonomous both before and after the portfolio application ( $\bar{x}$ =3.13 and  $\bar{x}$ =3.22 respectively). This result was similar with the

result of the blogging group. The portfolio users' autonomy levels did not increase significantly. Also when the sub-dimensions of the autonomy questionnaires were analyzed in detail, it was found out that except for the sub-dimensions of readiness for self-direction, independent work in language learning, and objectives and evaluation, there were no significant differences in the sub-dimensions of autonomy questionnaire. The increase in these three sub-dimensions was not enough to increase the general autonomy levels of the learners. As the general increase was not at a significant level, no change in the learners' autonomy levels can be stated for the students in the portfolio-keeping group as well. The results of the present study contradicted with the results of many studies in the literature. Nakayama (2010) conducted a study to examine the influence of portfolios on learner autonomy and in the study the students were asked to keep a portfolio for a year. The findings of the study indicated that using portfolio positively influenced students' autonomy. Similar to the results of the study of Nakayama (2010), Karagöl (2008) revealed that keeping portfolios had potential to make learners more autonomous.

However, in this particular study, the autonomy levels of the students did not change at the end of the study. Although the quantitative data did not reveal any positive relationship between the learners' autonomy levels and the use of portfolios, the interview responses of the participants who kept portfolios revealed that keeping portfolios provided various benefits to them regarding their language learning process. The beneficial areas emphasized by the portfolio users were almost the same as the blog users. The students who kept portfolios stated that as a result of keeping portfolios, their writing skills improved, their vocabulary knowledge enhanced and their personality developed. Through portfolios, they believed they became better at essay writing; and they became more organized and self-confident since they saw their progress. This finding can be interpreted as keeping a portfolio can make learners more critical of their learning process. As keeping a portfolio requires time for learners to see their progress, they can develop their assessment skills in this process. When they see that they are weak in a point in their language learning process, they have a chance to improve that weak point and follow their language development in the process. Also when they see that they are good at something, this will contribute to their self-confidence. For the relationship between the increase in self-confidence and use of portfolios, Ok (2014) revealed that portfolio integration into the learning process raised students' self-confidence not only in writing skill but also in speaking skill because students were not afraid to make mistakes in using English. Thus, it



can be stated that with the help of portfolios, learners could become slightly more autonomous.

The relation between the use of portfolios and learner autonomy was also examined by researchers and many studies in the literature revealed that there was a positive relation between portfolios and autonomy. Karagöl (2008) investigated the effects of involving learners in the learning and decision-making process through the use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) on learner autonomy and found that the use of self-assessment checklists and the involvement of learners in choosing their tasks fostered their autonomy. Similarly, in another study, Egel (2003) researched the development and implementation of an ELP junior model for Turkish primary school students and also investigated the impact of the ELP on the learner autonomy of the students. After implementing the ELP in the experimental group classes, it was found that the ELP was an influential tool in promoting learner autonomy of the students in the experimental group. In line with the results of the previous studies, Erden-Burnaz (2011) explored the perceptions of EFL learners towards the benefits and challenges of keeping portfolio and investigated how keeping a portfolio affected learner autonomy; and the results of the study indicated that students had positive perceptions towards keeping a portfolio and learners stated that they became more autonomous with the help of portfolios. In our study, the responses of the participants in the interview indicated that some of the students had positive perceptions about keeping portfolios as well. This can also be supported by their statements for the contributions of keeping portfolios to their language learning process in the interviews. In another study on the relation between autonomy and portfolio use, Köse (2006) investigated the effects of portfolio implementation and assessment on critical reading and learner autonomy of ELT students and found out that using portfolio improved critical reading skill and fostered learner autonomy. All of these studies are a proof to the positive relation between keeping portfolios and the development of learner autonomy in learners. However, the quantitative results of our study were opposite the results of the studies of Egel (2003), Köse (2006), Karagöl (2008), Nakayama (2010) and Erden-Burnaz (2011). In the present study, the learners did not become more autonomous by keeping portfolios at the end of the ten-week application process. According to the statistical data, the students sometimes behaved autonomously both before and after the study, which means that the portfolio-keeping implementation did not increase the learners' autonomy.

It is believed that the stability in the learners' autonomy levels could be related to several negative factors. A number of factors were identified in the responses of the participants in the interview. The participants reported in the interview that it was boring to put everything in a file after some time. Therefore, they did not enjoy the physical task of compiling portfolios. This negative point of view was also the case in some other studies in the literature, as well. Litz and Smith (2013) conducted a study on the perspectives of students towards writing portfolios and the results indicated that a significant number of students reported that they did not enjoy keeping portfolios, because portfolios were both uninteresting and impractical (difficult to bring the class, difficult to carry, difficult to organize). Similarly, the difficulty of compiling portfolio was also stated in the study of Fahim and Jalili (2013) as well. In their study, Fahim and Jalili (2013) investigated the effects of using writing portfolio assessment on developing the ability of editing among EFL learners. As a result of their study, they found that although learners mostly had positive opinions towards portfolios, some drawbacks were also reported like creating portfolios was a time-consuming and difficult task and a heavy burden on students. Likewise, Elango, Jutti, and Lee (2005) conducted a study on the perceptions of learners towards portfolios as a learning tool and found that some of the students perceived that it was time-consuming to develop a proper portfolio, which was a similar result with our study, as well. In our study, the students also complained that it took time to keep a portfolio.

Another problem that was reported by the respondents during the interview was that the time of the study was limited to benefit from the portfolios thoroughly. It can be stated that ten-week period in our study was not enough to create the habit of using portfolios. What is more, as the participants did not enjoy keeping a portfolio, they might not have had enough motivation for learning English. In addition, since it included pen and paper work, it was not different from usual class activities. Therefore, it might not have had a very big effect on the learners' autonomy. In short, the positive effects of portfolios could not be supported with the statistical data in the present study. However, despite the drawbacks that the learners had while using their portfolios, the learners' responses to the interview questions indicated the contributions of portfolios to their language learning process.

Finally, the mean values of the learners in the control group pointed out that the participants' level of autonomy fell in the 2.61-3.40 scale range, which also means that they were neither autonomous nor non-autonomous both before and after the application processes ( $\bar{x}=3.21$  and  $\bar{x}=3.09$  respectively). This result showed that the mean values of autonomy levels of the learners in the control group did not increase, in contrast at the end of the study their autonomy levels decreased. When the sub-dimensions of the autonomy questionnaire were analyzed in detail, it was found out that except for the dimensions of independent work in language learning, objectives and evaluation, and assessment and motivation, there were not significant increases in the other dimensions of the LAQ. The increase in these dimensions was not enough to increase the general autonomy levels of the learners in the control group. This could be due to a variety of factors. The students might have got bored doing the same things while learning English until the end of the second term. As a result, the learners in the control group might have developed a resistance to studying until that time. In addition, if their exam grades were not as they wished, they could have given up studying any more, which would definitely affect their motivation for English and as a result their autonomy. Another reason why the autonomy levels of the control group dropped could be because the learners in that group got used to doing things in English only when they had to. It is likely that they did not see any need or have any desire to study outside the class on their own. All of these factors might have an extremely big effect on the learners' language learning process.

Consequently, the statistical results in the present study indicated that although there was a decrease in the mean values of the learners' autonomy levels in the control group, there was an increase in the mean values of the learners' autonomy levels for the experimental groups after the LB and PK applications. However, this increase was not significant. Therefore, the common conclusion for all of the groups in terms of their autonomy levels is that the autonomy levels of the learners in all three groups did not change at all; therefore, there were no autonomy level differences between the students in these three groups. On the other hand, some other studies found a positive relationship between the development of learner autonomy and the use of blogs (Ballén, 2014; Jafari et al., 2014; Dickinson, 2013; Kumi, 2012; Arikan and Bakla, 2011; Lee, 2011; Bhattacharuya and Chauhan, 2010; Lida, 2009) and the use of portfolios (Ok, 2014; Yildirim, 2013; Sert et al., 2012; Erden-Burnaz, 2011).

#### 4.3.2. The Effect of Learner Blogging and Portfolio-Keeping on Self-Assessment

Another focus of this study was the effect of learner blogging and portfolio-keeping on EFL learners' self-assessment of their language skills. This issue has also been an important notion of language teaching. Self-assessment is an alternative way of assessment in which learners make judgements about their own language learning process and reflect on their performance or language skills in general. With the help of self-assessment, learners can share responsibility with teachers in the assessment phase, which means that while assessing their language skills, learners can learn their weaknesses and strengths, they can be more self-confident and as a result they can be more autonomous. Many researchers like Benson (2001), Dickinson (1993), Oscarson (2009), and Race (2001) conducted studies in relation to self-assessment skills of learners in relation with different concepts such as writing skill, peer-assessment, and group assessment and so on. One aim of this study focuses on the relationship between self-assessment skills of the learners and the utilization of learner blogs and portfolios.

To find out whether there was a significant change in the participants' level of self-assessment of their language skills in the experimental and control groups after the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications, each group's mean values of the pre-application and post application self-assessment levels were computed.

The mean values of the learners in the blogging group indicated that the participants' level of self-assessment fell in the 2.61-3.40 scale range, which means that the learners in blogging group assessed the level of their language skills as "average" before and after the LB implementation ( $\bar{x}=2.93$  and  $\bar{x}=3.31$  respectively). However, the learners' pre-study self-assessment level and post-study self-assessment level differed significantly ( $t= -4.13$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). This indicated that the learners believed their language skills improved after using learner blogs for a ten-week period. After analyzing the responses of the students to the SAC generally, each of the language skill was analyzed in detail and the results were subjected to One-Way ANOVA analysis and Paired Samples T-test. As a result of all the analyses, it was revealed that the students believed all their language skills, namely listening, reading, writing, and speaking, improved at a significant level at the end of the ten-week LB process. This improvement could result from the fact that they were able to practice all skills through their learner blogs. They wrote essays, shared their works, commented on their classmates' works, read their classmates' and

teacher's comments, watched and listened to the videos which their friends shared and finally communicated with their friends in English. Therefore, it could be stated that the learners' all language skills improved at the end of the study as expected. This finding was also supported by the responses given to the interview questions. The learners expressed the contributions of learner blogs to their language skills in the interview, as well. They stated that they were able to share the essays that they had written and read their classmates' essays, comment on their classmates' works and receive comments on their own works, realize their mistakes, see their weaknesses and strengths, and communicate with each other outside the class in English. Obviously, all of these had a significant effect on their language skills and as a result the learners also considered themselves better at language skills.

In the literature, there are also some studies that examined the relation between blogging and self-assessment skills. Iyer (2013) investigated the effects of collaborative blogging on communicative skills and writing skills of a group of EFL students and as a result Iyer (2013) claimed that students perceived blogging as a helpful tool to improve their writing skill by reading and commenting on others' blogs. This result was also obvious in our study as well; students believed especially their writing skills improved with the help of giving and receiving feedback in the present study. In addition, Dickinson (2013) carried out a study on the effect of blogging on learner autonomy and language awareness and found out that through blogging, students benefited from peer-learning and they noticeably became less teacher-dependent and stated that blogs created a collaborative space for self-expression and interaction. Similarly, Campbell (2007) reported that online portfolios had a capacity for encouraging shy learners to communicate. The problem of shyness was not reported by any of the students in the blogging group in the present study, but they talked about the positive effects of blogs on their communication skills. Students in our study reported that they had a chance to communicate with their classmates and teachers outside the class as well. At this point, Moffat (2008) also expressed that e-portfolios facilitated the communication between teachers and students. In conclusion, these studies reinforced the result of our study in that learners language skills improved through learner blogging and they became more self-confident of their language skills.

The mean values of the learners in the portfolio-keeping group indicated that the participants' level of self-assessment fell in the 2.61-3.40 scale range, which means that

the learners in portfolio group assessed the level of their language skills as “average” both before and after the portfolio-keeping application ( $\bar{x}=2.69$  and  $\bar{x}=2.75$  respectively). Although there was a little increase in the students’ assessment of their proficiency in English, it can be inferred from these results that the utilization of portfolios for ten weeks did not change the students’ view of their language skills significantly, which means that the students assessed their language skills as average both before and after the study. After analyzing the responses of the students to the SAC generally, a detailed analysis of each language skill was conducted and the results were subjected to One-Way ANOVA analysis and Paired Samples T-test in order to detect how well they assessed themselves in each skill separately. As a result of all the analyses, it was revealed that students believed their three language skills, namely reading, writing, and speaking, did not improve at the end of the ten-week PK process. However, the interesting result in these statistics was that the students believed their listening skills improved after using portfolios for a ten-week period. As they did not do much about their listening skill through their portfolios, this was an unexpected result. Reading and especially writing skills were the skills where improvement was expected by the researcher. In addition, as portfolios are not interactive tools, the learners’ listening skills were not expected to improve after ten weeks. However, the statistical results did not support these expectations. Although the statistical analyses did not reveal almost any improvement in the language skills of the portfolio users, the responses obtained during the interview illustrated that the students believed that portfolios contributed to their vocabulary knowledge and improved their writing skill. These data contradicted with the data they gave through the checklist. The interviews showed that the students believed their vocabulary knowledge and writing skills improved with the help of portfolios, and they could see their mistakes with the help of the feedback they received on their language-related works. Therefore, although it was not obvious in the statistical results, the interview results suggested that the learners self-assessed their language skills as improved at the end of the study. There are also several studies that investigated the relation between the skill development and use of portfolios. Ok (2012) investigated the opinions of EFL learners on using the portfolio process as an assessment tool and stated that students’ performances were evaluated without causing students to get anxious. Also the researcher found out that students had more positive attitudes towards writing skill at the end of the study. In one of her studies, Odabaşı-Çimer (2011) found that students could notice their strengths and weaknesses about learning through portfolios, so they can

remedy the parts of the topic they could not learn at first, which was helpful for the development of their skills.

The studies in the literature mostly focus on the assessment of language skills separately, thus there are not many studies combining the use of portfolios and the self-assessment of all language skills. However, in the light of the studies conducted on the self-assessment of individual language skills, it would be possible to compare the results of those studies and this study. Khodadady and Khodabakhshzade (2012) conducted a study in order to explore the effect of portfolio and self-assessment on writing tasks and self-regulation ability. The participants in the experimental group were required to write portfolios regularly and perform self-assessment tasks. The findings of the study revealed that the students in the experimental group scored higher on writing tasks and attained higher self-regulation ability as a result of writing portfolios and self-assessment. In another study, Arslan (2014) aimed to investigate the effect of the utilization of blog and portfolio on a group of prospective teachers' writing skill and found out that blog and portfolio implementation contributed to student teachers' writing skills specifically in terms of process, organization, content, language use, mechanics and accuracy. In the light of the study's results, Arslan (2014) suggested that both blogs and portfolios were effective tools to integrate feedback into writing process. These results were parallel to the findings of the interview results of our study, in which the students stated that their writing skills were positively influenced by the use of portfolios. Another study was carried out by Ok (2014) in order to find out the reflections of ELT students on portfolio implementation in regard to their development in language and vocabulary use and found out that the utilization of portfolios yielded benefits towards using English more self-confidently and towards progress in writing and speaking skills and vocabulary use. In another study on the use of portfolios, Yurdabakan and Erdogan (2009) explored the effects of portfolio assessment on reading, listening and writing skills of preparatory class students attending a secondary school and got their opinions on portfolio assessment. Their results showed that portfolio assessment affected students' writing skills significantly; however similar results were not revealed for the reading and listening skills.

In the light of all these studies, it can be suggested that using portfolios as an educational tool was effective on the self-assessment abilities of the students. That is, portfolios help learners become more aware of themselves as language learners and see

their mistakes, weaknesses, strengths in their language learning progress. In this particular study, although the statistical results did not support the relation between the use of portfolios and self-assessment skills, it can be understood from the interview results that students' use of portfolios made positive effects on self-assessing their language proficiency, and the students believed that their language skills, especially writing skills and vocabulary knowledge improved thanks to portfolios.

The mean values of the learners in the control group demonstrated that the participants' general self-assessment level fell in the 1.81-2.60 scale range, which means that learners in the control group assessed the level of their language skills as "poor" both before and after the ten-week process ( $\bar{x}=2.47$  and  $\bar{x}=2.54$  respectively). Although the students' general self-assessment level of their language skills did not increase, each of their language skill could improve after ten weeks. Therefore, after the responses of the students to the SAC were analyzed generally, a detailed analysis of each language skill was conducted and the results were subjected to One-Way ANOVA analysis and Paired Samples T-test in order to detect how well they assessed themselves in each skill separately. As a result of all the analyses, it was revealed that the students believed their three language skills, namely reading, writing, and speaking, did not improve at the end of the ten-week process. However, the interesting result in these statistics was that the students believed their listening skills improved after ten weeks, which was the exact case for the portfolio users as well. This interesting finding could result from the fact that they had not kept the track of their learning process. Since the students did not have any proof of what they had done during that ten-week period, they may not have evaluated their language skills effectively. Also, simply their language skills may not have improved in general in ten-weeks, because they were not involved with any extra practices other than their classroom practices. For the unexpected increase in their listening skills, it can be suggested that the students may have improved their listening skills with their own efforts outside the class, without any extra implementation at school.

