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# EXPLORING EFL INSTRUCTORS' READINESS FOR PROMOTING LEARNER AUTONOMY WITH TECHNOLOGY IN TURKISH CONTEXT

**Tuba Işık**

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# TELİF HAKKI VE TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

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İngilizce Adı: Exploring EFL Instructors' Readiness for Promoting Learner Autonomy with Technology in Turkish Context

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Tez yazma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyduğumu, yararlandığım tüm kaynakları kaynak gösterme ilkelerine uygun olarak kaynakçada belirttiğimi ve bu bölümler dışındaki tüm ifadelerin şahsıma ait olduğunu beyan ederim.

Yazar Adı Soyadı: ……..

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*To my beloved father*

*İhsan TÜRKEL*

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# EXPLORING EFL INSTRUCTORS' READINESS FOR PROMOTING LEARNER AUTONOMY WITH TECHNOLOGY IN TURKISH CONTEXT

**(M.S. Thesis)**

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## ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy, defined as learners' taking control of their own learning, has been a hot topic in foreign language education because new trends in language teaching require going beyond teaching language skills and raising learners' awareness about their responsibility for their language learning. In this connection, the role of teacher in promoting learner autonomy has been the focus of numerous studies and recently some research has also focused on the development of learner autonomy using technology. However, learner autonomy research in connection with technology from the teacher perspective is yet relatively unexplored terrain. To address this gap in the literature, this study investigated the EFL instructors' readiness to promote learner autonomy with technology in the Turkish context. More specifically, the purpose was to explore to what extent the instructors help learners for the development of learner autonomy and examine their technology integration in the course of their autonomy-supportive behaviors.

This case study, which has a qualitative research design, was conducted with 11 EFL instructors working in foreign languages school at a university in Turkey. The participants, chosen with convenience sampling, had different educational backgrounds (i.e., bachelor, masters' and PhD degree) and the length of teaching experience (i.e., ranging from four to 30 years of experience). The data were collected from the instructors by means of semi-structured interviews, conducted in three sessions. The interview guide created by the researcher consisted of 22 questions. The data were analyzed following the principles of thematic analysis using NVivo 11 software and three themes emerged at the end of the

analysis: (a) autonomy behaviors, (b) technology integration and (c) problems inhibiting learner autonomy development.
The findings of the first research question showed that the EFL instructors provide learners with resource and affective support and perform a variety of autonomy-supportive behaviors such as language advising, motivating learners, promoting cooperation among learners, and supporting out-of-class learning. On the other hand, they give limited capacity support to help learners manage their own learning. Thus, the findings revealed that the instructors are not fully ready to promote learner autonomy due to some institution and learner-based problems such as crowded classes, strict curriculum requirements, teacher-centered learning culture and low learner motivation to take responsibility for learning. However, they take small steps to create an autonomy-supportive learning environment in their language classrooms. The findings of the second research question revealed that while the instructors use a range of technological tools to promote learners' autonomous out-of-class learning and guide learners on how to use these tools, most instructors integrate technology into their in-class instruction as teacher tools which prioritize teacher control. Only a few instructors use technology as student tools which give control of activities to the learners and promote learner autonomy in class. This case could possibly derive from some institution-based problems such as poor technological infrastructure and crowded classes which hampers the instructors' flexibility in teaching and push the instructors to much control the learners in the class. The study findings are important for a number of people in the language learning process. The study presents implications for in-service teachers, teacher educators, and institutions who want to support learner autonomy and autnomus langauge learners in EFL settings.

Key Words : learner autonomy, teacher autonomy-support, autonomous learning with technology, technology integration, in-service EFL teachers
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# TÜRKİYEDE İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİM GÖREVLİLERİNİN TEKNOLOJİ İLE ÖĞRENEN ÖZERKLİĞİNİ DESTEKLEMELERİ KONUSUNDAKİ HAZIRBULUNUŞLUKLARININ İNCELENMESİ

**(Yüksek Lisans Tezi)**

**Tuba Işık**

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## ÖZ

Öğrenenin, öğrenmesinin kontrolünü kendi üzerine alabilmesi olarak tanımlanan öğrenen özerkliği yabancı dil öğretiminde öne çıkan ve önem arz eden bir konudur. Çünkü yeni dil öğretimi anlayışı, öğrenenlerinin kendi öğrenme sorumluluklarını almalarını ve öğretmenlerin bu konuda öğrenci bilincini arttırmasının gerekliliğini savunmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, öğrenen özerkliğini destekleme konusunda öğretmenin rolü, birçok çalışmanın konusu olmuştur. Son zamanlarda ise bazı araştırmacılar öğrenen özerkliğinin teknoloji kullanımı ile bağlantısı üzerinde odaklanmışlardır. Fakat teknoloji ile ilişkilendirilen öğrenen özerkliği çalışma alanında öğretmenin rolü konusunda az sayıda araştırma yapıldığı görülmektedir. Literatürdeki bu eksikliği işaret etmek amacı ile bu çalışmada, Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretiminde öğretim görevlilerinin teknoloji ile öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeleri konusunda hazırbulunuşlukları incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın amacı öğretim görevlilerinin öğrenen özerkliğinin gelişimi için öğrencilerine ne derecede yardım ettiklerini ve öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemek amacı ile teknolojiyi nasıl kullandıklarını incelemektir.