In short, these results illustrated that learners in the blogging group had the highest self-assessment levels and they showed the highest improvement after the LB process. The portfolio users were the second in rank and the students in the control group were the group that had the lowest self-assessment level. This was also the case before the study took place. Blog users had the highest mean value on the self-assessment checklist, and



portfolio keepers had the second highest mean value on the checklist, and the control group had the lowest. Before the study, a little difference in the self-assessment levels of the students was found between the blogging group and the control group. However, after the study, this difference got bigger between these two groups, and also a difference was detected between the blogging group and portfolio-keeping group, which could be a sign of the contribution of learner blog implementation to the students in blogging group. Therefore, it can be put forward that using blogs as part of language learning process contributed to the learners' self-assessment of their language skills, and made them more self-confident of their language skills. Their blogs created a sense of identity and they felt certain of their language abilities. These results support the research findings by Arslan (2014), Dickinson (2013), Cadd (2012), Țurloiu and Stefánsdóttir (2011), Nakayama (2010), Alm (2009), Mynard (2007), Murray (2007), Richards and Farrell (2005), and Little (2002) in that there was a positive relation between using blogs as part of the language learning process and skill development.

#### **4.3.3. The Effect of Learner Blogging and Portfolio-Keeping on Language Achievement**

The following concern of this study was the relation between the utilization of learner blogs, and portfolios and learner achievement. There have been many studies on learners' language achievement for a long time in combination with different concepts such as motivation, learner strategies, learning styles, learner differences, anxiety, and so on. Many scholars conducted studies on learners' language achievement from different perspectives like Jafari (2013), Hashemian and Heidari (2013), Mohamadpour (2013), and Nhan and Lai (2012). In this particular study, the effect of LB and PK on learner achievement was investigated as well. The students' language achievement levels were determined by using the scores that they got from the exams that were carried out in the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University. The learners' pre-study success levels in English were obtained from the mean values of the three midterm exams and their post-study success levels in English were determined by calculating the mean values of the three midterm exams and one final exam.

In order to find out whether there was a significant change in the participants' language achievement levels after the LB and PK implementation, each group's mean values of the pre-application and post-application language achievement levels were

computed. The mean values of the blog group indicated that the participants' language achievement level was between 60 and 70 scale range, which means that the learners in the blogging group had an average success both before and after the LB application ( $\bar{x}=64.46$  and  $\bar{x}=64.81$  respectively). The analysis of the exam results of the students in the blog group indicated that the language achievement levels of the students remained almost the same after the LB process. In addition, the mean values of the portfolio group demonstrated that the participants' language achievement level was between 65 and 75 scale range before the study, and it was between 60 and 70 scale range after the study, which means the learners in the portfolio group had an average success both before and after the PK application ( $\bar{x}=72.06$  and  $\bar{x}=66.41$  respectively). The analyses of the exam results of the students in the portfolio group indicated that the language achievement levels of the students decreased significantly after the PK process. The language achievement level of the learners in the control group was found to be between 65 and 75 as well, which also means that the learners in the control group had an average success both before and after the study ( $\bar{x}=72.94$  and  $\bar{x}=66.21$  respectively). The analyses of the exam results of the students in the control group revealed that the language achievement level of the students decreased significantly after the study.

In conclusion, these results showed that there was a significant difference between the groups in terms of language achievement level before the study. The most successful learners in the exams were the ones in the control group with the highest mean value of the language exams, and the least successful learners were the ones in the blogging group with the lowest mean value of the language exams. However, at the end of the ten-week process, the language achievement level of the students in the portfolio group and control group decreased significantly while the language achievement level of the blog users did not change at all. With the decreases that occurred in the mean values of the exams of the portfolio and control groups, the mean values of all the groups became very close. As a result, the difference that was present in the language achievement levels of the learners in each group before the study disappeared after the study. Thus, their success level remained between 60 and 70 at the end of the process. The analyses conducted did not indicate a correlation between the use of blogs and portfolios and the language achievement level of the learners. In other words, in this particular study, both the learner blogs and portfolios were not able to increase the learners' language success scores. This result was in line with the findings of Sert, Adamson, and Büyüköztürk (2012), who investigated the difference

between perception of adolescents towards autonomy through the European Language Portfolio Use (ELPU) and the effects of autonomy and the ELPU on English attainment. In their study, Sert, et al. (2012) found out that ELPU did not contribute to students' English attainment. For the reasons of this unexpected result, the researchers believed that sufficient self-monitoring activities, self/peer/teacher assessment/editing or journal/diary writing inside and outside the class might have affected the result. The interesting point in the findings of our study was that the success scores of the learners in the portfolio-keeping group and the control group decreased at the end of the process, although there was a slight increase in the scores of the blogging group. In the case of our study, the students were provided with the practices of self, peer, and teacher assessment, and the activities they did were followed closely, however the result was not satisfying in terms of increasing language success. Therefore, other assumptions could be put forward to explain this unexpected result.

Firstly, the students' absenteeism in class could be one of the strongest reasons why the students could not attain a higher language score from the exams at the end of the study. The correlation between school attendance and academic success was researched in the literature and found out that there was a strong correlation between them (Jones, 2006; Fay, Aguirre, and Gash, 2013). The more learners missed the class, the more they might have got away from the language studies, which led us to our second reason for the low rate of language success, which might be due to the lack of motivation in students. Most of the students might not have felt motivated to study when the summer holiday was approaching. This could be because they were tired of or bored with class works. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) viewed motivation as the primary impetus to initiate second language learning and incentive to maintain success in the learning process. Another reason for the decrease in the success scores of the learners in the portfolio-keeping group and control group could be that if the learners' language achievement was not very high since the beginning of the term, their psychology might have been affected by this. Consequently, they might have had a feeling of 'learned helplessness' and so they may have refused to make any efforts to score higher on the exams. Yaman, Esen, and Derkuş (2011) supported this proposition with the findings of their study in which they stated that when the level of learned helplessness increased, the level of academic achievement decreased evenly. This could have an important influence on the students' success. In addition, the literature suggests many different factors cause low language achievement like language aptitude,

age, gender, large class sizes, class environment, socio-cultural elements, socio-economic background, personal problems, family stress, self-confidence, inadequate instructional resources, insufficient strategy knowledge, teachers' lack of training, inappropriate curriculum, lack of practice and so on (Mosha, 2014; Nora, 2014; Alotaibi, Aldiahani, and Alrabah, 2014; Kochito, 2013; Golam, 2012, Njuguna, 2012; Mushtaq and Khan, 2012; Woo, 2009, Brown, 2007; İnal, Evin, and Saracaloğlu, 2005; Gömleksiz, 2001).

#### **4.3.4. Learner Perceptions towards the Learner Blogs and Portfolios**

When the results regarding the perceptions of the learners towards the utilization of learner blogs and portfolios as educational tools were examined, it was revealed that the students in both groups perceived LB and PK helpful for their learning. However, although most of the students who used learner blogs enjoyed using their blogs, very few of the students enjoyed keeping portfolios. The fact that learners in the blogging group liked learner blogging could result from that fact that they enjoyed sharing information on the Internet and they could chat with their friends while learning outside the class. In addition, the interview results indicated that the students believed that using blogs was a different way to study English and it was fun, so the perceptions of the learners could be positive. When the negative opinions on blogging were examined, it was found that lack of the Internet connection and not having previous knowledge on blogging were the reasons for the negative perceptions towards blogging. Likewise, Iyer (2013) also stated the negative effects of lack of access to computers and a good internet connection on the perceptions of learners towards blogging. Similarly, Aljumah (2012) carried out a study on learner perceptions and attitudes towards the use of blogs in English teaching writing course and found out that there were problems with access to computers while students were using their blogs. These studies support the findings of our study related to the drawbacks of blogging, however it should be noted that learners mostly had positive feelings towards blogging in the literature (Lin and Hooft, 2008; Ducate and Lomicka, 2008; Lee, 2011; Aljumah, 2012; Dickinson, 2013; Foroutan et al., 2013).

When the perceptions of the learners towards portfolios in the present study were examined, it was noticed that most of the students pointed out the positive effects of PK on their personal and educational lives and stated that keeping portfolios made them more organized, more aware of their learning process and more self-confident. However, it was found out that the majority of the learners did not enjoy keeping portfolios by stating that it

was difficult and boring to file all their works. This result was reinforced by several studies in the literature. Martínez-Lirola and Rubio (2009) examined students' perspectives about the benefits of using a portfolio as the main instrument of evaluation and found that despite the advantages, there were also some disadvantages of portfolios like being time-consuming. Similarly, Ok (2012) investigated the perceptions of EFL learners at tertiary level towards the use of the portfolio process as an assessment tool and one of the results the researcher obtained from the students' reflective essays and interviews was that the students sometimes got bored due to work load. Likewise, boredom was also expressed clearly in our study as well. Another study that was in line with the results of the present study in terms of the negative points of keeping portfolios was conducted by Litz and Smith (2013) who revealed that a significant number of students reported that portfolios were both uninteresting and impractical (difficult to bring the class, difficult to carry, difficult to organize), therefore they did not like keeping portfolios. Also, Rao (2003) investigated the use of portfolios as learning tools and the results regarding the problems related to portfolios indicated that compiling portfolio was time-consuming and it could be a burden for some students. As it can be seen, students' negative feelings towards keeping portfolios can also be supported by different studies in the literature. However, despite the problems of keeping portfolios, it should be noted that the utilization of portfolios yielded fruitful results in contributing to learners' language learning process in the literature (Martínez-Lirola and Rubio, 2009; Odabaşı-Çimer, 2011; Erden-Burnaz, 2011; Charvade, et al., 2012; Göksu and Genç, 2013; Arslan, 2014; Ok, 2014).

In conclusion, learner blogs and portfolios were reported to have contributed to language learning process by the participants of the present study. All of the participants in both the blogging and the portfolio-keeping group indicated the positive effects of learner blogs and portfolios on their language development regardless of their gender, major field of study, and their background in learning a foreign language. However, the feelings of the participants were different in both groups. While majority of the students in the blogging group expressed their likes towards LB, the minority of the students in the portfolio-keeping group reported their likes towards PK. In addition, the feelings of the participants towards learner blogs and portfolios cannot be related to the participants' gender, major field of study, and their background in learning English because of the unequal number of the students in terms of gender, major field of study, and English learning a foreign language.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the data analysis and the results of this study and discussed the results of the data gathered through learner autonomy questionnaire, self-assessment checklist, language proficiency exams, and interviews. This chapter presents a short overview of whether the learners in both the experimental and control groups became more autonomous, more successful, and better at assessing their language skills after the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications. In addition, the chapter presents some recommendations in the light of the results of the present study.

### **5.2. Overview of the Study**

The current study aimed to promote students' learner autonomy, self-assessment skills, and language proficiency levels through the utilization of learner blogs and portfolios. It was believed that if learners kept a learner blog or portfolio, they could be more autonomous learners who were more aware of their language learning process. The study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale University in the second term of the 2011-2012 academic year. In order to achieve this aim, the researcher made some arrangements. Firstly, three pre-intermediate level classes in each of which there were 20 students were formed as the experimental groups –blog users and portfolio keepers - and the control group assuming that it would be easy to control the study since the experimental classes were the researcher's classes. Totally 40 students were determined as the experimental groups, and 20 students were assigned as the control group. All of the students had the same syllabus. As they were chosen from the same level classes, their language proficiency levels were approximately the same. However, in order to get an idea of the students' autonomy levels and self-assessment levels, students in these classes were given a learner autonomy questionnaire and a self-assessment checklist. As a result of the questionnaire and checklist, learner autonomy levels of the groups were found to be similar; however there was a little difference between the students in the blogging group and the control group in terms of their self-assessment levels. As the students in the experimental groups were going to have an implementation process, the researcher had to be sure about the practices of the control group both inside and outside the class. Since the class that would be the control group were not going to have any of the implementations that the experimental groups would have, the researcher decided to keep that class as the

control group despite the little difference between the blogging group and the control group in terms of their self-assessment levels. After the study took place, the difference in their self-assessment levels would be considered again. The experimental classes were chosen for convenience, because these two classes were the researcher's own classes.

The participants in the experimental groups went through a process of learner blogging and portfolio-keeping for a period of ten weeks. During this period, the participants in the blogging group kept personal learner blogs where they could share their personal studies with their classmates and make comments about one another's works in addition to their usual classroom practices. They shared their essays, story reviews, vocabulary studies, and any extracurricular activities on their personal blog pages. The things that the students in the blogging group shared on their blog pages were not limited by their teacher, which meant that they were the ones who controlled their learner blogs and they could do whatever they wanted with their learner blogs. Their teacher asked the students to read their classmates' learner blogs and to make comments on their works. This was supposed to create a feeling of audience and help learners use English for communication outside the walls of the classroom (Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl, 2010; Ward, 2004). Their teacher also followed each student's blog pages, and made comments on their works. It was put forward that the utilization of learner blogs would contribute to the learners' autonomy levels, self-assessment skills, and language achievement scores. Day by day, the things learners did on their blog pages were going to pile up and they were going to get reviews from their classmates. Since they would have an audience for whom they would write on their learner blogs, this would make the learners more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. By critically analyzing one another's blog pages, the learners were to use their metacognitive skills. They would be able to assess their own language process more consciously; they would know where they stood in the learning process. At the end of the process, it was believed that there would be more autonomous learners who were active participants of their learning process.

The participants in the second experimental group kept portfolios and collected all their works in a folder in addition to their usual classroom practices. What they would put in their portfolios depended on the participants. They could put their essays, story reviews, vocabulary studies, and any extracurricular activities in their portfolios. This portfolio would be the proof of their language learning process; it would show everyone what they

did while learning English. The students were responsible for their portfolios; they were the ones who decided what to add to their portfolios. The students were asked to show their works to the teacher first and get feedback, and then revise the feedback. There were also some feedback sessions during the class, where the students as well as the teacher looked at their classmates' works and made comments in English. The teacher made groups of three or four students and asked each student to show some of their works to their classmates, to receive feedback on their works and finally to provide feedback to some of the works of their friends in their group as well. The students handed in everything they did to the teacher to receive feedback, but receiving feedback from the students was not always the case because of the limited time. As there were 20 students in the classroom, it was impossible for everyone to see all works of each other. Therefore, the students in the portfolio group were not as communicative as the students in the blog group. In addition, since the feedback session took place at the same time for all the students, the teacher could not follow everyone's feedback. The utilization of portfolios was supposed to create a feeling of ownership and audience in the students, make learners more responsible for their learning process by following their language works closely (Genese and Upshur, 1996), and foster their critical analysis skills while both looking at their own works and also their friends' works. By this way, it was believed that the utilization of portfolios could contribute to the learners' autonomy levels, self-assessment skills, and language achievement scores.

Finally, the control group had no special implementation other than their usual class practices. The researcher made sure that the control group had no practices of blogs or portfolios in their language learning process. Therefore, the students in the control group did not provide feedback to their classmates or receive feedback from their classmates. Also the students did not use English for the purpose of reviewing each other's works.

Data were collected quantitatively and qualitatively. Their first data collection tool was the Learner Autonomy Questionnaire, developed by Egel (2003) in order to reveal the learners' perceptions about their level of autonomy. The second tool that was utilized in the study was the Self-Assessment Checklist, adapted by the researcher from the "Self-Assessment Grid" based on the common reference levels of the Common European Framework in order to identify the learners' self-assessment level of their language skills. The next data collection tool was the semi-structured interview which aimed to get



feedback from the participants on the LB or PK implementation process. The final tool was a series of exams that were prepared by the lecturers at the School of Foreign Languages as a determinant to measure the participants' language achievement scores at the end of the year. The analysis of the quantitative data was conducted through the SPSS 16.0 statistical program.

Before administering the questionnaire and checklist, a pilot study was carried out in order to test the reliability, validity, comprehensibility, and the general flow of the questionnaire and checklist. The measure of Cronbach Alpha for the learner autonomy questionnaire was found as  $\alpha=0.70$  and as  $\alpha=0.80$  for the self-assessment checklist in the pilot study, which meant that the learner autonomy questionnaire was quite reliable, and the self-assessment checklist had a high reliability.

The qualitative data of the study were obtained through semi-structured interviews, which were carried out in order to answer the research question about the perceptions of the learners towards learner blogging and portfolio-keeping, and also to identify the differences between the learners' perceptions based on gender, major field of study, and background in learning a foreign language. Totally 15 students from each experimental group -30 in total- were selected randomly for the interview and each one of these students was interviewed individually at the end of the ten-week process of LB and PK. These 30 students were asked the same open-ended questions in the same order to be able to get their ideas about their own implementation process. They were asked whether the utilization of learner blogs and portfolios contributed to their language learning process in any way, whether they encountered any drawbacks while using their learner blogs or portfolios, and finally whether they enjoyed the LB and PK process. Their answers to these questions were recorded and then analyzed in order to evaluate the students' feelings for the utilization of learner blogs and portfolios in their language learning process.

There were five research questions in the study; four of them required quantitative analysis and one of them required qualitative analysis. Firstly, the study aimed to answer whether learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications make a significant intergroup difference in the autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of EFL learners. The second research question aimed to find out whether there were any differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the blog group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants. The third

research question aimed to examine whether there were any differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the portfolio group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants. The final quantitative research question sought to answer the question of whether there were any differences in the pre-study and post-study results of the control group in terms of autonomy level, self-assessment level, and language achievement scores of the participants.

Firstly, regarding the autonomy levels, it could be stated that at the end of the study, the learners' autonomy levels did not show any differences between the groups. This meant that the overall statistical mean values of the autonomy levels of the participants in the experimental groups and the control group were almost similar after the study. The learners in all the groups were found to be averagely autonomous at the end of the study. In addition, when each group's autonomy levels were compared in their own group, it was found out that there were not significant differences between the pre-study and post-study mean values of the learners' autonomy levels in each group itself. The learners in all the groups stated that they were not completely autonomous, but they sometimes behaved autonomously.

The second significant point in the research questions was related to the effects of LB and PK on the participants' self-assessment levels of their language skills. The results of the questionnaire and checklist indicated interesting results for the self-assessment levels of the learners. At the end of the study, the learners' self-assessment levels showed significant differences between the groups. The overall mean values of the self-assessment levels of the participants in the blogging group showed significant differences between the groups. After the study took place, the blog users' mean values of self-assessment scores were higher than the participants' in both the portfolio group and the control group. In addition, the mean values of the blog users' self-assessment scores also increased within their own group after the study. However, the self-assessment levels of the participants in the portfolio-keeping group and the control group did not show significant differences. These results could be interpreted in a way that using blogs for educational purposes was helpful for the learners to assess their own language skills more positively.

The final part of the research questions focused on the effects of LB, and PK on the learners' language achievement scores. The analyses of the data suggested that the mean values of the learners' exam grades did not show significant differences between the

groups after the study. However, before the study took place, there were significant differences between the groups in terms of the mean values of the learners' exam grades. The highest mean value of language achievement scores belonged to the students in the control groups and the lowest mean values of language achievement scores belonged to the students in the blog group before the study took place. However, at the end of the ten-week application process, the language achievement scores of the students in the portfolio group and control group decreased significantly while the language achievement scores of the blog users did not change at all. Therefore, it can be stated that the blog users managed to maintain their language achievement level. With the decreases that occurred in the mean values of the exams of the portfolio and control groups, the mean values of all the groups became very close. As a result, the difference that was present in the language achievement levels of the learners in each group before the study disappeared after the study. Thus, the success levels of the students in the language exams remained between 60 and 70 at the end of the process. The analyses conducted did not indicate a significant correlation between the LB and PK and the language achievement scores of the learners. In short, both the LB and PK applications were not able to increase the learners' language success scores in this particular study. However, the interesting point with these results was the decrease in the learners' success scores in the portfolio group and the control group at the end of the study.

The qualitative data of the study were obtained by means of semi-structured interviews, which were carried out in order to answer the research question about the perceptions of the learners towards learner blogging, and portfolio-keeping, and also to identify the differences between the learners' feelings based on gender, major field of study, and background in learning a foreign language. When the responses of the participants to the question regarding the contributions of LB to their English language learning process were examined, it was seen that the participants reported that LB was beneficial to their language learning process in general and contributed to their language skills, especially writing skill, vocabulary knowledge, and communication skills. The participants stated that they had a chance to use English for communicative purposes while they were receiving and giving feedback through their blog pages. In addition, they could improve their writing skills by following their classmates' blogs and making comments on each other's works. They could also enrich their vocabulary knowledge by reading the works that their friends shared on their learner blogs. The analysis of the responses to the

interview questions also revealed that LB provided the learners with personal development by making them more aware of their weaknesses and strengths, and also helped them spend their time more efficiently by being engaged in their blogs for educational purposes outside the class.

Next, the participants were asked in the interview whether they encountered any problems while using learner blogs. Regarding the drawbacks of the ten-week LB, 66.6% of the participants stated that they had encountered several problems while using their learner blogs and 33.3% of the participants reported no drawbacks of using their learner blogs. Totally 40% of the students who reported a problem related to their learner blogs stated that they did not have previous knowledge about blogs, which made it hard for them to get adapted to using blogs for educational purposes. Another problem that was reported in the interview by 30% of the students was the lack of internet facility. The last problem that was expressed by 30% of the students was the limited time of the study.

The last question that was directed to the participants in the interview was about their feelings towards the LB. In general, it can be suggested that the students in the blog group felt positively about the LB. Although, they reported several problems associated with their learner blogging experience, the analysis of the responses given to the interview questions suggested that 86% of the participants in the blog group enjoyed keeping personal learner blogs, and 13.3% of them disliked using learner blogs. Regarding the analysis of the differences in the learners' perceptions towards the LB based on gender, it was found out that all of the male participants reported that they enjoyed using learner blogs for educational purposes, and 77.7% of the female participants expressed that they took pleasure in having a learner blog. Although there were no male students who did not enjoy LB in the blog group, there were two female students who did not like LB. However, as the number of male students was six and the number of female students was nine, the difference between genders with regard to their feelings towards LB was not significant. Therefore, in general, it can be stated that learners of both gender enjoyed keeping learner blogs as part of their language learning process.

The next comparison regarding the perceptions of the participants towards LB was based on the major field of study. The findings showed that it was only the Faculty of Engineering students who did not enjoy LB for their language learning process with 13.3%. However, 66.6% of the students that studied at the Faculty of Engineering enjoyed

having personal learner blog pages. All of the students that studied at other faculties liked LB as part of their classroom practices. Therefore, this finding cannot be generalized in any way. It is clearly seen that there was not a relationship between the learners' faculties and their feelings towards the LB in their learning process.

The final comparison relevant to the perceptions of the participants towards LB was made on the basis of the learners' English language learning backgrounds. The students were asked how long they had been learning a foreign language at the beginning of the study, and the results indicated that the learners were of different language backgrounds, namely for 0-1 year, 2-5 years, and 5-10 years. When the relation between their perceptions for LB and language learning backgrounds were considered, it was found out that 100% of the participants that had been studying English for 0-1 year expressed their likes for the LB. Next, 80% of the students who had been learning English for 5-10 years enjoyed LB. Finally, 75% of the students who had been learning English for 2-5 years stated that they enjoyed LB. These findings suggested that whether learners liked having a personal learner blog page for educational purposes did not depend on their English language learning background. In conclusion, no generalizations for the relationship between the learners' feelings towards the LB and language learning background can be made based on these results.

According to the analysis of the interviews with the students in the portfolio group, the students believed that the PK contributed to their language learning process positively. The students were asked about the contributions of the PK in the interview and regarding the positive effects of keeping portfolios, three categories were identified, which were benefits for writing skill, vocabulary knowledge, and learners' personality traits. The respondents reported that by keeping all their works in a portfolio after they were checked, they got more aware of their mistakes, which was a very essential step in improving their writing ability. Also with the help of the vocabulary lists which were piling up day by day, their vocabulary knowledge increased as well. The last contribution reported by the students about the positive effects of PK was making the learners more organized and self-confident.

The next interview question was related to the negative points about their PK process. For this question, 80% of the participants stated that they had not come across any problems during the PK process. However, only 20% of the learners explained that they

had some problems by expressing that the duration of the implementation was not long enough for them to get used to using portfolios and also it was hard to file each work they had done in their language learning process.

The last question was about whether the learners enjoyed the PK process or not; and this question was analyzed in terms of gender, major field of study and language learning background. The analysis of the responses given to this question revealed that only 33.3% of the participants enjoyed keeping portfolios and 66.6% of the participants did not like the PK practice as part of their classroom work. This was interesting because all of the participants explained at least one positive effect of keeping portfolios on their language learning process; however most of them actually were not happy to keep portfolios.

When the participants' likes and dislikes were compared based on gender, it was found out that 62.5% of the males and 71% of the females disliked the PK practice. The percentages could look different here, however, when we look at the number of the male and female students, it was seen that the number of the male and female students who disliked keeping portfolios was equal. This result could suggest that there was not a significant difference between genders in terms of their feelings towards the PK implementation.

The next comparison for the participants' perceptions towards the PK was based on the learners' major field of study. The analysis of the data revealed that out of the five students who liked keeping portfolios, four of them would study at the Engineering Faculty, which made 80% of the total students who liked using portfolios. Only one student who was positive about keeping would study at the Business Faculty. The findings put forward that the majority of the students expressed their dislikes for their PK experience as part of their class practices primarily because it was boring. When the data was analyzed in detail, it was seen that out of the 10 students who did not enjoy the utilization of portfolios, 50% of the students would study at the Faculty of Business, 20% of the students would study at the Faculty of Engineering, 20% of the students would study at the Faculty of Tourism and 10% of the students would study at the Faculty of Medicine. These findings illustrate that it was not possible to make a generalization for the relationship between the learners' major field of study and their feelings towards the PK,

because the number of the students from each faculty was not equal and not large enough to make a generalization.

The last analysis included investigating the relationship between the participants' feelings towards the PK implementation and their English learning background. Data analysis indicated that 80% of the participants who loved using portfolios had been learning English between five and ten years. Next, 20% of the students who enjoyed the utilization of portfolios reported an English learning background between two and five years. However, when the students who disliked keeping portfolios were investigated, it was seen that 60% of the students had been learning English for 5-10 years, 30% of them had been studying English for 0-1 year, and finally 10% of the students had an English learning background between 2 and 5 years. These results suggested that the learners of different language backgrounds had different feelings for the PK as part of language learning process. Consequently, it can be stated that the learners' language backgrounds were not related to whether they liked or disliked keeping portfolios.

To conclude, the quantitative data suggested that there were no differences between the three groups in terms of the autonomy levels and success levels of the learners after the study. All of the learners in three groups sometimes behaved autonomously and their language success scores were average. However, the mean values of the self-assessment levels of the learners in the blogging group were higher than those of the learners both in the portfolio-keeping group and the control group. This shows that the students who experienced the LB practice evaluated their language skills higher than the students in the other two groups. In addition, the analysis of the qualitative data revealed that the participants in both experimental groups believed the LB and PK contributed to their language learning process despite the several drawbacks that they encountered during the study. The blog users stated that the LB improved their language skills, especially writing skill and vocabulary knowledge and helped them evaluate their strengths and weaknesses by reading their classmates' blog pages and receiving feedback on their own works, as well as increasing interaction between the students and creating a genuine space for communicating in English. The portfolio users also reported several contributions of the PK by expressing that portfolios helped them follow their language progress by being aware of their strengths and weaknesses and improved their language skills, especially writing skill and vocabulary knowledge as well as making them more organized. The

students in both of the experimental groups had the same opinion that LB and PK were useful to promote their learning. However, the participants' feelings towards the LB and PK differentiated in that the majority of the blog users enjoyed their learner blogging experience, but most of the portfolio users did not enjoy their portfolio-keeping experience in general. However, these feelings of the participants cannot be related with the participants' gender, major field of study, and English learning background. In short, the participants' perceptions towards the LB and PK were not affected by the participants' gender, major field of study, or English learning background. As a result, despite its limitations, the study has been fruitful to our participants and to the researcher.

### **5.3. Implications of the Study**

This section is concerned with the implications raised for the programs which educate the EFL students in Turkey. In the subsections, possible implications for further studies are reflected.

#### **5.3.1. Pedagogical Implications**

The current study investigated the relationship between learner blogging and portfolio-keeping as educational tools and the autonomy levels, self-assessment perceptions, and language achievement levels of the preparatory class learners at the School of Foreign Languages at Pamukkale University, as well as examining the perceptions of the learners towards the LB and PK as part of their language learning process. As a result of this study, several pedagogical implications can be suggested. One of these is that since the LB and PK applications were perceived beneficial to the language learning process by the students in this study, it can be suggested that the utilization of blogs and portfolios can be integrated into the curricula of language teaching classes at universities to promote learning. By this way, more student-centred learning can also be achieved. Syllabuses can be reviewed in order to provide more flexibility to teachers in their teaching and assessment. Teachers in preparatory classes mostly follow fixed programs in Turkey; they are used to practising usual class activities. However, if the syllabuses are renewed in a way to include the latest trends and technologies in language teaching, the results can be more fruitful for learners.

However, apart from the curricula, teachers are one of the most important factors in language teaching as well. In order to achieve a more student-centred, innovative,



technology-aided teaching and learning, changing the curriculum is not enough. Teachers should also be willing to undertake responsibility and update their teaching styles. Teachers should be technology-friendly, innovative in teaching, and knowledgeable about the latest trends in teaching. In order to achieve this, courses that teach the latest technologies and trends in education can be added to the ELT programs in Turkey. In addition, current language teachers can be provided with in-service teacher training on the latest technologies and trends in education to be able to update their teaching.

Another implication is that blogs can be used as a teaching aid for all language skills. Teachers can benefit from blogs in their teaching since blogs provide learners with opportunities for self-expression, collaboration, and interaction. Today since students are getting more technology-oriented day by day, blogging can provide the students with the necessary motivation to practice their learning beyond the classroom wall. Also, with the help of blogs, students can enhance their learning opportunities through collaboration with their peers.

Portfolios can also be integrated into writing curriculum to provide learners with self-reflection opportunities and to include learners in learning process as active participants in their language learning process.

Finally, students' blog pages or portfolios can be used as alternative assessment tools in their learning process. Educators can set a standard for the evaluation of students' blogs and portfolios, so students can also be involved in the assessment part of their learning, which will absolutely make learners more autonomous.

### **5.3.2. Implications for Further Studies**

This study aimed to find out whether the learner blogging and portfolio-keeping applications would contribute to preparatory class students' levels of learner autonomy, self-assessment, and language achievement and to reveal their perceptions regarding the use of learner blogs and portfolios as educational tools. As this study was limited to one case of preparatory class learners of English at Pamukkale University, a more widespread study will provide more effective results. Further research should be conducted in order to illustrate the possible differences among the participants in different settings such as different preparatory classes of different universities or high schools based on learner

autonomy, self-assessment, and language achievement. This study can be replicated with a large number of participants in different settings in order to generalize the findings.

Since this study was limited to the students of preparatory class at Pamukkale University, it did not illustrate the implementation results and perceptions of the preparatory classes of other universities and university students who study in departments related to foreign languages. A further study can shed light on the perceptions of these learners regarding the utilization of blogs and portfolios in their language learning process and provide more general results after blogging and portfolio implementation.

Also, this study covered only ten-week period of implementation, which was obviously not enough for the learners to benefit from their learner blogs or portfolios in the best way. Therefore, a longitudinal study can be conducted from the beginning of the academic year to the end. By this way, the study can provide more reliable results.

Moreover, the study also aimed to illustrate the differences in learners' language success scores at the end of the study. However, learning opportunities of the learners were not restricted by the researcher during the study. Therefore, while some students might have studied a lot, others might not have studied at all; and this might have affected the results regarding the language achievement. A further study can be conducted by ensuring that the students' learning efforts and practice activities are the same.

The study covered two implementations, namely blogs and portfolios. The results were examined differently for each implementation. In order to focus on each concept in more detail, these two implementations can be studied separately.

This study also covered different correlation domains such as learner autonomy, self-assessment, language achievement, and learner perceptions. In order to be able to focus on each concept in more detail, these domains could be studied separately rather than together in one study.

Finally, self-assessment angle of the study was studied as a whole in the study. In order to detect the skill that is mostly correlated with blogs and portfolios, a further study can be carried out by assessing each skill separately. Similarly, autonomy levels of the learners were also studied as a whole. In order to find out which dimensions of autonomy

are mostly related with the utilization of blogs and portfolios, a further study can be conducted to reveal the dimensions in which the learners are more autonomous.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PAMUKKALE ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**YABANCI DİLLER YÜKSEKOKULU**  
**HAZIRLIK ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİ ANKETİ**  
**2011-2012**

**Sayın Katılımcı,**

Bu anketin amacı, bir dil öğrencisi olarak sizin özerklik düzeyinizi belirlemektir. Lütfen her ifadeyi dikkatli bir şekilde okuyup size en uygun olduğunu düşündüğünüz seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Her bir ifade için yalnızca bir seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Vereceğiniz doğru cevaplardan elde edilecek bilgiler, ülkemizdeki İngilizce Öğretim Programlarının gelişimine dair yapılan çalışmalara önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunacaktır. Vereceğiniz cevaplar kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır ve bu bilgilerin notlarınıza herhangi bir etkisi olmayacaktır.