Bu araştırma nitel araştırma yöntemlerinden durum çalışması ile desenlenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemi kolay ulaşılabilir örneklem yöntemi ile seçilmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini, Türkiye'deki bir üniversitenin yabancı diller yüksekokulunda çalışan 11 öğretim görevlisi oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcılar farklı öğrenim geçmişine (lisans, yüksek lisans, doktora) ve mesleki deneyim süresine (4 ve 30 yıl arası) sahiptir. Veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan ve 22 sorudan oluşan yarı-yapılandırılmış

görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde NVivo 11 programı kullanılmıştır. Veriler tematik analiz yoluyla elde edilmiş ve analiz sonucunda özerklik davranışları, teknoloji entegrasyonu ve öğrenen özerkliği gelişimini engelleyen problemler olmak üzere üç ana temaya ulaşılmıştır.
Birinci araştırma sorusundan elde edilen bulgular, öğretim görevlilerinin kaynak ve duyuşsal destek verdikleri ve birçok özerklik-destekleyici davranış sergiledikleri sonucunu göstermiştir. Bu davranışlardan bazıları dil danışmanlığı, öğrenenlerin motivasyonlarını arttırma, öğrenenler arasında dayanışmayı destekleme ve sınıf dışı öğrenmeyi desteklemektir. Diğer yandan, öğretim görevlilerinin öğrencilerine öğrenme yönetimi konusunda yeterince kapasite desteği vermedikleri sonucuna varılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlar göstermiştir ki İngilizce öğretim görevlileri bazı kurum kaynaklı (kalabalık sınıflar ve katı müfredat uygulaması) ve öğrenci kaynaklı problemler (öğretmen-merkezli öğrenme kültürü ve düşük öğrenci motivasyonu) nedeni ile öğrenen özerkliğini destekleme konusunda tam anlamıyla hazır değillerdir. Buna rağmen, sonuçlar göstermiştir ki, öğretim görevlileri sınıflarında özerklik destekleyici öğrenme ortamı oluşturmak için adımlar atmaktadır. İkinci araştırma sorusunun sonuçları, öğretim görevlilerinin, öğrencilerin sınıf dışı dil öğrenmelerini desteklemek amacıyla birçok teknolojik araç kullandıklarını ve bu araçları öğrencilerinin nasıl kullanmaları gerektiği konusunda yönlendirme yaptıklarını göstermiştir. Bununla birlikte, sınıf içi teknoloji entegrasyonuna bakıldığında, büyük bir çoğunluğun teknolojiyi öğretmen merkezli olarak kullandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Çok az sayıda öğretmenin öğrenci merkezli ve özerkliği destekleyici nitelikte teknoloji kullandığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu durum, sınıflardaki yetersiz teknolojik kapasite ve her bir öğrenciye öğrenme kontrolü vermeyi zorlaştıran kalabalık sınıfların bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmış olabileceği saptanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları birçok insan için büyük önem taşımaktadır. Bu araştırma, öğrenen özerkliğini desteklemeyi hedefleyen öğretmenler, öğretmen eğiticileri ve kurumlar için öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: öğrenen özerkliği, öğrenen özerkliğinde öğretmen desteği, teknoloji ile özerk öğrenme, teknoloji entegrasyonu,
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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| **ASR** | Automatic speech recognition |
| **CALL** | Computer-assisted language learning |
| **CAQDAS** | Qualitative data analysis software |
| **CMC** | Computer-mediated communication |
| **CRAPEL** | Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues |
| **EFL** | English as a foreign language |
| **ESP** | English for specific purposes |

# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

This study investigates the readiness of English as a foreign language (EFL) instructors to promote learner autonomy and explores their technology integration in promoting learner autonomy. To this end, this chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and the purpose and scope of the study. The chapter also provides the assumptions and the definitions of key concepts pertinent to the study.

## Background to the Study

*"The highest and best teaching is not that which makes the pupils passive recipients of other peoples' ideas (...) but that which guides and encourages the pupils in working for themselves and thinking for themselves." Quick (1890, p.421)*

The above quote goes back to the times the primary role of the teacher was to transmit knowledge and learner was considered as the passive recipient. With the advent of humanism, cognitive psychology and constructivism in the 1970s, a significant shift has taken place in the field of education corresponding to Quick's foreseeing ideas after almost a century. Active involvement of learners in their learning has become the primary concern in educational research, and it redefined the roles of teachers and learners. Thus, this shift paved the way for the introduction of a new concept to the educational research: *learner autonom*y.

The notion of learner autonomy first entered in the field of language education with the language project of Council of Europe in 1971, and it is described as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p.3). Because this concept requires the active

involvement of learner and knowing how to identify learning needs, plan, monitor and evaluate one's own learning progress, it has been identified as the key for success in language learning. In this connection, there is a consensus in the literature that learner autonomy contributes to the greater achievement in learning. For example, Little (1994, p.431) indicated that "all genuinely successful learning is in the end autonomous". Dickinson (1995, p.14) also stated that "people who take the initiative in learning learn more things than people who sit at the feet of teachers, passively waiting to be taught".

Autonomous language learners are not supposed to wait for the knowledge transmitted from an only resource, teacher, any more in today's educational and technological conditions. They can actively involve in their learning in class and get knowledge from various resources such as mobile phones, computers, interactive whiteboards, and tablets. They can also go beyond the classroom and continue to learn out-of-the classroom. In this connection, computers and mobile technologies provide learners with many opportunities in and out-of-the class for language learning and the development of learner autonomy (Chapelle, 2003; Golonka, Bowles, Frank, Richardson, & Freynik, 2014). As such, learners can have access to a variety of language learning materials which address different learning styles and learner needs. They can transfer their in-class learning to out-of-class and vice versa. They can also access to the authentic target language and online platforms to interact and communicate in the target language with the other language learners (Reinders & Hubbard, 2013). Moreover, technology provides learners with the freedom to control their learning (Figura & Jarvis, 2007). Thus, it is evident that autonomous learning can take place in and out-of-the class with the advancements in technology. However, there are several features language learners need to have to be autonomous and make use of technology for their autonomous learning. First of all, learners should be willing to take responsibility for their learning (Chan, Spratt, & Humpreys, 2002; Lai & Gu, 2011). They should have metacognitive skills to manage their learning and also have the independence to control their learning. Moreover, they need to have digital skills to manage their learning using technology. However, the literature suggests that language learners are mostly far from being autonomous, and they need the support of their teachers for the development of autonomy (Inozu, Sahinkarakas, & Yumru, 2010; Lai, Zhu, & Gong, 2014; Lai, Yeung, & Hu, 2016; Reinders & Hubbard, 2013; Wang, 2007). Given that, being a significant agent in the learning process, teachers are supposed to create an autonomy-supportive learning environment in and outside the classroom.