Okt. YELDA ORHON

YABANCI DİLLER YÜKSEKOKULU

	Statements	Always true	Mostly true	Sometimes true	Rarely true	Never true
1.	İngilizce öğrenirken bildiklerimle yeni öğrendiklerim arasında ilişkiler kurmaya çalışırım. When I am learning English I try to relate the new things I have learned to my former knowledge.					
2.	İngilizce yazılmış olan kitaplardan ve kaynaklardan kendi isteğimle faydalanırım. I use other English books and resources on my own will.					
3.	İngilizce çalışan bir insan duyduğumda onu çok dikkatlice dinlemeye çalışırım. When I hear someone talking in English, I listen very carefully.					
4.	Arkadaşlarımla veya ailemle İngilizce konuşmak istiyorum. I want to talk in English with my family or friends.					
5.	Basit İngilizce ile yazılmış olan kitapları kendi isteğimle okurum. It is my own preference to read English books written in basic English.					
6.	İngilizce öğrenirken kendi kendime öğrenebileceğim alıştırmaları severim. While learning English, I like activities in which I can learn on my					

	own.					
7.	İngilizce öğrenirken kendi kendime yeni şeyler denemeyi severim. I like trying new things while I am learning English.					
8.	İngilizce bir konuyu öğretmen anlatmazsa, onu öğrenemeyeceğim diye korkarım. I am afraid that I won't learn a topic if the teacher doesn't explain it in the English class.					
9.	İngilizceyi kendi kendime öğrenmek zorunda kalmayı sevmem. I don't like learning English on my own.					
10.	İngilizce dersinde öğrenemediğim konuyu tek başıma çalışarak öğrenebilirim. If I cannot learn English in the classroom, I can learn working on my own.					
11.	İngilizce öğrenirken öğretmenin yanımda olması beni rahatlatıyor. I feel confident when the teacher is beside me while I am learning English.					
12.	İngilizceyi sadece öğretmenin yardımıyla öğrenebilirim. I can learn English only with the help of my teacher.					
13.	İngilizce öğrenmem için öğretmenin bana her zaman yol göstermelidir. My teacher always has to guide me in learning English.					
14.	İngilizce öğrenirken öğretmenin dilbilgisi kurallarını tekrarlayarak anlatmasını isterim. While learning English I would like my teacher to repeat grammatical rules.					
15.	Öğretmenim bize İngilizcedeki her ayrıntıyı anlatınca sevinirim. I feel happy when my teacher explains every detail of English.					
16.	Gelecekte İngilizceyi tek başıma/öğretmenim olmadan öğrenmeye devam etmeyi isterim. In the future, I would like to continue learning English on my own/ without a teacher.					
17.	Diğer öğrencilerle çalışabileceğim İngilizce proje ödevlerinden hoşlanırım. In the English lesson I like projects where I can work with other students.					
18.	İngilizcenin dil bilgisini kendi kendime/ öğretmene gerek duymadan öğrenebilirim. I can learn the English grammar on my own/ without needing a teacher.					
19.	İngilizcedeki sözcükleri öğrenmek için kendi yöntemlerimi kullanırım. I use my own methods to learn vocabulary in English.					
20.	İngilizcedeki sözcükleri sözlük karıştırarak geliştirmeyi severim. I like learning English words by looking them up in a dictionary.					
21.	Sadece öğretmenim İngilizce dil bilgisi kurallarını bana öğretebilir. Tek başıma öğrenemem. Only my teacher can teach me the English grammar. I cannot learn on my own.					
22.	Öğreneceğimiz sözcükleri öğretmenin vermesini isterim. I want the teacher to give us the words that we are to learn.					
23.	Yabancı dil derslerimle ilgili kaset/video/ CD'leri sınıf dışında kullanmak isterim. I would like to use cassettes/video/CD in the foreign language, outside of the classroom.					
24.	İngilizce okumayı ve dinlemeyi aslında sınıf dışında yapmayı tercih ederim. In fact I like to listen and read in English outside of the classroom.					
25.	Yabancı dil derslerim için malzemeleri kendim seçmek isterim. I would like to select the materials for my foreign language lessons.					

26.	İngilizce dersinde neler yapılacağı konusunda sorumluluk paylaşmak isterim. I would like to share the responsibility of deciding what to do in the English lesson.					
27.	Ben İngilizceyi nasıl en iyi şekilde öğrenebileceğimi bilirim. I know how I can learn English the best.					
28.	İngilizce dersindeki bir konuyu öğrenmemişsem, sorumlusu benim. If I haven't learnt something in my English lesson, I am responsible for it.					
29.	İngilizce dersinde öğretilcek konuları kendim belirlemek isterim. I would like to choose the content of what is to be taught in the English lesson.					
30.	Yazılıdan iyi bir not alınca, bir daha o ders konularını çalışmam. I don't study the topics after I get a good grade from my test.					
31.	Arkadaşlarımın yabancı dilde benden daha iyi olduğunu düşünürüm. Onların seviyesine ulaşmak isterim. I think my friends are better than me in the foreign language. I want to reach their level of English.					
32.	İngilizce derslerimle ilgili eksiklikleri nasıl telafi edeceğim konusunda endişelenirim. I hesitate on the matter of compensating what I have missed in English lessons.					
33.	İngilizcede iyi bir seviyeye geleceğime inanıyorum. I believe that I will reach a good level in the English language.					
34.	İngilizceyi sınav olacağımız zaman çalışırım. I study English when we are going to have a test.					
35.	İngilizceyi kendi kendime çalışınca daha iyi öğrendiğimi düşünüyorum. I think that I learn English better when I work on my own.					
36.	İngilizce dersini sadece öğretmenimin verdiği ödev için çalışırım. I only study for the English lesson when the teacher gives homework.					
37.	İngilizceyi yalnız çalışmaktansa arkadaşlarımla çalışmak bana daha faydalı oluyor. I find it more useful to work with my friends than working on my own for the English lesson.					
38.	İngilizce alıştırmaları sadece öğretmenim not vereceği zaman çalışırım. I do the English lesson activities only when my teacher is going to grade me.					
39.	Öğretmenimin yazılı sınavlardan daha farklı sınav türleri yapması hoşuma gider. I like it when my teacher gives us different test types, other than written tests.					
40.	Öğretmenimin İngilizce dersi için çok sınav yapması hoşuma gider. I like it when my teacher does a lot of tests in our English lesson.					
41.	Öğrendiğim yabancı dildeki fıkraları anlamaya çalışırım. I try to understand the jokes and riddles of the foreign language.					
42.	Öğrendiğim yabancı dilin kültürünü de araştırırım. I also investigate the culture of the foreign language I am learning.					
43.	Öğrendiğim yabancı dilin atasözlerini ve deyimlerini de araştırırım. I also investigate the idioms and sayings of the foreign language I am learning.					
44.	Yurtdışında yaşamış olan insanlara, oradaki insanların yaşam biçimleriyle ilgili sorular sorarım. I ask people who have lived abroad about the lifestyles of the people living there.					

## APPENDIX B: SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### PAMUKKALE ÜNİVERSİTESİ

#### YABANCI DİLLER YÜKSEKOKULU

#### HAZIRLIK ÖĞRENCİLERİ İÇİN ÖZ DEĞERLENDİRME ANKETİ

2011-2012

Sevgili Öğrenci,

Bu anket, “Öğrencilerin Kendi Yabancı Dil Becerileriyle İlgili Öz Değerlendirme” isimli bilimsel çalışma için hazırlanmıştır. Lütfen size uygun olan seçeneğe (X) işareti koymanız yeterli olacaktır. Ankete vereceğiniz cevaplar bilimsel araştırmanın verilerini oluşturacaktır. Lütfen size uygun seçeneklerden yalnızca birini seçiniz. Ayrıca, hiçbir ifadeyi yanıtsız bırakmayınız. Cevaplamada göstereceğiniz hassasiyet ve katkılarınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederiz.

Okt. YELDA ORHON

Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu

Self-Assessment Statements/Özdeğerlendirme İfadeleri	Very well	Well	Average	Poor	Very Poor
1. I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. İş, okul, boş zaman vb. ortamlarda sürekli karşılaşılan bildik konulardaki net, standart konuşmanın ana hatlarını anlayabilirim.					
2. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear. Güncel olaylar ya da kişisel ilgi alanıma giren konularla ilgili radyo ve televizyon programlarının çoğunun ana hatlarını yavaş ve net olduğunda anlayabilirim.					
3. I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency every day or job-related language. Meslekle ilgili ya da günlük dilde en sık kullanılan sözcükleri içeren metinleri anlayabilirim.					
4. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work,					

travel and current events). Bildik, ilgi alanıma giren ya da günlük yaşamla ilgili (Örneğin; aile, hobi, iş, yolculuk ve güncel olaylar gibi) konularda hazırlık yapmadan konuşmalara katılabilirim.					
5. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters. Kişisel mektuplarda belirtilen olay, duygu ve dilekleri anlayabilirim.					
6. I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Dilin konuşulduğu ülkede seyahat ederken ortaya çıkabilecek bir çok durumla başa çıkabilirim					
7. I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. Deneyimlerimi, hayallerimi, umutlarımı, isteklerimi ve olayları betimlemek (anlatmak) için çeşitli kalıpları yalın bir yoldan (basit bir şekilde) kullanabilirim.					
8. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. Düşünce ve planlarıma ilişkin açıklamaları ve nedenleri kısaca belirtebilirim.					
9. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions. Bir öyküyü anlatabilirim, bir kitap ya da filmin konusunu aktarabilirim ve izlenimlerimi belirtebilirim.					
10. I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Bildik ya da ilgi alanıma giren konularla bağlantılı bir metin yazabilirim.					
11. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions. Deneyim ve izlenimlerimi anlatan kişisel mektuplar yazabilirim.					
12. I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. Güncel bir konuyla ilgili uzun konuşma ve sunumları anlayabilir, karmaşık cümlelerle yapılan tartışmaları takip edebilirim.					
13. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programs. Televizyon haberlerini ve güncel olaylara ilişkin programların çoğunu anlayabilirim.					
14. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect. Standart dilin (herkes için anlaşılır olan) kullanıldığı filmlerin çoğunu anlayabilirim.					
15. I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. Yazarların belirli tutum ya da görüşü benimsedikleri, güncel sorunlarla ilgili makaleleri ve raporları okuyabilirim.					
16. I can understand contemporary literary prose. Çağdaş edebi düzyazıyı anlayabilirim. (öykü, roman)					
17. I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. Öğrendiğim dili anadili olarak konuşan kişilerle anlaşabilecek kadar akıcı ve doğal dille iletişim kurabilirim.					
18. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views. Bildik konulardaki tartışmalarda, kendi görüşlerimi açıklayıp destekleyerek etkin bir rol oynayabilirim.					
19. I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. İlgi alanıma giren çeşitli konularda açık ve ayrıntılı bilgi verebilirim.					
20. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options. Çeşitli seçeneklerin olumlu ve olumsuz yanlarını ortaya koyarak bir konu					

hakkında görüş bildirebilirim.					
21. I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. İlgi alanıma giren çok çeşitli konularda anlaşılır, ayrıntılı metinler yazabilirim.					
22. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. Belirli bir bakış açısına destek vererek ya da karşı çıkararak bilgi sunan ve nedenler ileri süren bir kompozisyon ya da rapor yazabilirim.					
23. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences. Olayların ve deneyimlerin benim için taşıdıkları önemi ön plana çıkaran mektuplar yazabilirim.					



**APPENDIX C: COMMON REFERENCE LEVEL DESCRIPTORS OF THE  
COUNCIL OF EUROPE**

<b>B A S I C</b>	<b>A1</b>	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
	<b>A2</b>	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
<b>I N T E R M E D I A T E</b>	<b>B1</b>	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst traveling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
	<b>B2</b>	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialization. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
<b>A D V A N C E D</b>	<b>C1</b>	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
	<b>C2</b>	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarize information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

**APPENDIX D: 2011-2012 ACADEMIC YEAR B LEVEL SECOND TERM  
WRITING SYLLABUS**

Week 1	Part II:THE ESSAY  ESSAY ORGANIZATION
Week 2	PLANNING AN ESSAY  WRITING ASSIGNMENT
Week 3	Essay Type: OPINION ESSAYS  ORGANIZATION  DEVELOPING SUPPORTING DETAILS
Week 4	Essay Type: OPINION ESSAYS  REVIEW & WRITING ASSIGNMENT
Week 5	Essay Type: CAUSE&EFFECT ESSAYS  ORGANIZATION  DEVELOPING SUPPORTING DETAILS
Week 6	Essay Type: CAUSE&EFFECT ESSAYS  REVIEW & WRITING ASSIGNMENT
Week 7	Essay Type: COMPARISON&CONTRAST ESSAYS  ORGANIZATION  DEVELOPING SUPPORTING DETAILS
Week 8	Essay Type: COMPARISON&CONTRAST ESSAYS  REVIEW & WRITING ASSIGNMENT
Week 9	Essay Type: ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS  ORGANIZATION  DEVELOPING SUPPORTING DETAILS
Week 10	Essay Type: ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS  REVIEW & WRITING ASSIGNMENT

## APPENDIX E: RECORDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS FOR LEARNING BLOGGING

### **Q1. After the ten-week process of LB, how do you think LB contributed to your English?**

Inf.01

I think it's good for my language skills. Blogs developed my writing skills, and vocabulary knowledge. I mean, we used more vocabulary in our essays, so we learn more vocabulary.

Inf. 02

I could see my friends' essays or anything they shared. While I was reading their essays, I had a chance to examine them closely. I could see what they did right and what they did wrong. Therefore, I could be aware of my mistakes, as well. Moreover, after I had seen my friends' essays, I wanted to publish more essays. Before I set up my blog, my essay writing was really poor. However, thanks to my blog, it developed. In addition I got a chance to get feedback from my friends on my essays. With the help of this feedback, I could work on my weak points

Inf.03

I shared my essays in my blog, so everyone could read it. Moreover, I learnt new words. In addition, I make comments on my friends' essays.

Inf.04

Blog is a different way where I could study or practice. I began to write the words I learnt in lessons. Thus, I could keep those words in my mind. Also, my friends could read my word lists, so they would have a chance to enrich their vocabulary knowledge. With blog application, my English improved. That is to say, I wrote several essays and as a result of this my writing methods improved. Besides, I had a good opportunity to spend my free time. I began to spend my free time on English.

Inf.05

Everybody shared their work on their personal blogs so that we could all benefit from them. I could read different essays. Moreover, my computer knowledge also developed. I also started to use computer to improve my English.

Inf. 06

We could get our friends' opinions on what we had written. Moreover, we learnt new things from the things that our friends had shared. I read many essays that my friends had written and as a result, I learnt new structures from my friends' works. In addition, I searched for some caricatures to share in my blog to have fun. My English also improved while searching for them.

Inf. 07

With the help of our learner blogs, we had connection with each other, so we could talk to our friends and discuss anything we wanted in English. Moreover, we could make comments on the things we shared.

Inf. 08

We could continuously connect to each other thanks to learner blogs. Besides, we used only English in our blogs. Moreover, we had personal spaces thanks to our own blogs. In addition, we wrote a lot of essays, so it was beneficial, especially for writing skill. We also read many things to share in our blogs, so we made comments to our friends' works. Besides, our teacher could also assess us. What I mean is that, our teacher could see our progress clearly.

Inf. 09

Thanks to my learner blog, my English improved. It was great that everybody used English to communicate or to give their opinions on anything. Thus, I could speak English with my friends. As a result, learner blogs were good for our communication skills.

Inf. 10

I think it has a variety of advantages. The first advantage was I learnt a variety of words. Another advantage was that I learnt how to write essay. I could see different examples of essays from my friends. I learnt to give feedback to my friends on their essays. By this way, I learnt how to write essay better, because while reading others' essays, I could look from a different window. In addition, they also wrote comments on my essays. In this way, I could get other people's views on my work. This was so useful, because I might not comment on my work thoroughly by myself I think the most important advantages of having a blog was communicating in English. Thanks to this, I improved myself.

Inf. 11

My learner blog helped me see the things my friends shared, so we had more information about different topics. For example, we had many different essays as an example for us. If we wanted to write about a topic, we could remember their views and get benefit from them. In this way, we had more ideas about the topic while writing essay. Also, my learner blog helped me write better essays by seeing all these examples. I learnt new vocabulary or new grammatical structures. In addition, we could also see each other's weaknesses and helped each other to overcome the points we were not successful.

Inf. 12

I had an opportunity to see what my friends published such as essays. I learnt new structures and to write better essays. I could also see what my friends know about a topic, how well they could show it. Moreover, it also improved my relations with my friends. In addition, it helped us technologically as well.

Inf. 13

I had information about my friends' level of English.

Inf. 14

The first advantage of learner blogs was getting feedback from my friends. As a result of this feedback, everybody had some ideas about different essay topics. At the same time, we learnt how to comment on essays.

Inf. 15

I think learner blogs are very useful. Being able to read what everybody had written improved our vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, we also shared the new words we learnt or read in a book on our pages. Therefore, we could learn more vocabulary together. Besides it was very nice that everyone could see each other's work and comment on them.

## **Q2. What problems did you encounter in the process of LB?**

Inf.01

I didn't have any problems in my blog. I am accustomed to sites like this blog.

Inf.02

I didn't encounter any problems about my blog.

Inf.03

I didn't have any problems.

Inf.04

First of all, I didn't like it, because I didn't know how to use it. Later, I got used to it, and I had no problems about the use. However, Lack of the internet facility was another problem I encountered during the learner blog application. I didn't have so many opportunities to use the Internet. I could only get connected to the Internet at school or in an internet café. Having no personal computer prevented me using my learner blog effectively

Inf.05

I had some problems due to lack of internet facility. Moreover, it was also a little difficult to use. I had difficulty in publishing my essays.

Inf.06

It was not possible for me to use the internet all the time.

Inf.07

I had no problem. Internet was also not a problem I think, because I believe every university student should have a personal computer.

Inf.08

Blogs were complicated, because we hadn't used blogs before. I had some difficulty in creating my blog. I couldn't create the categories as I wanted. The time was limited for using our blogs. I didn't know anything about blogs before. Our teacher showed us how to use, but it took some time to explore the site. Thus, it wasn't easy for me to understand the site thoroughly. If we had more time, we could use learner blogs more effectively. Moreover, I had some problems with the Internet. I could have shared much more things, however as a result of having no continuous internet facility; I couldn't use it that much. I do not have a personal computer and I had to go to an internet café to use my learner blog. As this was not very easy, I couldn't use my learner blog as much as I liked. Moreover, lack of the internet facility led me understand how blogs function more slowly. In addition, time was also limited for the study. If we had more time, we could use blogs more effectively.

Inf.09

It was complicated and so difficult for me to use, because I hadn't used blog before.

Inf.10

I didn't come across any problems, but sometimes when I wrote my essay, my teacher and my friends didn't give feedback immediately.

Inf.11

I wish we could have started using blogs earlier so that we could benefit more.

Inf.12

We could have started using blog earlier for more benefit. Other than this, I had no problems.

Inf.13

I didn't encounter any problems about my blog.

Inf.14

Because of the lack of internet facility, I couldn't benefit from my blog so much.

Inf.15

It was difficult to use. I had difficulty in creating sections for my works. I wanted to have different part for each of my work such as essays, vocabulary etc. However, as it was the first time I had a blog, I had trouble with using my blog easily

### **Q3. Did you enjoy LB as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If no, why?**

Inf.01

Learner blog was pretty fun, because I like sharing information on the internet. Moreover, I am accustomed to sites like these blogs. Therefore, I think it was an enjoyable experience for all of us.

Inf.02

I enjoyed blog use, because we could post anything we were interested in. While we were giving feedback about each other's works, I had lots of fun

Inf.03

I enjoyed blog use, especially while I was studying vocabulary and essay.

Inf.04

Generally speaking, I enjoyed it, because blog is an enjoyable site just like Facebook.

Inf.05

If it hadn't been that complicated, I would have certainly had more fun.

Inf.06

I had fun, especially when I shared some funny caricatures.

Inf.07

I enjoyed having a blog. It provided me lots of enjoyable time. I had a chat with my friends. I love blog and I will go on to use my blog in the future as well.

Inf.08

I sometimes enjoyed using my blog. I could share anything I was interested in.

Inf.09

I enjoyed blog use. I spent lots of time with my friends on blog.

Inf.10

I enjoyed it, because it was fun. It provided a variety of options to entertain. I don't regret to use blog.

Inf.11

I had real fun while I was using my own blog. I had pleasure to read or watch what my friends had shared.

Inf.12

I enjoyed it. I will go on to use my blog.

Inf.13

As I had an interest in using technology I had fun while using my blog.

Inf.14

I didn't enjoy it. I did not have internet facility, so I did not like it.

Inf.15

I liked using blog.

## APPENDIX F: RECORDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS FOR PORTFOLIO-KEEPING

### **Q1. After the ten-week process of PK, how do you think PK contributed to your English?**

Inf.01

In my opinion, there are several advantages of portfolio-keeping. Firstly, teachers follow their students easily and they can understand how much work students have done or how much development they have had. Thus it increased my self-confidence as a learner. It gave me a sense of achievement. Secondly, Portfolio-keeping made me well-organized and it provided me to work regularly. It helped me to keep everything I did in a folder. In addition, the teacher could also follow our development, thus it increased my self-confidence as a learner. It gave me a sense of achievement. In addition, portfolios improved my vocabulary knowledge. I know more words now, because I could study vocabulary from my lists. I did not have to be at home to study; I could study even when I was on bus, because I kept vocabulary lists in my portfolio.

Inf.02

Thanks to portfolios, we can collect everything we do in a folder, from the beginning of the term to the end. Therefore, we could see our own development.

Inf.03

Portfolios became the number one source for the exams, because there were a lot of things in it such as the essays I wrote, vocabulary lists, grammar exercises etc. With the help of my portfolio, I gained self-confidence. I added many works to my portfolio, and later I saw all the things I did during one term and this made me feel contented and more successful. In addition, I felt myself productive and I started to see myself good at English.

Inf.04

There are some advantages of portfolio-keeping. Firstly, It made me more organized and responsible. Then, I could follow my works regularly. It was obvious when we learned topics. It is helpful for my English lectures.

Inf.05

I think there are many advantages of portfolio-keeping. Firstly, we could study our words which we had learned beforehand repeatedly. Secondly, in the future, our portfolios could be used again for the purpose of remembering English words I learnt. Thus, my vocabulary knowledge could be permanent. I think it is very good way for exercising and keeping portfolio increased my word capacity and grammar information day by day.

Inf.06

I think the only advantage of keeping portfolio is keeping all the vocabulary learnt in a folder, so I could study the words when I need.

Inf.07

In my portfolio, I had many vocabulary lists that I prepared to study for exams. Thanks to my portfolio, I did not lose any of these vocabulary lists; I kept all of them in a folder. Thus, when I needed them, I could study easily and my vocabulary knowledge developed as I studied. In addition, it helped learners to be more organized. Finally, it is beneficial for writing, because I kept all my essays in my portfolio and studied them later. As the teacher gave feedback on my essays, I could be better at writing.



Inf.08

With the help of my portfolio, I kept all my essays in a folder. Whenever I needed, I could go back to one type of essay and study it. In addition, I could also learn from my mistakes. As the teacher gave feedback to my essays in terms of organization, content and accuracy; I learnt the right way to write different types of essays and different grammatical structures. Also, I could follow my learning process from his portfolio. Thus, I knew what I did right and wrong.

Inf.09

Thanks to portfolio, my English improved in many ways.

Inf.10

Portfolios were good for vocabulary practice. I could study many words from my portfolio. Also, I believe my English got better, because I studied everything I did later. And as my English got better, I became more self-confident, because when I looked at my portfolio, I saw that I did a lot of works.

Inf.11

I think the most important effect of portfolios were on vocabulary growth. I kept a vocabulary notebook in my portfolio. I think this helped my vocabulary knowledge to increase. When I needed to study vocabulary, I used the lists in my portfolio. By this way, I could learn the meanings of many words and see their usage in example sentences.

Inf.12

By keeping a portfolio, I learnt how to write essay better, because the teacher corrected my mistakes. I got aware of my mistakes thanks to the comments of the teacher and my friends. In addition, I kept all my essays in my portfolio, so I could see the difference between the essays I had written at the beginning and at the end of the term. It was nice to be able to keep track of my development in writing thanks to my portfolio

Inf.13

Portfolio is a good way of showing what learners can do, because learners can collect everything they do in their portfolios. Thus, the teacher can see what their learners know, what they can do and so on.

Inf.14

With the help of portfolios, teachers could follow their students' development from their essays. They can evaluate their students.

Inf.15

Learners keeping a portfolio can learn from their mistakes. When they write essays, their teacher checks the essays and gives them back to their students. Therefore, the students can see what they did wrong and they can study more on these points. Furthermore, learners can see their development when they look at their portfolio.

## **Q2. What problems did you encounter in the process of PK?**

Inf.01

I had no problem while keeping portfolio.

Inf.02

There weren't any problems about keeping portfolio.

Inf. 03

There weren't a lot of problems. However, sometimes it was really difficult to file everything we do.

Inf.04

I did not have any problems.

Inf.05

It was easy, there weren't any problems.

Inf.06

I did not have any problems concerning portfolio.

Inf.07

I had no problem using portfolio.

Inf.08

There weren't any problem about keeping portfolio.

Inf.09

I did not encounter any problems while I was keeping portfolio.

Inf.10

There weren't any problems.

Inf.11

There weren't many problems. But the time was too limited. I think we should use portfolio a little longer to be able to benefit more.

Inf.12

Maybe we could start keeping portfolio earlier.

Inf.13

I did not have any problems.

Inf.14

There weren't any problems while keeping portfolio.

Inf.15

I did not have any problems.

**Q3. Did you enjoy PK as part of your learning process? If yes, why? If no, why?**

Inf.01

I think it was boring to keep portfolio, but if you want to learn English, you must do it.

Inf.02

I did not like keeping portfolio. It was really boring to put everything I did in my portfolio.

Inf.03

I think keeping a portfolio was enjoyable, because I showed what I did to the teacher and my friends. If there were any mistakes, the teacher and my friends corrected it and I saw my mistakes. As I saw my progress, I got happier. Thus, I liked it.

Inf.04

I did not like it. It was not fun to collect papers in a folder.

Inf.05

Yes, I enjoyed it so much, because, I think it is very good way for exercising. I could take advantage of my portfolio and this way increased my word capacity and grammar information day by day.

Inf.06

I did not enjoy keeping a portfolio, because it was boring to put essays in a folder. I think there was no meaning to collect our works like that. It was time-consuming.

Inf.07

I think it was not enjoyable to keep portfolio, because it took time to collect everything.

Inf.08

In my opinion, it was a different way of learning; it helped me, so I enjoyed it.

Inf.09

I did not enjoy it. I think there was no need to do such a thing. I don't think I will go on keeping it later.

Inf.10

I think, keeping a portfolio was enjoyable, because you could see what you did in a term. Also, it was beneficial. So, I liked it

Inf.11

I did not like keeping portfolio. It was hard to be responsible enough to collect all your works.

Inf.12

Yes, I did. Thanks to my portfolio, I could understand the topics easily. Doing this kind of works improved my English skills. I think I will continue to keep a portfolio later.

Inf.13

No, I did not like it. It was boring and time consuming.

Inf.14

I think it was not enjoyable. I got bored while collecting everything I did. In my opinion, it was not necessary for students.

Inf.15

I think it was very boring. I did not like it, because it was hard to do it for a long time.

## APPENDIX G: STUDENT CONSENT FORM

### ÖĞRENCİ İZİN BELGESİ

Sayın Katılımcı,  
İlk olarak bu çalışmada yer aldığınız için size teşekkür ederim. Bu izin belgesi **“Investigating the Impact of Blogging and Portfolio-Keeping on English as a Foreign Language Learners’ Level of Autonomy, Self-Assessment, and Language Achievement”** konulu yüksek lisans tezinin verilerini elde etmek için bu çalışmada yer alacak olan katılımcıları bilgilendirmek ve izinlerini almak için düzenlenmiştir. Belgeyi okuduktan sonra belirtilen bölüme isminizi yazınız ve imzanızı atınız.

#### **Çalışmanın Amacı, Süreci ve İşleyişi:**

Bu çalışmanın amacı, öğrenci bloğu ve bireysel portfolyo uygulamalarının üniversitede İngilizce hazırlık sınıflarında okumakta olan öğrencilerin özerklikleri, öz-değerlendirmeleri ve dil başarıları üzerindeki etkisini ortaya çıkarmak ve öğrencilerin öğrenci bloğu ve bireysel portfolyo uygulamalarına dair görüşlerini araştırmaktır.

Çalışmanın veri toplama evresi Aralık, 2011 tarihinde başlayıp Mayıs 2012 tarihinde sona erecektir. Veri toplama evresi; anketlerle uygulama öncesi durum tespiti, öğrenci bloğu ve bireysel portfolyo uygulama evresi ve anketlerle ve mülakatlarla uygulama sonrası durum tespiti olmak üzere üç evreden oluşmaktadır.

Çalışma, süreç tamamlandıktan sonra, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi alanında bir yüksek lisans tezi olarak kabul edilecek ve ulusal ve uluslararası bilimsel dergilerde makale olarak yayınlanacak, kongrelerde bildiri olarak sunulacaktır.

#### **Katılımcılara Yönelik Beklentiler:**

Çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına bağlıdır. Ancak, çalışmaya katılan bireylerden, çalışmanın gereklerini yerine getirmeleri beklenmektedir. Katılımcıların üzerine düşenleri yapmaması herhangi bir cezaya yol açmayacaktır, ancak katılımcı çalışmadan tam anlamıyla yararlanamayacaktır.

#### **Çalışmanın Katılımcılara Sağlayacağı Faydalar:**

Çalışma süresince katılımcılar öğrenci bloğu kullanarak ve bireysel portfolyo tutarak dil öğrenme süreçlerine farklı bir yöntem dâhil etmiş olacaklardır. Çalışmanın sonunda, katılımcıların öğrenen özerkliği, dil becerilerine dair öz-değerlendirme ve dil başarı seviyelerinin artmış olması beklenmektedir.

#### **Araştırmacının Yükümlülükleri:**

Araştırmacı, veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılacak olan anketlerin, kontrol çizelgelerinin hazırlanmasından ve uygulanmasından, çalışma süresince verilecek olan ödevlerin belirlenmesinden ve bu ödevlerin takibinin yapılmasından, çalışma sonunda uygulanacak olan yapılandırılmış mülakatların hazırlanmasından ve uygulanmasından ve çalışmanın toplanan veriler doğrultusunda incelenmesinden sorumludur.

#### **Gizlilik İlkesi:**

Çalışmaya katılan bireylerin isimleri araştırmacı dışında kimseyle paylaşılmayacak, gizli tutulacaktır. Çalışma verilerine erişim, sadece araştırmacı, araştırmacının çalışmasını yöneten öğretim üyesi ve çalışmayı değerlendiren tez jürisine açık olacaktır.

**Arařtırmacı Taahhüdü:**

Bu alıřmanın yrtcs ben Yelda ORHON, arařtırmanın sađlıklı bir Őekilde yrtlebilmesi iin ykmllklerimi yerine getireceđime ve verilerin gizliliđi konusunda gereken zeni gstereceđime sz veriyorum. İmza: \_\_\_\_\_

**Katılımcı Onayı:**

Yukarıda belirtilen maddeleri okudum. alıřma sırasında toplanan verilerin gizliliđi kořuluyla bu alıřmaya katılmaya ve tarafımın verilerinin kullanılmasına izin veriyorum.

İsim: \_\_\_\_\_

İmza: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX H: SAMPLE LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAM OF THE SCHOOL  
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES, PAMUKKALE UNIVERSITY**

**LISTENING SECTION**

**A. Listen to the tour guide and circle the correct alternative (2 points each)**

1. **In the library ,.....**
  - a. there aren't many books
  - b. computers are not new
  - c. you don't have to pay for the internet access
  - d. students are not allowed to bring their own computers
  
2. **One of the dormitories is .....**
  - a. behind the library
  - b. on sports field's left
  - c. behind the dining commons
  - d. next to the dining commons
  
3. **Small classes are important, because.....**
  - a. Students don't always talk to professors
  - b. professors know the students well
  - c. the lessons are not interesting
  - d. students don't work in teams and have discussion groups
  
4. **Students don't learn ..... at Watson university.**
  - a. writing skills
  - b. critical thinking
  - c. foreign languages
  - d. French history
  
5. **Students can ..... to help the community**
  - a. go to dinner
  - b. go to a movie
  - c. become volunteers
  - d. visit places like food bank and hospital

**B. Listen to the lecture TWICE and complete the notes (1,5 points each)**

We'll be talking about spending again today and the various ways that different groups of people in (a) \_\_\_\_\_ spend money- I am going to cover some of the different ways men/women spend money and discuss some of the (b) \_\_\_\_\_ by businesses to these differences - The main reason for the focus on gender differences in spending is because these differences have very big implications for marketers and (c) \_\_\_\_\_. Traditionally, the wife/mother in a family is the one who has been (d) \_\_\_\_\_ with taking care of the home and children, so for example it is the woman in the family who thinks about preparing the food or keeping the family (e) \_\_\_\_\_ and warm.

Experts say that women want to create a lifestyle; they tend to (f) \_\_\_\_\_ on daily life of their family. Let's move on to the traditional responsibilities of men: the man in the family is the one who fixes things, so for example when the door in the house is (g) \_\_\_\_\_ the man fixes it. When it comes to spending, they prefer the things that are long-lasting and don't need (h) \_\_\_\_\_ or repairing. They are the ones who are interested in the long term value of purchases. The long term value of an item (i) \_\_\_\_\_ as the price goes up.

- Now, let's take a look at some numbers: today (j), \_\_\_\_\_ of all household in the US. are now headed by single women.