Considering the points above, the current understanding of language teaching has redefined the learners' and teachers' roles and extended the responsibilities of teachers. Learners need to have three components to be autonomous language learners in this technology-enhanced learning environment: willingness, learning resources and learning management skills. In line with these components, teachers are supposed to give three supports: affective, resource and capacity (Lai, 2017). Thus, teachers need to perform a variety of autonomy-supportive behaviors and also share their responsibilities with the learners. First, they need to motivate learners to take responsibility for their learning. Second, they need to provide them with learning resources and also guide them on how to find and use appropriate language materials in line with their learning needs and proficiency level. Lastly, they need to teach learners how to manage their learning by involving them in the learning process in class and giving learning training on how to manage their learning. However, it is very crucial to ask to what extent the in-service EFL teachers are ready for their new roles as autonomy-supportive teachers in this technology-enhanced learning environment.

**Statement of the Problem**

It is a fact that there is an accelerating tendency towards learner autonomy in Turkish education policy and a great amount of investment has been made so far to enhance the technological conditions of schools to provide a learner-centered education. However, as Hurd (1998) highlighted, without being autonomous, learners cannot make use of their surroundings which provide them with various learning resources and opportunities to develop their learning skills. Thus, the efforts to create better conditions may doom to fail in case of the inadequate support for learners' involvement and autonomy. In addition, Reinders and Hubbard (2013) noted that learners are most frequently "empowered without the preparation to use that power effectively" (p.17). As such, the researcher believes that those points somewhat reflect the problem in the current situation of the Turkish context. The education system intends to empower the learners and create an autonomy-supportive learning environment by providing them with better technological conditions. However, it often fails to prepare learners and teachers for the intended situation. It is evident that Turkish education system is still predominantly teacher-centered and it mostly fails to encourage learners' individuality and creativity even though learner autonomy is one of the objectives of the current education policy (Balcikanli, 2010, Cakici, 2017; Yumuk, 2002).

Considering this fact, teachers' readiness for the promotion of learner autonomy plays an important role in the creation of an autonomy-supportive learning environment. However, the conditions addressing the teachers' professional development and needs for the new situation may frequently be neglected. It is the researcher's observation that the mentioned problems are also available in the research context even though the policy of the institution is to encourage learner autonomy. It is of importance to better understand and give a picture of the current conditions of teachers by looking into their practices to promote learner autonomy in the reality of the Turkish education system. Without that, it would be a deficit to talk about the feasibility of learner autonomy in language classrooms.

**Purpose and Scope of the Study**

This study aims to explore how ready EFL instructors are to promote learner autonomy incorporating technology and to what extent they support their learners' autonomous learning with technology in and out of class. The aims will be achieved by means of qualitative data collection. The study will be guided by the following questions;

1. To what extent are EFL instructors ready to promote learner autonomy?
2. How do EFL instructors use technology in promoting learner autonomy?

In the study, learner autonomy refers to two capacities: the capacity to take control of one's own learning as the original learner autonomy definition entails and also the capacity to use technological devices for autonomous language learning. Regarding this working definition, this study investigated teachers' practices which aim to help learners to develop those two capacities in the EFL classes at tertiary level in Turkey.

**Significance of the Study**

Learner autonomy has become a buzzword in EFL research in the Turkish context. There is a large and growing body of research devoted to the learners' beliefs, perceptions and practices pertinent to learner autonomy development (e.g., Altunay, 2014; Bekleyen & Selimoğlu, 2016; Inozu et al., 2010; Karababa, Erkin, & Arık, 2010; Yıldırım, 2008). However, there is a limited number of studies focusing on the teachers who are significant social agents for the development of learner autonomy (e.g., Balcikanli,, 2010; Cakici, 2017; Doğan & Mirici, 2017; Ürün, Demir, & Akar, 2014). The majority of research focusing on teachers addresses the beliefs and perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers and

in-service teachers working at different educational levels. There are some limitations of the related learner autonomy research from the teachers' perspective, and the current study aims to contribute to the existing literature by providing an in-depth understanding of teachers' current readiness for promoting learner autonomy. First, the previous research revealed that EFL teachers perceive learner autonomy positively and they desire the development of learner autonomy during formal education. However, when asked how feasible it is to involve learners in their learning, teachers expressed their concern about the feasibility of learner involvement. The studies attempted to explain the reason of the gap between the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy and referred to various constraints inhibiting the development of learner autonomy in schools. As such, the majority focused on the constraints instead of providing more insights into the EFL teachers' real-life practices. Given that, the current study aims to give an in-depth understanding of the dimensions of the learner involvement which teachers perceive feasible and support in their teaching. Thus, the study attempts to add a new understanding to the growing, but still limited, literature. Second, the previous studies are mainly based on surveys and questionnaires giving teachers little room to express themselves. However, the study aims to give teachers more space to express themselves by adopting a qualitative research design. Third, the research context adds on the significance of this study. Limited research (e.g., Balcikanli, 2007; Doğan & Mirici, 2017), has been conducted to explore the in-service EFL teachers' practices related to learner autonomy at tertiary level in the Turkish context. Moreover, the majority of the previous research in this context mostly focuses on pre-service EFL teachers who have not had any teaching experience, yet (Balcikanli, 2010; Cakici, 2017). Fourth, the scope of the current study makes this study significant for the literature. Very little learner autonomy research in Turkish context does provide direct connections of learner autonomy with technology (e.g., Çelik, Arkın, & Sabriler, 2012; Mutlu & Eroz-Tuga, 2013). This study incorporates the technology integration of teachers for the development of learner autonomy in addition to their autonomy-supportive behaviors.

**Assumptions**

In this study, it is assumed that all participants have given sincere answers to the interview questions and the interview questions measure the instructors' readiness for promoting learner autonomy using technology and their actual technology use in and out of class.