## LANGUAGE USE SECTION

### PART A) Choose the best answer (1 point each)

Online education today is an important part of education sector. One of the first famous online schools \_\_\_\_\_ (6) in Los Angeles, America. It was called "Online Academy". The main advantage of studying in that school was that people \_\_\_\_\_ (7) commute to a school every day. In order not to \_\_\_\_\_ (8) the regular schools, the course tried to provide the best education with famous teachers with lots of interactive exercises online. However, there were also some arguments against this course. Some people claimed that students \_\_\_\_\_ (9) lacked in computer skills couldn't reflect their real performance during the lessons. Seeing these arguments, the institution decided \_\_\_\_\_ (10) computer course at the weekends. Students had the chance to learn not only computer skills but also how to prepare good presentations during those courses. By the time the course \_\_\_\_\_ (11) many students had already made a great progress in their lessons. Parents were also satisfied with this situation as they paid \_\_\_\_\_ (12) money compared to the previous years. If they had sent their children to private schools, they \_\_\_\_\_ (13) much more money for their education. Nearly 10 years ago, there were about 1000 online education institutions available in different subjects. In the last 10 years, this number \_\_\_\_\_ (14) and nowadays this trend has taken over the world. As an education expert, I am sure that more and more students \_\_\_\_\_ (15) these online courses due to their convenient conditions in the future. Technology has made our lives easier, but is it valid for education sector? This question can't be answered accurately until we \_\_\_\_\_ (16) the long-term consequences of these online courses. You should consult an expert before \_\_\_\_\_ (17) your education path.

- |                    |                      |                        |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| 6. a. was founded  | b. is founded        | c. founded             | d. had been founded  |
| 7. a. had to       | b. were able to      | c. didn't have to      | d. couldn't          |
| 8. a. keep up with | b. fall behind       | c. catch up with       | d. set out           |
| 9. a. who          | b. when              | c. whose               | d. which             |
| 10. a. doing       | b. to do             | c. do                  | d. to be done        |
| 11. a. ended       | b. had ended         | c. were ended          | d. has ended         |
| 12. a. more        | b. less              | c. the least           | d. much              |
| 13. a. would spent | b. would have spent  | c. couldn't have spent | d. will have spent   |
| 14. a. doubled     | b. has been doubling | c. was doubled         | d. has doubled       |
| 15. a. will prefer | b. would prefer      | c. are going to prefer | d. will be preferred |
| 16. a. see         | b. will see          | c. have been seen      | d. may see           |
| 17. a. choose      | b. to choose         | c. chosen              | d. choosing          |

### PART B) Choose the best answer (1 point each)

Even if you have never touched a cigarette in your life, you are still at risk from smoking-related diseases if you live, work or travel with smokers. When smokers and non-smokers share the same room, the non-smokers cannot avoid \_\_\_\_\_ (18) in some of the smokers' tobacco smoke. This is called 'passive smoking'.

People's awareness \_\_\_\_\_ (19) the dangers of smoking has increased a lot in recent years. Nowadays more people \_\_\_\_\_ (20) up smoking than ever before. Recently, smoking \_\_\_\_\_ (21) from most forms of public transport, and nearly all public buildings \_\_\_\_\_ (22) 'smoke-free zones'. \_\_\_\_\_ (23), in the workplace many people are exposed to the danger and discomfort of passive smoking.

There are many benefits to an employer taking action to create a smoke-free environment. Firstly, the company has a better, cleaner image. Secondly, the workforce are \_\_\_\_\_ (24) before, less likely to take time off due to illness, and more likely to stay with the company. Thirdly, cleaning costs are greatly reduced for \_\_\_\_\_ (25) the employer and the employee, neither of them have to go home in clothes \_\_\_\_\_ (26) stink of smoke.

Whenever a non-smoking policy \_\_\_\_\_ (27), there is usually some protest to the smokers. But eventually if the smokers \_\_\_\_\_ (28) the benefits of working in a smoke-free environment, many will be encouraged to give up \_\_\_\_\_ (29) altogether. All of the non-smokers hope that most smokers \_\_\_\_\_ (30) this unhealthy habit one day.

- |                      |                   |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 18. a.to breathe     | b.breathing       | c.breathe            | d.to be breathed      |
| 19. a.at             | b.about           | c.of                 | d.for                 |
| 20. a.are giving     | b.had given       | c.will give          | d.gave                |
| 21. a.banned         | b.has been banned | c.is banning         | d.will ban            |
| 22. a. has           | b.are having      | c.have had           | d. had                |
| 23. a.Besides        | b.Although        | c.However            | d.In addition         |
| 24. a.healthier than | b.the healthiest  | c. healthy           | d. so healthy         |
| 25. a.either         | b.both            | c.not only           | d.nor                 |
| 26. a.whose          | b.where           | c.who                | d.which               |
| 27. a.was introduced | b.is introduced   | c.will be introduced | d.had been introduced |
| 28. a.understood     | b.had understood  | c.understand         | d. will understand    |
| 29. a. smoking       | b.to smoke        | c.smoke              | d. smoked             |
| 30. a. will stop     | b. stopped        | c. would stop        | d. have stopped       |



## READING SECTION

### PART A) Choose the best answer. (1.5 points each)

#### Rain Forests and the Earth's Climate

##### The Importance of Rain Forests

Rain forests cover only about six percent of the earth's surface, but they are very important to the earth. What is a rain forest? It is an area of land that gets a lot of rainfall and is mostly covered by tall, old trees. Some rain forests get up to 33 feet (10 meters) of rain each year. Some of their trees are thousands of years old. Most of the world's rain forests are in Africa, Asia, Australia, Central America, and South America. More than half of the world's plant animal species live in rain forests or originally came from rain forests. Scientists continue to discover plants in the rain forests that have medical value (useful for treating medical problems). In fact, over 25 percent of the medicines we have come from rain forest plants. And there are still a lot of plants.

##### The Effects of Rain Forests on the Earth's Climate

But rain forests are important not only for the plants and animals that live in them and for the medicines that come from them. They also have major effects on the earth's atmosphere and climate. According to some scientists, global warming is causing dangerous changes to earth's climate. Rain forests can help us fight global warming. Some scientists believe that rain forests cool the atmosphere by absorbing the sun's heat. *Absorb* means to soak up. Also, plants and trees use carbon dioxide. The cause of global warming is an increase of gases like carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. So rain forests can clean some of the excess (extra) carbon dioxide out of the air.

##### How We Are Destroying Rain Forests

Rain forests are so important to the earth, but we are cutting them down and burning them very quickly. Why? Some companies want to use the trees to make wood and paper. Others want to use the land to raise animals or grow crops (plants that farmers grow to use as food). This is dangerous for the climate in two ways. First, we are destroying something that helps cool down the earth's atmosphere. And second, by burning rain forests, we add a lot of carbon dioxide to the air. In fact, the burning of rain forests is responsible for about 30 percent of the carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. Some people believe that in 40 years, all the rain forests will be destroyed. What will happen to the earth's climate when the all rain forests are gone?

##### 31. What is the main idea of this article?

- a. Rain forests are important because they are very old and most of our medicines come from their plants.
- b. We need to protect rain forests because they are important to the earth in many ways.
- c. We are destroying the rain forests very quickly.
- d. The rain forests are important, but they do not have a major effect on the earth's climate.

##### 32. In some rain forests,.....

- a. the trees grow to 33 feet
- b. there are no animals because there is so much rain.
- c. 33 feet of rain falls each year
- d. 25 percent of the plants can be used for medicine.

##### 33. Rain forests can be helpful to the earth because.....

- a. they heat the atmosphere.
- b. they put carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

- c. they burn the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- d. they soak up the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

##### 34. Scientists and researchers probably....

- a. are still looking for medicinal plants in rain forests.
- b. are not looking for medicinal plants in the rain forests anymore.
- c. don't believe there are any more important plants to find in the rain forests.
- d. all agree that global warming is harming the earth's atmosphere.

##### 35. Burning rain forests.....

- a. helps farmers grow strong crops
- b. adds carbon dioxide to the air
- c. cools the carbon dioxide in the air
- d. cools the atmosphere

**PART B) Choose the best answer. (1,5 points each)****Cross-Cultural Business Blunders\***

Many visitors to different countries don't realize how important it is to understand a country's culture. Sometimes people learn this lesson by making a big cross-cultural blunder, or embarrassing mistake. In business situations, these blunders can cost a lot of money or end business relationships.

When companies are trying to sell products, it's very important for them to understand what is important to their potential customers, and to understand a bit of their language. For example, one company wanted to sell toothpaste in Southeast Asia. In their advertisements, they claimed that their toothpaste whitens teeth. They didn't understand that many of the local people chewed betel nuts to make their teeth black, and that these people thought black teeth were attractive. In another case, a car company tried to sell a car called "Matador" in a Spanish speaking country. The company thought that it was a strong name because it means "bullfighter". In Spanish, matador is indeed a noun meaning "bullfighter". But it is also an adjective meaning "killing". Imagine driving around in a car called "Killing"!

Business meetings with people from another country can be very tricky when you don't understand the other country's culture. A European businessman had an important meeting with a company in Taiwan. He wanted to bring gifts for the people he was meeting with. He thought that something with his company's logo on it would be a nice gift. So he bought some very nice pocket knives and had his company's logo printed on them. He didn't know that giving a knife as a gift symbolizes cutting off a friendship! The Taiwanese businessmen were very offended (angry and upset). But luckily, the European businessman was able to repair the relationship with a lot of explanation and apology.

It's very easy to make blunders like these people did. But it's also very easy not to. Before you visit a new country, research that country's customs and etiquette (social rules for polite behavior). You can find a lot of information online. Just go to a search engine and type in key words like "cross-cultural etiquette" or "cultural information Taiwan". By spending a few minutes doing research, you can save yourself from a lot of embarrassment and make sure you don't accidentally offend anyone.

*\*Blunder: careless or stupid mistake*

**36. What is the main idea of this article?**

- a. People in Southeast Asia like to chew betel nuts.
- b. It's important to understand other people's culture before you do business with them.
- c. It's dangerous to understand other people's cultures before you do business with them.
- d. Proper business etiquette in most countries is difficult for foreigners to understand.

**37. The toothpaste company probably \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. changed their advertisement in Southeast Asia.
- b. tried to convince people in Southeast Asia that betel nuts are bad for your teeth.
- c. kept using the same advertisement in Southeast Asia.
- d. started to sell cars instead of toothpaste.

**38. The car company that tried to sell a car to a Spanish-speaking country probably \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. sold a lot of Matador cars in that country.
- b. changed the name of the car to "Killing".
- c. didn't sell many Matador cars in that country.
- d. were offended by their potential customers.

**39. The European businessman probably \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. researches new cultures before he visits them now.
- b. doesn't do business in Taiwan anymore.
- c. always brings pocket knives as gifts to business meetings
- d. didn't care that he offended the Taiwanese businessmen.

**40. What can you do to save yourself from making cross-cultural blunders?**

- a. You can't do anything.
- b. You can disagree with people when they say you did something wrong.
- c. You can teach people from other countries how you do things in your culture.
- d. You can do research on the Internet.

**PART C) Choose the best answer. (2 points each)**

Most countries have anti-smoking laws. However, whether or not these laws are enforced differs by country. In Canada, smoking laws are enforced. Police have shut down bars and restaurants simply because people were smoking in **them**.

Singapore is even stricter. Not only are public places smoke free, but you can be fined if you smoke while waiting for a taxi or bus—outside! And these **fin**es are high, sometimes up to six thousand dollars.

**41. What would be the best title for this reading?**

- a. Smoking in Russia
- b. Dying for a Cigarette
- c. How to Enforce Anti-smoking Laws
- d. Smoking by Country

**42. In the first paragraph, “them” refers to\_\_.**

- a. Police
- b. anti-smoking laws
- c. bars and restaurants
- d. people

**43. What does the passage imply about anti-smoking laws in Bhutan?**

- a. They are enforced.
- b. They are not enforced.
- c. They were enacted only recently.
- d. They were enacted over a hundred years ago

However, Bhutan takes the award for being the most anti-smoking nation. Although visitors to Bhutan can take cigarettes into the country, it is illegal for them to give cigarettes to Bhutanese people. It is illegal for the people of Bhutan to smoke anywhere, and you cannot buy cigarettes in Bhutan.

On the other side of the coin, China does have anti -smoking laws, but you wouldn’t know it. China banned smoking in public places in 1996, but the ban is ignored. If you are fined for smoking, it isn’t much more than a dollar or two. It’s the same in Russia. People are still smoking at work and in hospitals. You can, however, be fined for smoking on public transportation.

**44. What is the best definition for “fine” (paragraph 2) as used in this reading?**

- a. Good or OK
- b. Of very high quality
- c. Very thin or small
- d. Paying money for doing something wrong

**45. Which of the following sentences is NOT true?**

- a. China has strict anti-smoking laws.
- b. Bhutan has the strictest anti-smoking laws.
- c. Russia’s anti-smoking laws are not as strict as Canada’s.
- d. Anti-smoking laws are enforced in Singapore.

**WRITING SECTION**

Write an argumentative essay on one of the topics below (25 points.).

- Foreign language learning should start at an early age.
- All students should have university education after high school.

ÖRNEKTİR

## APPENDIX I: SAMPLES FROM THE STUDENTS' WORKS ON THEIR LEARNER BLOGS

### CAUSES OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

There are many bad situation negatively effects people's lives. These situations are often both material and moral damage to people. Traffic accidents are one of them. Nowadays traffic accidents are very common so several questions come to mind of the accident. For example, Why do people traffic accident? Have you ever had a traffic accident? What are the causes of traffic accidents? There are different causes of traffic accidents. Some of them are carelessness, alcohol and overspeed.

Carelessness is at the beginning of the most important causes of traffic accidents. There are various reasons that cause the carelessness. If you are to sleep and in this way driving, you are able to collect the attention of so you can traffic accident. In another example of, you deal with order things while you were driving a car your attention is shifted in that direction such as talk to by mobile phone or someone to talk to dive next to or If you have a child in the car, you take care of him or her. All these reasons lead to the disintegration of our attention. Our attention is shifted in other directions. As a result of all these accidents become inevitable.

Another important reason for accidents is alcohol. Aleoholic people's consciousness isn't fully in place so they may experience bad situations. Accidents are at the beginning of their income. If a person use alcohol, he or she certainly shouldn't drive a car. Because, he/she can cause very large accidents. Today eighty percent of traffic accidents due to this reasons. To prevent this situations are founded in various law such as fine and imprisonment. However, a big change isn't occurring in this situation. People continue to behave unconscious.

The last reason is important to other causes overspeed. When people are late, they can often overspeed. Do you think this a correct behavior? This is

Hakkımda



Profilimin tamamını görüntüle

İzleyiciler

Maalesef...

Bu gadget hatalı olarak yapılandırıldı. Web yöneticileri için ipucu: Lütfen "Friend Connect Ayarları - Ana Sayfa URL'si"nin bu sitenin URL'siyle eşleştiğinden emin olun.



9 Mayıs 2012 06:14

I think you explain this reason a lot of examples and knowledges. Your essay's concluding pragraf is very good

Yanıtla



12 Mayıs 2012 02:56

i like your essay because your essay is very fluently. you said that ' ... he or she certainly shouldn't drive a car. Because, he/she can cause ....' alternatively you can write 'you'

Yanıtla

15 Mayıs 2012 Salı

## essays

### OBESITY

In the 21st century many of people have obesity. Obesity is very important health problem in a person's life which effect people's lifestyle and personality. Moreover, people do not do anything although people believe that obesity is an important health problem. There are several effects of obesity.

The first and most important effect is poor health in a person's life. Obesity cause lots of harmful and dangerous disasters, which are high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and stress. According to doctors, people who are obese may be ill these disaster easier than other people. So, obesity is very dangerous disaster.

The second effect is economic. People pay lots of money for obesity. The hospitals need more money, and overweight person pays a lot for special diets. For example, my uncle is a person who is overweight. He went to the private doctor three years ago. And he paid lots of money for special diet. So, the economic way of obesity may damage a family's budget.

The third effect is difficulty in finding clothes. Because of this, a lot of people complain. Overweight people who do not find clothes suffer from there are not many clothes. So, finding clothes is really difficult problem for overweight people because companies produce small size clothes.

As a consequent, the effects of obesity are poor health, economics, and difficulty finding clothes. So, obesity is very dangerous and harmful problem for overweight people.

Gönderen [redacted] zaman: 08:27



Bunu Google'da önerin

2 yorum:



[redacted] 16 Mayıs 2012 04:37

I like all of your essay. But this essay haven't enough information. You should give more examples and you should write more extended your conclusion paragraph.

Yanıtla



[redacted] 19 Mayıs 2012 06:59

you choose rich a topic and I like this topic. But you can give more examples. I think not enough this examples. good luck my friend :)

Yanıtla

Web yöneticileri için:  
"Friend Connect A"  
URL'si"nin bu sitede  
eşleştiğinden emin

### Hakkımda



Profilimin tamamını  
görüntüle

## Essays

Today, lots of people prefer living in a big city but I don't think in this way. In my opinion, living in a village is better than living in a big city because of transportation, neighborhood and fresh food.

First of all, transportation is one of the biggest problems in our country especially in big cities but if you live in a village, you haven't got any problem about transportation because not many people live in a village, most of them have been migrating to big cities for a long time therefore in a village there are not many transportation problems.

Second advantage is neighborhood. People who live in a big city don't even know their neighbor's name because they live in an apartment so they can't even come across each other but if you live in a small village you probably know most of the neighbors and they usually are friendly and helpful. In short, communication between people is strong for people living in a village.

Thirdly, living in a village is really advantageous for fresh foods. You can consume your own food. It must be really enjoyable and healthy so thanks to their food maybe you can live longer.