**Definitions of Some Key Concepts**

Learner Autonomy: The term is defined as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p.3).

Autonomous Learners: The term refers to the learners who are willing to take responsibility of their learning, aware of the objectives of their learning, capable of setting their learning goals, plan and execute the learning activities, and monitor and evaluate their learning progress (Little, 2003a)

Promoting Learner Autonomy: The term refers to educational initiatives designed to stimulate or support the development of autonomy among learners (Benson, 2011, p.124)

Autonomous Language Learning with Technology: The term refers to out-of-class language learning activities with technology such as “homework, self-access work, extra-curricular activities and use of self-instructional materials” (Benson, 2011, p.139).

# CHAPTER 2

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses the related literature to provide a conceptual framework for two core concepts of the current study: autonomy and technology. In the first section, the origins of autonomy, its place in language education, and its theoretical framework are explained in detail. In the second section, the role of technology in language education and its relationship with learner autonomy are presented. Later, the role of teacher support in promoting learner autonomy with technology is discussed. Lastly, several related research studies in the foreign and Turkish literature are discussed to depict a clear picture of the case leading the current study.

## Autonomy

### The origins of autonomy

Today, autonomy is the subject of a variety of domains such as politics, biology, medicine, philosophy, psychology, and education. However, the notion of autonomy has a long history, and it drew the interest of several significant philosophers in moral and political philosophy such as Immanuel Kant, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Georg Wilhelm Frederick Hegel and Karl Marx. Even though it is a commonly used term, the original version of the term comes from a Greek compound word, autonomos: autos (self) and nomos (rule or law). This term was first used for the government system of ancient Greek city-states where the citizens were governed by the laws they decided on (Farsides, 1994). In a similar vein, Jean-Jacques Rousseau published his eminent book 'The Social Contract' in 1972 and referred to autonomy as moral freedom which entails "obedience to self-prescribed law" (Neuhouser, 2011, p.481). In this freedom, individuals are subject to these self-prescribed laws and Rousseau highlighted the need for democracy to have freedom rather

than enslavement (Neuhouser, 2011). In its political sense, autonomy entails self-regulation which requires freedom and control over the decisions pertaining to a group of people. From an individualistic view, Immanuel Kant also referred to autonomy as the freedom and responsibility of a person who is not subject to the others' will (Wolff, 1970). In other words, autonomous behavior entails the individuals' actions according to their own preferences, interests, and capabilities without the external interferences (Wehmeyer, Kelchner, & Richards, 1996). In moral and political philosophy, autonomy is also used in a broad sense for the description of such terms as sovereignty, freedom of will, dignity, individuality, the absence of external causation and knowledge of one's interests (Drawkin, 1988, p.6). All these different views and descriptions indicated the common idea that autonomy is an ideal state which requires freedom, control, responsibility, and self-regulation of an individual or a system.

### Learner autonomy in education

Autonomy refers to freedom, control, responsibility, and self-regulation in moral and political philosophy. In a similar vein, the notion of autonomy affected the educational domain to a great extent. The traces of autonomy in education can be found in several educational theories. In the humanistic theory of learning, Carl Rogers (1983, p.120) identified an educated man as the person who "has learned how to learn; (…) has learned how to adapt and change; (…) has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security." He also added that education should rely on the process of learning rather than the transmission of static knowledge. Another educational theorist, Jerome Bruner who contributed to cognitive learning theory, underlined the importance of learners' self-sufficiency and being independent from the teacher. Bruner (1966) stated that;

> …instruction is the provisional state that has as its object to make the learner or problem solver self-sufficient. ... The tutor must correct the learner in a fashion that eventually makes it possible for the learner to take over corrective function himself (p.53).

Emphasizing the individuals' problem-solving abilities from the pragmatism perspective, John Dewey also considered schools as a place in which learners get prepared for the social and political life out of the school. He proposed the idea that education should deal with the solutions of the current problems of the society and learning tasks should be based on learners' current needs rather than teachers' preferences (Benson, 2011). Malcolm

Knowles, one of the leading figures in adult education, also regarded autonomy, in other words, self-directed learning, as a way of survival in life and indicated that;

> The "why" of self-directed learning is survival—your own survival as an individual, and also the survival of the human race. Clearly, we are not talking here about something that would be nice or desirable….We are talking about a basic human competence—the ability to learn on one's own—that has suddenly become a prerequisite for living in this new world (Knowles, 1975, pp.16-17).

All these viewpoints have served as a basis for the presence of learner autonomy in the education domain. In this sense, autonomy is regarded as an ideal for the future of the society. Given that, it is crucial to involve learners in their own learning by giving freedom and responsibility and teachers should create learning environments which guide learners on how to learn independently.

### Learner autonomy in EFL setting

The notion of learner autonomy has become a buzzword in the field of language education for almost 50 years. Until the 1970s, autonomy did not appear much in this field. However, the researchers started making connections between autonomy and language teaching to decide the learner's role in language learning process with the emergence of learner-focused approaches to the classroom teaching (e.g., communicative language teaching) in which "the learner is in control of the lesson content and the learning process" (Fotos & Browne, 2004, p.7). Additionally, such factors as the interest in minority rights, political developments after the Second World War and technological advancements also affected the way of teaching, and these factors led The Council of Europe to concentrate on individual needs of the migrants and adult education (Gremmo & Riley, 1995). By this way, the history of autonomy in language education started with the language project of Council of Europe in 1971, named Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues (CRAPEL). This project focused on the self-directed learning of adults by providing them with a wide range collection of language materials via self-access centers. This project led to the seminal report of Henri Holec, "Autonomy and Language Learning", in the late seventies. According to Holec (1981, p.3), autonomy is "the ability to take charge of one's own learning." In the definition, Holec addressed the learners' ability as the central point of learner autonomy and focused on such components of learning management as planning which includes determining the objectives and defining the content of learning, material selection, monitoring and evaluation of the learning process.

### *Definitions and descriptions of learner autonomy*

Holec's (1981) definition has remained the most oft-cited definition of learner autonomy in language education research. However, as Little (1990, p.7) argued, the construct of autonomy is "not a single, easily describable behavior." A number of researchers (e.g., David Little, Phil Benson, William Littlewood, and Ernesto Macaro) have attempted to describe what autonomy entails, given that a clear description of the concept is significant to find effective ways to promote learner autonomy. Those attempts have contributed to the investigation of different aspects of autonomy including capacity, situation, and social aspects with variations of the autonomy definition.

Emphasizing capacity aspect of autonomy, Benson (2011) explained the notion of autonomy as "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" and replaced "ability" in Holec's definition with the term "capacity". Benson argued that capacity can be developed contrary to ability because ability refers to the personal attributes of a learner. Only if the learner has this ability naturally, he can be an autonomous learner, but capacity to take control over learning entails not only ability but also other components like desire and freedom (Huang & Benson, 2003). Thus, learners can acquire this capacity in the learning process through time (Benson, 2006).

According to Little (1991), learner autonomy is "a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning" (1991, p.4). In his definition, Little (1991) underlined the cognitive and psychological dimensions of autonomy in addition to Holec's learning management perspective. The capacity aspect of autonomy here refers to a set of cognitive and metacognitive abilities pertinent to the learning management. What is more, as a result of the development of cognitive and metacognitive capacities, learners' social-interactive capacity also gets developed (Little, 1999).

Providing a different autonomy definition, Dickinson (1987) emphasized the situation aspect of autonomy. She explained autonomy as "the situation in which learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p.11). More specifically, Benson (2011, p.60) stated that in this situation, learners need to have "control over the learning content" which requires situational freedom, as a complementary dimension to Holec's and Little's definitions, which emphasize learning management and cognitive processes respectively. Then, the

situational freedom requires a learning situation which empowers learners' control over all the decisions related to individuals' learning.

Dam and her colleagues (1990) moved the definition one step further by adding a new aspect, the social aspect. They emphasized the independent and interdependent features of autonomy and extended the definition as "a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a social, responsible person" (p.102). While some advocates of autonomy regard autonomy as an individual attribute, other researchers (e.g., Dam, Eriksson, Little, Millander, & Trebbi, 1990; Little, 1996; Murray, 2014) put more emphasis on the social aspect of autonomy. With reference to Vygotsky's social-constructivist perspective, Little (1996) stated that individuals' metacognitive capacity, which is essential for learner autonomy, "depends on the development and internalization of a capacity to participate fully and critically in social interactions" (p.211). Therefore, learners need to involve in social interaction to develop autonomy even if they need to be independent in their learning. This kind of independence does not hinder the need for interdependent relationships of each learner for their autonomy.

### *Levels and degrees of autonomy*

Though learner autonomy is a multifaceted construct which lacks a concrete explanation, there is a consensus in the existing literature that there are different levels and degrees of autonomy (Benson, 2006). Several researchers (Littlewood, 1996; Macaro, 1997; Nunan, 1997) have attempted to explain its degrees supporting the idea that autonomy is not an all or nothing concept. One of them, Nunan (1997) argued that learners should develop some degree of autonomy to become successful language learners and they need help to become independent in their learning due to the fact that "few learners come to the task of language learning as autonomous learners" (p.202). To this end, Nunan (1997, p.195) proposes a scheme of five levels of encouraging learner autonomy; awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence respectively. In the first level, learners are made familiar with the learning goals and content of the learning. They are also made aware of learning strategies related to the tasks assigned. In the second phase, learners actively get involved in the learning process by identifying their learning goals and selecting the content of learning from alternatives in line with their goals. After that, they modify the goals, content, and tasks up to their preferences and needs in the process of learning. In the next step, learners are encouraged to create their own learning goals and their own learning

tasks. Lastly, in transcendence level, learners are expected to link classroom learning with the life outside the school to become fully autonomous learners.

Similar to Nunan's levels of encouraging learner autonomy, Littlewood (1996) distinguished levels of autonomy from a more general point of view referring autonomy as "a capacity for thinking and acting independently that may occur in any kind of situation" (p.428). The capacity for independent choices of individuals in thinking and acting differ within various hierarchical levels ranging from low-level choices "which control specific operations" to high-level ones controlling "the overall activity" (p.439). These levels include decision making for communicative and language learning purposes, shaping individuals' own learning environment and taking the initiative for every step of their learning, and using the target language independently, which are aggregated under three categories; autonomy as a communicator, autonomy as a learner and autonomy as a person. Littlewood (1999) further made a further distinction between proactive and reactive autonomy by emphasizing the important places of both autonomy types up to their context. Proactive autonomy mostly finds its place in the Western context, and it is related to the learners' ability to take charge of their learning by taking all the initiatives and to create their personal agenda for learning. On the other hand, reactive autonomy is most suitable with non-western cultures and refers to the autonomy behaviors in which direction of learning is initiated by someone else. In reactive autonomy, the learners are able to choose their materials and organize their learning for a directed learning goal. In this sense, reactive autonomy can be regarded as an initial step to develop proactive autonomy.

Macaro (1997), who states that each learner has either low or high level of autonomy, also divided autonomy into three stages to find out how the abilities for autonomous behavior can be developed; autonomy of language competence, autonomy of language learning competence and autonomy of choice and action (pp.170-172). Autonomy of language competence entails the use of target language to communicate independently which requires the competence of the target language rule system. Autonomy as language learning competence refers to the ability for transferring the knowledge of language learning skills to different learning situations. Lastly, autonomy of choice and action means the learner involvement in their learning process in which learners get the opportunity to identify their needs and learning objectives, to select learning materials, and to decide on their learning styles.

These three models signify the development of learner autonomy from low to high levels of autonomy. As Candy (1991) stated, the development of autonomy requires a process in which the individual tries to become a fully autonomous learner, which is not necessarily possible. These models also emphasize the pedagogical interventions and autonomy-supportive environments for the development of learner autonomy. It is suggested that autonomy should be fostered consciously and systematically by involving learners in their learning management and taking consideration of technical, psychological, political and social dimensions of autonomy (Lai, 2017).