As a result, as you see living in a village is really good in every viewpoint and if I had a chance to determine where I live, I'd definitely choose a village.

- essay (1)
- Free Housewife (1)
- Global Warming (1)
- Grow up without a TV (1)
- Living In A Village (1)
- Responsibilities: Animals (1)
- video review (1)

### Blog Arşivi

- ▼ 2012 (9)
- Nisan (1)
- ▼ Mart (8)
- :)
- Essays
- Essays
- Essays
- essay
- video review

13 Mayıs 2012 Pazar

### CAN LEARN ALL AGES

**Technology is developing day by day. Now, people of all ages can access the internet easily. Although technology and internet are very useful objects, but some people use them for bad things. Many people argue this view, everybody shouldn't have access to the internet. I think it is not true, everybody can use a thing such as the internet.**

**First, today we can do everything with a computer. For example, we may no longer own our home office and we don't have to go to work. Because we can do everything with a computer. Therefore, we can spend much more time with our family, children and friends.**

**Secondly, we can obtain what we are looking for in a short time. It is very important for people, because time is money. In the past, people went to the library and they looked for hours for a thing. However, now life is easier with a computer. Time is always important for everyone, no matter of ages,**

**Some people believe children and teenagers shouldn't use the internet. If they start using a computer and the internet when they are little, they will be dependent. They may be right at some point but I don't agree with this idea. Because they should use the internet when they were children. Then it can be difficult to keep pace with advancing technology.**

**In summary, technology is very useful for people of all ages.**

Gönderen: [Redacted] zaman: 02:30

[M](#) [E](#) [C](#) [F](#) [P](#) [G+](#) Bunu Google'da özetle

### 4 yorum:

[Redacted] 14 Mayıs 2012 12:15

Baby, your essay is good but is it too short like my essay? Also you can support a lot of examples in your paragraphs. Moreover, you did some wrong spelling such as teknoloji, children, friends. I believe these were your carelessness. :)

Yanıtla

[Redacted] 15 Mayıs 2012 08:38

I think your thesis and concluding paragraph are different, you explain computer is useful in the thesis however you explain technology is useful in the concluding paragraph also you make a mistake in spelling. But, your writing is good



26 Mart 2012 09:31

Essay was short but it impressive. Also you should develop your idea..maybe..

Yanıtla



14 Nisan 2012 13:32

thanks özgür :D

Yanıtla



yelda yelmer 22 Nisan 2012 09:30

I agree with Ozgur, its a little bit short. your introduction is not well developed. you mention your idea in your first sentence, but yo should talk about what you think, only in your thesis, not before.

your topics are really good: transportation, neighborhood and fresh food

try to make your body paragraphs richer, give more major supporting sentences, more examples, quotations etc.

in your second body, you can talk about how people behave each other in the city and in the village (in terms of communication, trust, help etc.)

for example, in your third body, you only mention village while talking about fresh food. what about city? how is the situation in big city?

your conclusion is short, I think its better if you start your conclusion with a general statement like: living in a city and village differ from each other in some aspects.

however, I like your comment in the end.

Yanıtla

shortly, your essay is good but you should improve some parts of it. thanks for your effort:)

Yanıtla



11 Mart 2012 09:21

thank you teacher...but this is the first writing. I think I have to write one more 2-3..I will try to improve myself refreshed :)

Yanıtla



11 Mart 2012 13:03

Congratulations Sercan :D I think you wrote firstly :)I would like to first writer, but you didn't miss the opportunity.

Yelda teacher, it's big surprise for me :

yelda yelmer Mar 11, 2012 04:35 AM

When I first saw this, I say "What is this?" :D Yelda teacher at the computer as well as 4.35 am and it's a long evaluation =D

You are AWESOME, because you didn't sleep night and you read Sercan's Essay and you evaluate this essay :D

Please wait for my essays, I'm curiosing your thoughts.

Sercan don't stop my bro, you will improve your writing skill :D

Yanıtla



### The last book I read: Jane Eyre

Jane Eyre has attention grabbing story. Jane's life was very awful. But her life changed when she met a man. I like this story. All of the women hope, they meet a man will change their life. :)) I advise this book all my friend.

Gönderen [redacted] zaman: 05:09 Hiç yorum yok:

[M](#) [E](#) [t](#) [f](#) [p](#) [g+1](#) Bunu Google'da önerin

### Film [redacted]

I watched a film that name is 3 idiots and Bollywood film, with my friend on Friday night. It is very funny a film. Aamir Khan is playing leading role. Players want to show to absurd of education system, to study to learn knowledge not to pass the exam. Also, they show to what is friendship? Moreover, they reflect to us in a different way. It's worth watching a film. I'm sure, it will contribute to you.

Gönderen [redacted] zaman: 02:30 Hiç yorum yok:

[M](#) [E](#) [t](#) [f](#) [p](#) [g+1](#) Bunu Google'da önerin

### THE BERLY CORONET

Berly coronet important one of the wealthiest. He for store the identity of London gives some money Alexander. Arthur with request for gambling some money the Alexander but doesn't accept. Therefore argue and Arthur steal gems. In recognition of his father: 'Where gems?' Arthur asks. Home searched but can not find gems. If Alexander does not want to be heard of this incident. Arthur shows Alexander guilty and that cell is turned off. Alexander 's house was searched, but found gems. Arthur runs away from home, leaving the gems. Alexander out of the cell. George is persuaded to marry and gems steal. Arthur saw the situation and took back gems. If George ran away from there.

#### Characters:

Berly Coronet: London's wealthiest

Arthur: The spoiled child of Mr. Coronet

Alexander Holder: Banker

Marry: Nephew of Mr. Coronet


Give a brief summary of the book plot.


Charles, who entertained the girls mind, and with them not only intend to marry a young man. Then Charles, his friend's wedding one day encounters a woman's life. He falls in love with Carrie, but he can't express the feelings of a kind. Later, Charles and Carrie meet again at a funeral, and three weddings. Each time, friendships begin to progress however they can't admit a kind of interests to each other therefore both married other people and weddings invite each other. After many years they admit his feelings together but both were married and both of them have children so they decided to stay friends.

Posted by [redacted] at 15:31

4 comments:

 yolda yelmer 22 April 2012 at 08:49  
I like this book, but maybe its end could be different:)  
Reply

 [redacted] 23 April 2012 at 23:49  
I disagree with you, teacher :D I don't like this book review.  
I'm choosing adventure, science-fiction or historical stories, which are not enough publishing...  
Reply

 [redacted] 24 April 2012 at 05:25  
everyones own choice... so I respect your opinion umut.  
Reply

 yolda yelmer 6 May 2012 at 08:37  
hahaha:) we respect your opinion umut:)  
Reply

## VOCABULARY

**SCARCITY:** rareness, scarceness, state of being in short supply (kıtlık)  
Synonym: shortage  
Antonym: abundance

**PRECIOUS:** of great value or worth; very valuable; highly esteemed; dear; beloved; as, precious recollections. (kıymetli)  
Synonym: treasured  
Antonym: valueless

**EXCEED:** to be more or greater; to be paramount. (aşmak)  
Synonym: overstep

**REVENUE:** the annual yield of taxes, excise, customs, duties, rents, etc., which a nation, state, or municipality collects and receives into the treasury for public use. (maliye)  
Synonym: gross

**OFFSET:** offshoot; outcome; compensation, counterbalance. (denkleştirmek)  
Synonym: balance  
Antonym: disproportion

**ACCOMMODATE:** host guests; provide lodging; adapt oneself; give, bestow (kalacak yer sağlamak)  
Synonym: board

**RESTORE:** to renew; to reestablish; as, to restore harmony among those who are variance. (yeniden düzenlemek, restore etmek)  
Synonym: regenerate



**Why People Should Ride a Bicycle for Short Distance Trips** A bicycle is a mechanism that has transported man for many decades. Nowadays, bicycling is a great way to move from one place to another in short distances. I believe you should use a bicycle for short

distances to protect the environment as well as your health. The purpose of this essay is to explain why people should ride a bicycle for short distance trips. By riding a bicycle, people can decrease gasoline consumption, improve the quality of their lives, and protect the environment. The first reason to use a bicycle for short distances is that you can cause a decrease of pollution. Because many people use their cars to move short distances, they increase the rates of pollution causing more pollution problems to our environment. That is why the use of a bicycle for short distances is a really good idea to help lower the rates of pollution. The second reason to use a bicycle for short distances is that you can help lower gasoline consumption. If you use a bicycle or a car to move to a place that is near your home, you will decrease the gasoline consumption of your car. This can save you a lot of money because the price of gas is expensive. Maybe, it is the laziness of some people who use their cars to drive to places that are near their homes. However, this



**In my opinion all of the students hate Mondays. We must wake up very early because of it.**

Gönderen [redacted] zaman: 14:49

[M](#) [e](#) [t](#) [f](#) [p](#) [g+1](#) Bunu Google'da önerin

1 yorum:

[redacted] 22 Mayıs 2012 03:13

hahaha this is funny, but I hate from everyday :) what happen now :)

Yanıtla

Kişisel Gelişim İçin İlham Veren Son Ders...

Kolumu sıvazladı ve "ne hissettiğini biliyoruz.  
Babanın senin yaşındayken 2 Dünya  
Savaşında Almanlarla savaştığını unutma."

www.kisiselgelisim.com.tr

Gönderen [redacted] zaman: 03:50

[M](#) [E](#) [t](#) [f](#) [p](#) [g+](#) Bunu Google'da önerin

2 yorum:

[redacted] 9 Mayıs 2012 08:14  
Where did you get that? great!!!!!!!!!!!! I liked it very much  
Yanıtla

[redacted] 9 Mayıs 2012 08:44  
thank you I'm too glad  
Yanıtla

*Alize La Isla Bonita*

Alize La Isla Bonita Türkçe Ak Yazı v1

Bir kadın bir erkek

Posted by [redacted] at 15:55 1 comment

*Alize La Isla Bonita*

Alize La Isla Bonita Türkçe Ak Yazı v1

onu daha fazla yapmak  
istemiyorum

Posted by [redacted] at 15:55 No comments

## SpongeBob SquarePants in China -- by Boom Chicago



Gönderen: [redacted] zaman: 09:28

8+1 Bunu Google'da önerin

### 2 yorum:

[redacted] 19 Nisan 2012 09:32  
Are they very sweet? When I watched it, I am feeling good so I think, you should motion it.  
Yanıtla

[redacted] 23 Nisan 2012 23:15  
I don't understand topic :D pleasure is pleasure, we can't discuss this situation :)) many people like this video but i don't understand :D  
Yanıtla

[redacted] - TURKEY

Home Projects Essays Film Reviews Book Reviews Vocabulary News Videos Pictures

### Beşiktaş held to draw by Orduspor

Monday, March 12, 2012 [redacted] spornews 0



A late strike from Edu salvaged a point for Beşiktaş, who was held to a 1-1 draw at Orduspor on March 11 in a Spor Toto Super League game.

With the draw, Beşiktaş advanced to 50 points, but it fell further behind the league's pacesetter, Galatasaray.

Leader Galatasaray has 69 points while Fenerbahçe has 60.

On Sunday, a blunder by goalkeeper Rüştü Reçber gave Bogdan Stancu a chance to score an easy goal for Ordu on the 45th minute.

Brazilian striker Edu scored from well outside the box in the 71st minute to give Beşiktaş one point.

In other games on Sunday, Karabükspor beat Antalyaspor 2-1, Manisaspor beat Mersin İdman Yurdu 2-0 and Samsunspor held Gaziantepspor to a goalless draw in three games of great importance to the relegation battle. Karabük has 37 points, Gaziantep has 36, Antalyaspor has 35, Manisaspor has 32 and Samsunspor has 30 in six spots from 12 to 17. Two of those six teams will fall short in their bid to avoid relegation

### About

[redacted] I am 18 years old. I was born in Ordu. I am living in Denizli since I won Pamukkale University. My department is civil engineer. I like my department.

### Followers

Maalesef...

Bu gadget hatalı olarak yapılandırıldı. Web yöneticileri için ipucu: Lütfen "Friend Connect Ayarları - Ana Sayfa URL'si"nin bu sitenin URL'siyle eşleştiğinden emin olun.



23 Mart 2012 08:40

I think about this situation, and try it. But I didn't write like this poem :D

Thank you for like this my share. I hope so my friends likes my shares, too :)

Yanıtla



9 Mayıs 2012 03:20

I liked too umut :) Normally I don't like poem-particular romantic poem never-yet, your poem is ever not bad :)Do you happy now :)

Yanıtla



14 Mayıs 2012 12:32

Yes I'm happy with your comment, thank you ;)

Yanıtla



I rave his self confident. He looks like Çağlar, doesn't he? :D

Sönderen zaman: 06:07

Bunu Google'da önerin

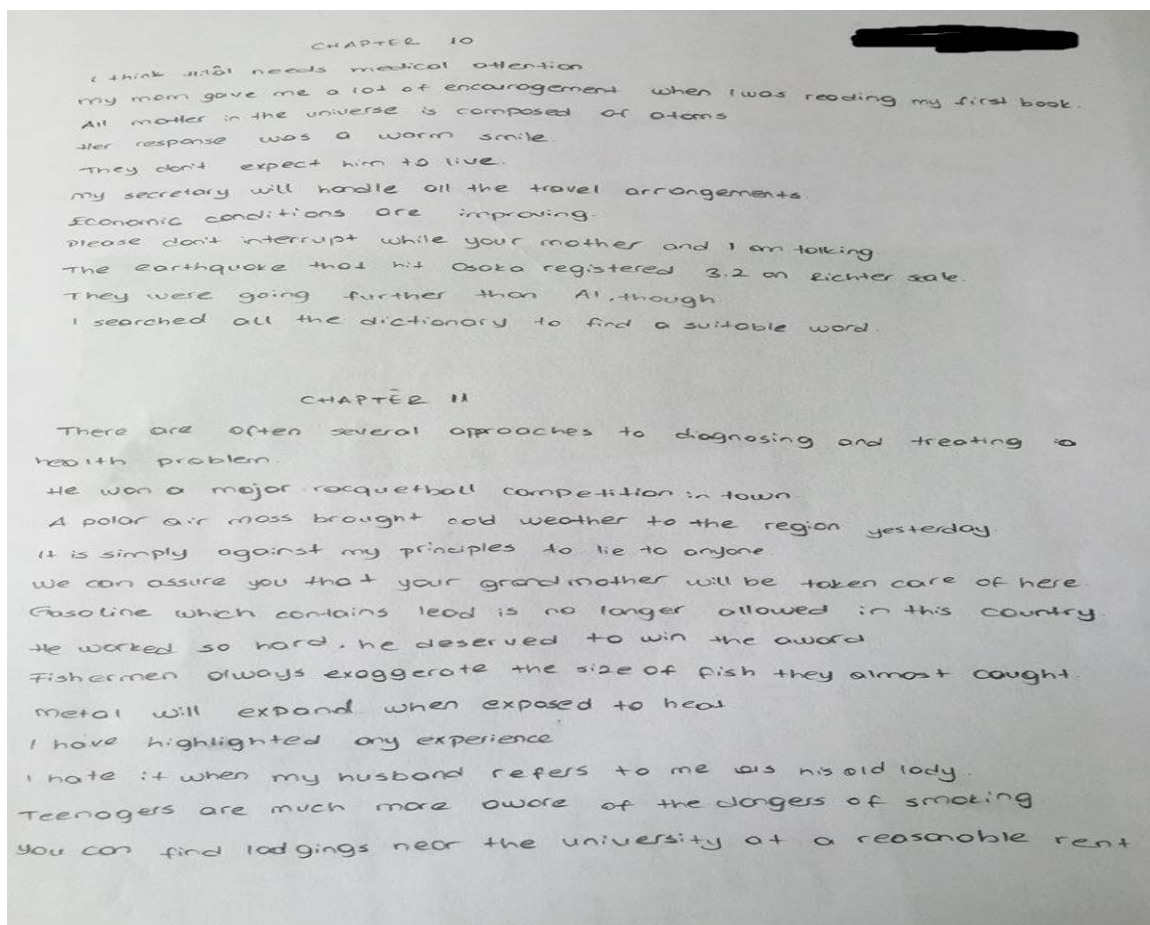
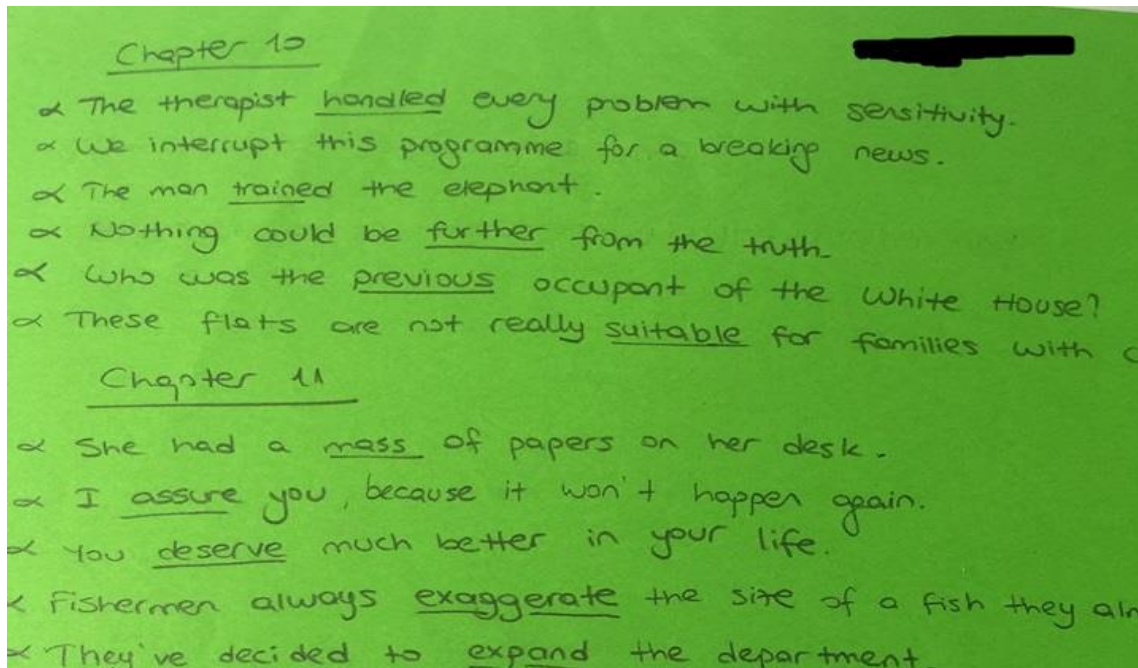
yorum:



22 Mayıs 2012 03:16

I'm sure, it is me :p heyyy apple heyyy look at me :)

## APPENDIX J: SAMPLES FROM THE STUDENTS' WORKS IN THEIR PORTFOLIOS



## VOCAULARY PART 2

accommodations = konaklama.

dormitory = yurt

rent = kiralamak

private = özel

possible = mümkün, imkans.

option = seçenek

roommate = oda arkadaşı

obey = itaat etmek, uymak

freedom = özgürlük

cause = sebep

effect = sonuç, etki

comfortable = konforlu

incredible = inanılmaz.

illustrate = örneklemek

brief = kısa özet.

hides = gizler.