### *Versions of learner autonomy*

Benson (1997, pp.19-25) put forward the idea of versions of autonomy, and proposed three versions of learner autonomy; technical, psychological and political. In the technical version, autonomy is defined as the ability to take charge of the learning outside the school without the help of a teacher and equipping learners with learning management skills is the main concern. In psychological version, autonomy is seen as "the internal psychological capacity to self-direct one's own learning" (p.19). Lastly, in political version, the concept is defined as "the control over the processes and content of learning" (p.19), and how to achieve this goal in the main issue. Benson (2006) related these versions to the three dimensions constituting the description of autonomy; technical to learning management ability, psychological to cognitive processes and political to the control over learning content.

Additional to these versions, Oxford (2003) proposed the sociocultural version of autonomy which focuses on "the development of human capacity via interaction" (p.85). Oxford divided this version into two categories: Sociocultural I and Sociocultural II. Sociocultural I version takes Vygotsky's social constructivist perspective as the basis, and sociocultural context is significant for this version of autonomy in two ways. In the first perspective, learning takes place in a particular context which is "a social and cultural setting populated by specific individuals at a given historical time" (p.86), that of situated learning. In the second perspective, context also involves "a particular kind of relationship, that of mediated learning" (p.86). This kind of relationship, mediation, requires dynamic cooperation between the learner and more capable others (i.e., teachers, parents, and peers) and mediation helps learners for their cognitive development through Zone of Proximal Development which will be explained in detail later. Sociocultural II involves mediated

learning through community practice. It focuses on community participation of the individuals. The context here involves the community of practice, the relationship between the newcomer and the old-timer, and the social and cultural environment. Overall, both categories address situated, mediated and meaningful learning in which a sense of agency is developed. Motivation and learning strategies also play an important role in each category.

When all taken into consideration, it is evident that the definition of autonomy has many variations and involves different aspects, dimensions, levels, and versions. In line with the above literature, Sinclair (2000) propounded a description of autonomy that summarizes all aspects of autonomy, and described the concept by explaining its characteristics. First of all, autonomy involves a capacity of and willingness to take responsibility for the learning. There are levels of autonomy which are unstable and variable. Autonomy can also be considered as a continuum, and complete autonomy is idealistic. Furthermore, autonomy involves freedom on behalf of the learner and the learner needs to be aware of the language learning process. Autonomy should be encouraged and promoted which can be done in- and out-of-the class. Lastly, autonomy has individual, social, psychological and political dimensions.

## Theoretical framework

### *Constructivism and learner autonomy*

Constructivism is a philosophical theory which has been transferred to the field of psychology and education. Constructivism in the field of education derived from the work of a number of educational psychologists such as Jean Piaget (1973), John Dewey (1916), George A. Kelly (1963), and Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1978). Each of the theorists draws attention to learners' active involvement in their learning and to the construction of knowledge based on the learners' previous knowledge (Huang, 2002). According to Gray (1997),

> …knowledge isn't a thing that can be simply given by the teacher at the front of the room to students in their desks. Rather, knowledge is constructed by learners through an active, mental process of development; learners are the builders and creators of meaning and knowledge (p.2).

In the constructivist theory, "knowledge and truth are constructed by people and do not exist outside the human mind" (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991, p.9). In other words, knowledge is not taught by a teacher but constructed by the learners' mental processes.

Constructivist learning approaches are aggregated under two perspectives: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism (Kalina & Powell, 2009). Cognitive constructivism is mainly based on Piaget's (1978) developmental psychology and Kelly's (1963) personal construct. Cognitive constructivists identify learning as an intrapersonal process in which learner constructs knowledge individually, and they assert that "knowledge is not directly transmittable from person to person, but rather is individually and idiosyncratically constructed or discovered" (Liu & Mathews, 2005, p.387). On the other hand, social constructivism is stemmed from Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective and Zone of Proximal Development. In this perspective, social interaction and learning context directly influence the learners' knowledge construction (Liu & Mathews, 2005).

From cognitive learning viewpoint, Piaget's cognitive constructivism is grounded in his developmental psychology of children and Piaget (1973) regarded learning as discovery and stated;

> To understand is to discover, or reconstruct by rediscovery, and such conditions must be complied with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition. (p.20)

Piaget's theory involves the learners into their learning cognitively by discovering, constructing and reconstructing the knowledge. In this process of learning, the learner is an active participant instead of being the passive recipient (Ginn, 1995). Piaget (1977, as cited in Gray, 1997) explains the cognitive construction of knowledge, which is learning. Firstly, the learner encounters a new situation that conflicts with the current mind and an imbalance/disequilibrium occurs. Then, the mind tries to associate the new knowledge with the previous one by assimilation. When it is not possible, the brain accommodates the new knowledge by restructuring the existing knowledge.

Similar to Piaget's theory, Kelly's (1963) personal construct theory proposes that individuals perceive the world and construct their knowledge based on their understanding and previous experiences. In other words, the constructs are unique to each individual due to the fact that the constructs are created by the individual's own existing experiences or knowledge. In terms of learner autonomy, this means that learners' assumptions, values, learning styles may differ from each other and that is the reason why learners should be the major focus in classroom teaching. Moreover, learners' awareness about their own personal construct system, "the assumptions, values, and prejudices which determine their

classroom behavior" is of importance to control their own learning process (Little, 1991, p.22).

Cognitive constructivism, in terms of learner autonomy, suggests that learners should be involved in their learning process actively and individually. Learning is an intrapersonal construction of knowledge which requires discovery rather than transmission of a set of information and skills. Furthermore, learning should be learner-centered and unique to every learner, not conflicting with learners' personal construct.

Contrary to cognitive constructivism, which focuses on individualistic learning, Vygotsky's social constructivism, also named sociocultural theory, highlights the need for social interaction of learners with more capable others for their cognitive development. According to Vygotsky's developmental psychology, learners construct their knowledge based on their previous experiences as in the case of individualists but additionally through social interaction (Tam, 2000). This view is made explicit in the idea of "Zone of Proximal Development" which is explained as in the following excerpt;

> ... the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable others" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86).

This explanation puts forward three dynamics in the learning process. According to Little, Ridley, and Ushioda (2002), these are as follows: what a learner can learn is limited to what one already knows, social interaction is needed for learning, and the ultimate goal of learning is independent problem solving, that is learner autonomy. Vygotsky's view emphasizes the significant place of social interaction in the construction of knowledge and this case serves as a basis for the importance of collaboration or group work in the development of language learner autonomy (Benson, 2011). As Kao (2010) stated, that is because language learning is not solely the acquisition of linguistic rules, but it requires a socially mediated language learning environment to use language for communicative purposes.

Constructivism and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory propose that successful learning is achieved only if the learners are active participants cognitively and socially. Learning is the construction of knowledge by the learner himself, and the learner should be aware of his capacity to take control of this learning process.

### *Critical theory and learner autonomy*

According to critical theory, knowledge is not acquired; rather it is constructed by the learner oneself as in the constructivist approaches (Benson & Voller, (1997). This theory also underlines the importance of social context with its constraints in language learning process and asserts that knowledge is subjectively shaped by the ideology and interests of a particular social group (Benson, 1997). If the learners are aware of the social context their learning takes place and its constraints, they become more independent, active and autonomous in their learning (Thanasoulas, 2000).

### *Humanistic approach and learner autonomy*

Humanism in education is derived from the work of the prominent psychologist Carl Rogers (1961). Rogers' humanistic psychology does not mainly focus on the cognitive processes of learning but the affective and social nature of learning, which has common points with Vygotsky's social constructivism (Brown, 2007). The human beings are treated as whole persons with their emotional, cognitive and physical being, which is the core idea of humanism.

In humanistic pedagogy, learners' freedom and dignity are valued on the contrary with the educational systems in which what learners are taught is prescribed and limited. The focus is on learning and knowing how to learn rather than being taught. So, learners are supposed to discover the facts and principles on their own in a non-threatening learning environment (Rogers, 1961). The goal of education is facilitating learning, and the teachers take the role of the facilitator by establishing an interpersonal relationship with learners and by creating a learning context in which learners can construct their knowledge in interaction with their teachers and peers (Brown, 2007). According to this approach, if a suitable learning environment is created, any human being can learn whatever he needs. As can be related with learner autonomy, humanistic approaches focus on learner-centered classrooms where learners get engaged in the discovery of knowledge, negotiate their learning outcomes with others and link their learning in class with the reality outside the classroom.

### *Experiential learning and learner autonomy*

Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), has been developed by David Kolb based on the experiential work of John Dewey's philosophical pragmatism, Kurt Lewin's social psychology, and Jean Piaget's cognitive-developmental genetic epistemology. In the theoretical frame, learning is defined as "the processes whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p.41) and learning experiences play a significant role (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2001). However, experiences need to be processed consciously through reflection because knowledge is created in a cyclical process which comprises of "immediate experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization and action" (Kohonen, 2007, p.2). In this learning, reflection links the experience and conceptualization and it is the crucial element for the learning process.

In line with the idea of learner autonomy, this theory emphasizes learners' active engagement in meaningful learning as a whole person emotionally, intellectually and physically. Learners are in touch actively and reflectively with what they study instead of only watching, reading, listening or thinking about it (Kohonen, 2001). Experiential learning theory contributes to the development of learner autonomy by raising learners' awareness about the learning processes and engaging learners in their own learning (Benson, 2011).

## Promoting learner autonomy

Promoting learner autonomy has become an ultimate goal of language education in today's learner-centered classrooms. It is generally believed that it is the teachers' responsibility to promote learner autonomy. Therefore, autonomy researchers keep working on the effective ways to enhance learner autonomy, and a number of prominent figures in the field of learner autonomy have proposed different inclusive models, approaches, and frameworks to create a guideline for teachers who desire to promote learner autonomy. Among these guidelines, Nunan's (1997) model of autonomy levels, Benson's (2001) approaches and Reinders' (2010) pedagogical framework stand out.

One of the earliest guidelines for promoting learning autonomy was proposed by Nunan (1997). In his model, Nunan introduces five levels of encouraging autonomous learning development: awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence (p.195). The first level, awareness, aims to help learners become aware of pedagogical goals and

content of learning materials. Learners are also made aware of their preferences about learning styles and strategies. In the second phase, learners are encouraged to make decisions on their learning goals among a number of alternatives. After this stage, learners move to intervention level, they are supported to modify and adapt tasks with the skills they acquired through awareness and involvement level. After learning how to make modifications for their learning, they are encouraged to take more responsibility for creating their own learning goals, content and tasks to be accomplished. In the final stage, learners move their formal learning experiences beyond the classroom and make connections between formal and informal learning. Considering these five levels of autonomous language learning, teachers can help the learners in step by step procedure.

Another important guide in the literature is the approaches of Benson (2001). Benson proposes six approaches to promote learner autonomy: "resource-based, technology-based, learner-based, classroom-based, curriculum-based and teacher-based approaches" (p.124). The first two approaches highlight the autonomous learning with independently chosen language learning resources and educational technologies. Resource-based approaches focus on the learners' independent interaction with learning resources via self-access centers, through distance, tandem and out-of-class learning. Choosing appropriate resources is of importance in this approach for the development of learner autonomy and also material selection requires a degree of learner autonomy. Similarly, technology-based approaches focus on learners' technology use. Technology provides many opportunities for autonomous language learners via computer-assisted language learning (CALL) materials and internet. Using those opportunities effectively, the learners are supposed to control their own learning. Unlike the first two approaches, learner-based approaches underline the learners' own development by giving the locus of control to the learners. The focus of this approach is mainly on the learners' behavioral and psychological development. For this reason, learners are trained through explicit strategy training to take control of their own learning. Classroom-based approaches involve learners into the decisions pertinent to classroom teaching and give the responsibility of planning and evaluating. Similarly, curriculum-based approaches involve learner control over the curriculum as a whole. In line with this purpose, the process syllabus is used to involve learners in the decisions related to the content and the planning of learning processes. The last approach emphasizes the teachers' roles and the teachers' professional development in promoting learner autonomy. In this approach, teachers are expected to create an autonomy-supportive

environment helping learners to exercise the skills required for learner autonomy. All in all, it is wise to take these approaches as a whole model because each approach is a way of promoting learner autonomy from different perspectives and they use different methods, ways, and resources for the same aim.