## CHAPTER 11

- Ambition is so important for success
- The children stopped talking at the teacher's approach
- If I want to get the job, I must show enthusiasm in the job interview.
- I assure you that it is perfectly safe.
- Each box contains 24 tins.
- We deserve a holiday.
- He was granted permission to leave early.
- When she said "some student's", do you think he was referring to...



## BOOK REVIEW

Book title = Uncle Tom's Cabin

What genre of book is this?

Social Protest

Who were the main characters in the book?

Goodies: Uncle Tom (slave), Arthur Shelby (Tom's master), Emily Shelby, Fanny (maid)

Baddies: Mr. Hally (slave trader), Tom Loker and Marks (slave hunters)

Neutral: Harry (Eliza's son(s)).

What was the setting? Did setting change from the beginning of the book to the end? In what ways?

Arthur Shelby is a slave master who is kind. He has got debts. He have to sell two slaves, but he don't sell because slaves are escape.

In what time period is this book set?

This book set in time when the slave trade became popular.

Why would you recommend somebody to read this book?

It was very different book because it reflect reality

## BOOK REVIEW

Book Title: A Case Of Identity

What genre of book is this?

gripping book, crime fiction

Who were the main characters in the book?

Goodies: Sherlock Holmes, Mr. Angel, Mr. Windibank, Mary Sutherland

Baddies: —

Neutral: —

What was the setting? Did the setting change from the beginning of the book to the end? In what ways?

This book is the best for beginners to read. Subject of the book is not changeable. From start to end, it is gripping.

In what time period is this book set?

20th century's story.

Why would you recommend somebody to read this book?

Because book's words suitable for pre-intermediate and intermediate level students. When you read this book, you can understand all sentence.

I think everyone should read it.

Give a brief summary of the book plot.

Mary lives with her mother and step father. Holmes only shows up when James is in France; he wears tinted glasses and whiskers, he only walks out at dusk. All his letters to Mary reveal nothing about him and all are typewritten. He wants to keep Mary at home so he can enjoy her income. Holmes arranges to marry Mary and make her promise that she will wait for him, so matter what happens. Mrs. Windibank advises Mary to come home and wait for Holmes. Angel appears. Holmes contacts James at his office by mail and asks him to drop by Baker Street. Holmes threatens to beat Windibank severely because of this actions, although Windibank points out that he hasn't committed a crime. Holmes decided not to tell the truth because he feels she will not believe him. He predicts that Windibank

## BOOK REVIEW

Book title = The call of the wild

What genre of book is this?

Thriller

Who were the main characters in the book?

Goodies = Buck, Buck's last master (John)

Baddies = Spitz, Perreault (who kidnaps Buck)

Neutral = Buck's first master (Judge Miller)

What was the setting? Did the setting change from the beginning of the book to the end? In what ways?

Buck's period of to be wild is mentioned by author. For this, name of book is the call of the wild. Setting not change. Buck's masters are changed.

Nature is calling for Buck. The main place of book pole and ground with ice.

In what time period is this book set?

The time period when the ship and sledge used for post and traveling.

Why would you recommend somebody to read this book?

I think, This book tell inevitable ends.

Give a brief summary of the book plot

Buck is a domestic dog who live in Santa Clara valley. His life was so good but one day Buck was kidnapped by a postman who used sled dog. Buck meet a lots of new dogs and a variety of difficulty. Moreover, He even has a rival who name is spitz, very rude dog. He should adapt all of these. In time, he adjust hard condition such as cold and one day he was spitz and he became leader sledge dog. Buck change several master and then he met a very kind and great master who name is John. John save Buck's life. Buck is attached to them and even he saves his life several times. In time, Buck became more wild than before and he became a good hunter. One day when Buck leave for hunting from John, John was killed by Yeehat tribe. Buck is sorry for this but he must last his life and he run into forest. At that Buck is a wild dog.

## If Clause Type 1

style: goperson boyle  
class:

If a man takes time off work, his career will be over

If (+) simple present (+) will  
can  
might  
may

If you study hard enough, you can pass the exam

If it doesn't rain tomorrow, we will go for a picnic

If I have a free time, I will read a book today

If I haven't homework, I will early sleep tonight.

If I have a enough money, I will buy dress in the Mango at the weekend

What'll you do if the business fails?  
the a company

## DEADLY FRIEND CELL PHONE

Phone was invented by Bell and phone industry has grown since then. After that, mobile phone was invented in 1990's and it has been replacing home phone. Furthermore, new mobile phone models have been manufactured by big companies, BB, phone apple, notia. Although many people told that mobile phone was very necessary thing, I knew that mobile phones cause some problems, radiation, antisocial people, hereditary disease.  
 like

The first problem is radiation which is very harmful for human body; Radiation is manufactured from uranium and there are a lot of scientists who died because of radiation, such as Madamma Curie. In addition to these, if people want to see effects of the radiation, they might look Hiroshima and Gerdail. Thus, mobile phone is harmful for human body because it also provides radiation like uranium or controls.

Another reason <sup>of what?</sup> is asocial people who are grown in number now. Mobile phone causes people to be antisocial because people don't want to join a society when they use or play it too much. Some research show that the rate of dease and asocial people has been growing since modern mobile phone were invented. Moreover twenty five percent of the people who use new phones android, BB, etc. are addicted to these. Finally, it might be the reason of being an asocial society.

As a result / In conclusion, in what

A lot of people think that mobile phone provides some easiness for human, internet, face to face, speaking e-book etc. They are right to some extent, but mobile phones cause some hereditary diseases, which can be death, because radiation can be effective under DNA. If these effects or unproduction genes some hereditary. Many researchers showed mobile phone cause some healthy and social problems. So we must decreased the use of mobile phones health radiation? decrease

To sum up, we may have an ill society in terms of social and healthy and there are some bad effects life, uranium, social problems and hereditary problems. If Effects of mobile phones on life ~~the~~ people want or achieve, they lower the time which is spent on mobile phone.

- \* Can you relate radiation and mobile phones more clearly?
- \* There are some grammatical mistakes and also some spelling and vocabulary mistakes.
- \* In your conclusion paragraph you could talk about phones as well in that way, it will be more meaningful.
- \* It's a nice topic and you have provided very good viewpoints :)

## T1 Turkish Films Vs. Hollywood Films.

Cinema, the seventh art, has been playing an <sup>Very Good and Effective Introduction!</sup> incredible important role in all societies in the world since it was introduced. Every country is doing its best to develop its cinema industry because it is the most effective way to advertise its culture and language. Hollywood is known to be most popular cinema sector in the world while Turkish cinema sector has recently started to become known. Even though there are some similarities between Hollywood and Turkish films, there are also some differences.

You should write your topic sentence here.

To begin with, <sup>is this necessary?</sup> it is clear that there are some similarities between Turkish and Hollywood films. First of all, both types of films, more or less, have similar themes. For example, in Hollywood films romance and action are the best-selling themes. Similarly, in Turkish films we see that romance and action are the most common themes. Another similarity is that for both types of films similar advertising campaigns are carried out. To illustrate, in Turkey advertisements can be seen on newspapers, magazines and billboards as well as buses and metro. Likewise, Hollywood films are advertised on the same places and the same ways. In short, themes and advertising are two of similarities between Turkish and Hollywood films.

Despite similarities, there are also several differences between Turkish and Hollywood films. The primary difference is budget of course. Turkish producers cannot afford to invest as much as their American counterparts. For instance, Hollywood films are known to cost around 200-300 million dolar whereas Turkish films hardly cost more than 50 million dolar. The second difference is the use of technology. As the United States extensively benefit from technology in ever field of business, cinema sector is no exception. The films Star Wars, Matrix and Avatar are only some of the examples in which incredibly high technology was used. However, Turkish films can only benefit from limited computer tricks. In brief, budget and use of technology seem to be two of the differences between Turkish and Hollywood films.

All in all, there are not only similarities but also differences between Turkish and Hollywood films. I am of the opinion that Turkish cinema sector is on the rise and it will be able to compete with the rest of the world soon.

Very Good!

## Should Celtic and Glasgow Rangers Join EPL?

Unfortunately, football was to be industry and football clubs spend on a lot of money. However, some football clubs are affected from football industry as negative 50% of these clubs are English football clubs. F.A. wants to CFC and GR in the EPL for increasing league quality of economic. Although quality of 'Scottish' League will decrease, other Scottish clubs will develop, also competition will increase with CFC and GR in EPL and TV revenues will be more excessive. between?

+ Your thesis sentence is missing!

CFC and GR should join EPL. Thus, team number will be twenty-two in the EPL. Twenty-two teams mean ~~that~~ more difficult a league and more ~~firm~~ league. Because, CFC and GR have ~~of~~ good squads and they are strong teams. Depend on, competition will increase in EPL.

English Premier League is the most watched and Glasgow Rangers and Celtic have a lot of fans around the world. If GR and CFC join EPL, people will be watching who are CFC and GR fans. Also, person number will increase (who watch) EPL. Depend on, TV revenues will reach the top and these revenues will become active economic cases of English football teams.

Joining of CFC and GR may make negative effects. If CFC and GR join EPL, quality of Scottish league will decrease. However, other Scottish clubs such as Motherwell or Hibernian will be successful compared to past. Because, GR or CFC always is to be champion in Scotland. Other clubs will increase experiences as they are champions and another competition will start in Scotland. This case will note more benefits than harms for Scottish league.

To summarise, some rules are removed in football for football industry. Cases of CFC and GR are an example. Necessary changes must be done in Great Britain. Thus, Celtic and Glasgow Rangers should join English Premier League for value and quality of both leagues.

+ Your conclusion paragraph is good!

You have some grammar mistakes, but overall you used [REDACTED] some nice structures.

Before using their acronyms like CFC / GR, you should explain them.

I have a dream - Martin Luther King, Jr. On 28th August 1963.

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our 1) nation.

.....

We've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."

But we refuse to believe that the bank of 3) justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

.....

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a 3) dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created 4) equal."

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every 5) valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

.....

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this 6) happens, when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Muslims, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing:

*Free at last! Free at last!*

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN  
LANGUAGES

Teacher :  
Name : Yelda  
Surname : YELMER

Student :  
Name : [REDACTED]  
Surname : [REDACTED]  
Class : [REDACTED]  
Number : [REDACTED]

ENGLISH  
PORTFOLIO

Tongue Twisters 2 -

1. The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday.
2. Pickypeoplepick Peter PanPeanut-Butter, 'tis the peanut-butter picky people pick.
3. One-one was a race horse.  
Two-two was one too.  
One-one won one race.  
Two-two won one too.
4. Elizabeth's birthday is on the third Thursday of this month.
5. How manycookiescould a goodcookcookIf a good cook could cook cookies? A good cook could cook as much cookies as a good cook could cook cookies.
6. Mr. Tongue Twister tried to train his tongue to twist and turn, and twat, to learn the letter "T".
7. Fourfuriousfriends fought for the phone.
8. Love's a feeling you feel when you feel you're going to feel the

<b>Start</b>	lazy tembel	honest jujur	warmhearted suka menolong	<b>Go back 2</b>	<b>Personality Traits</b>	hard working	adventurous	generous	
	shy genging	well-traveled				<b>Trade places</b>			passionate +utukuh
	kind sebaik baik	talkative komunikatif	moody hujisaz						reserved ayakam
			strict siki	easygoing babacan	unreliable gawilmet	FREE Candy	stubborn inat ul	<b>Go Ahead 2</b>	
	FREE Candy	ambitious hustli	rude kabo	impatient sabar s2	Talk about someone you know that has the trait you land on. You must give an example.				
	mean siri			arrogant kibirli		<b>Go Back 1</b>	greedy ak g226	romantic	patient sabrli
	stingy siri	<b>Go Ahead 2</b>	sneaky sinsi	<b>Trade Places</b>					
	messy dajinik		grumpy hujisaz	conservative muhafazakar		rational rasyonal		cold-hearted	
	neat temiz	clumsy beceriksiz	outgoing	polite kibar		picky sewic			
						well-read	intelligent zeki	<b>END</b>	

Examples: My boyfriend is *romantic*. Last week, he took me to a movie and then a really cool café. Then we went for a walk in the park.  
My father is *stubborn*. He never changes his mind about anything.  
My best friend is *adventurous*. She likes to travel and she always tries new things

*Handwritten notes:* cooliskan, cesur, cembur, iji skanyan

**TEMA Foundation**

The foundation was founded on 11 September 1992. This foundation was established to protect natural assets. It was founded by Hayrettin Karaca and A. Nihat Gökçiyiğit.

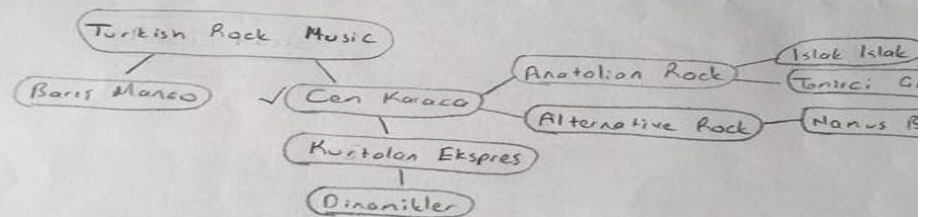
For example,

- 1- Oak Project  
The target is to create one million oak forest.
- 2- Memorial Forest  
The aim is to plant many saplings. Until this time, many saplings were planted.
- 3- Biodiversity and Landscape Planting Project  
This project occurred in ~~the~~ Bodrum / Türkiye. Has been taken under the protection of the natural assets here. And a lot of saplings were planted.
- Natural Cultural Center  
In this project reforestation <sup>was</sup> reviewed. And the landscape

### The Founder of Anatolian Rock

Cem Karaca who was born 5th April in 1945, was one of the best musician in Turkey. He was the most important singer who presented rock music to Turkish people with Turkish lyrics. He started his career at Beyoğlu Sport Club in 1962. His first group was Dinamikler. Although his father protest him he didn't give up singing. Cem Karaca stepped at the theatre by playing Hamlet in 1961. Kralların Öfkesi was the first film he actually played. It is said that he and Barış Manço were brothers but there is no tangible proof about it and it remains as a secret.

Have you ever thought about bowing to your father ?





### APPENDIX K: CURRICULUM VITAE

<b>Personal Information</b>	
Name	Yelda
Surname	ORHON
Place and Date of Birth	Fethiye – 08/06/1987
Nationality	Turkish
Contact and E-Mail Address	Pamukkale University School of Foreign Languages, Pamukkale/ DENİZLİ yyelmer@pau.edu.tr
<b>Educational Background</b>	
Primary School	Menteşeoğlu Primary School
Secondary School	Atatürk Secondary School
High School	Fethiye Super High School
University (Bachelor)	Akdeniz University, English Language Teaching, 2009
University (Master)	Pamukkale University, English Language Teaching, 2016
<b>Professional Background</b>	
2009....	Pamukkale University, School of Foreign Languages, as Instructor