One of the latest and oft-cited guidelines for teachers focusing on the development of learner autonomy is Reinders' (2010) pedagogical framework. The framework suggests a support mechanism for the development of learner autonomy starting with the identification of the learner needs and ending with the evaluation of the learning process. Reinders identifies this support mechanism as a whole cycle and underlines the continuity of this cycle. According to this framework, learners need to find out their learning needs in the first phase, and this can be managed with a need analysis. Setting goals in line with those needs is the second phase, and there should be a collaborative work between the learner and the teacher to decide on the curriculum. The third phase, planning, requires learner involvement into the decision making on what, how, and when to learn. The fourth phase, selecting the resources, also involves learners' action for the preparation and selection of the learning materials. Selecting learning strategies are also important, and teachers can give explicit strategy training, model and practice the strategies in their instruction. The fifth phase is practice. Teachers should give freedom and support to make learners find ways to link classroom learning with the life outside the classroom in this phase. As the last phase, monitoring, teachers should use learning diaries and logs to make reflections on the progress. In addition to these tools, some alternative assessment tools such as European Language Portfolio, self-assessment worksheets can be used for the reflection of the student development (Little, Ridley, & Ushioda, 2002; Reinders, 2010).

Reinders (2010) also indicated some programs and structures to promote learner autonomy which can also be incorporated into teachers' classroom teaching: learner training, strategy instruction, self-access, language advising and special tools. The first approach, learner training, refers to special courses to develop learner autonomy skills and to raise learners' awareness about the importance of learning independently. These courses also offer strategy instruction and this instruction can be linked to the classroom teaching. Self-access centers are another opportunity for the development of learner autonomy, and teachers can do their classes in there or guide learners to study out-of-the class in self-access centers. Many self-access centers offer language advising and on the other hand that can be managed through the teacher-learner meetings about the needs and progress of the

learners. In language advising sessions, teacher necessarily provides feedback, recommends language resources and help learners manage their autonomous learning. Lastly, teachers can use and offer some special tools created specifically for developing learner autonomy such as online learning environments, e-portfolios, and tandem learning programs.

Taking these different guidelines into consideration, it seems clear that all of them propose common ideas for the development of learner autonomy. Learners' metacognitive and cognitive awareness about the learning processes is very important and for enhancing learner awareness, learners should be trained about how to manage and control their learning. Learner involvement in the planning, material selection, monitoring and evaluation phases is also significant in promoting learner autonomy. Besides, learners and teachers work in collaboration and take different roles and responsibilities for the development of learner autonomy.

### *Learner roles in learner autonomy*

According to Holec (1988, as cited in Huang & Benson, 2013), autonomous learners have the ability, willingness, and freedom which are specialized as the components of capacity in autonomous learning. Firstly, the ability refers to metacognitive (i.e., learning management skills such as planning, monitoring and evaluating) and metalinguistic skills (i.e., the knowledge of the target language to control the learning). Learners need to have these skills and be aware of their responsibility to manage their learning (Little, 1995). Thus, they should create a personal agenda "which sets up directions in the planning, pacing, monitoring, and evaluation of the learning process" (Chan, 2000, p.75). Secondly, learner willingness plays a significant role in the development of learner autonomy and autonomous learner should be motivated intrinsically or instrumentally to take responsibility for their learning (Breen & Mann, 1997). In other words, the learners should have a desire or willingness to take the initiative for their own learning. Lastly, Cotterall (1995a) suggests that learners' independence is a key indicator of the learners' readiness for learner autonomy. An autonomous learner can act independently despite such obstacles as their "educational background, cultural norms and prior experiences" (p.200). The learners need to be permitted to act independently by the significant agents in this process like teachers and have convenient learning situations in which learners have a degree of independence to control their learning (Huang & Benson, 2013).

Benson (2011) also highlighted the importance of 'taking control' rather than 'taking charge' (i.e., responsibility) in Holec's autonomy definition for the development of learner autonomy and also proposed three types of control autonomous learners should have over their learning: control over learning management, cognitive processes and learning content. While control over learning management refers to observable behaviors which include the decision of 'when', 'where' and 'how' one learns, cognitive processes are more related to the cognitive competences or psychology of learning behind these behaviors. Control over cognitive processes involves learner' attention to linguistic input, the exercise of reflection and metacognitive knowledge. Furthermore, control over learning content is related to 'what' and 'why' to learn, which implies the learners' independence in the choice of learning content according to their learning objectives.

A variety of studies have also revealed different characteristics of autonomous learners and their roles in the autonomous learning. For example, Wenden (1991) underlined the learner confidence for the development of learner autonomy. Cotterall (1995a) asserted that autonomous learners are confident and have positive beliefs about their capabilities to self-direct their learning independent of a teacher. Cotterall (1995b) also stated that autonomous learners have the ability to self-monitor their learning progress and to assess the quality of their learning. Another study by Ho and Crookall (1995) further added that autonomous learners should have time management skills and the ability to deal with the stress and negative affective factors. Additionally, Chan (2001) identified some characteristics of autonomous language learners and showed that autonomous learners are motivated, goal-oriented, having an inquisitive mind, well-organized, hardworking, curious about languages, active, taking advantage of opportunities to learn better and flexible. Moreover, Breen and Mann (1997, pp.134-136) provided a long list of what being an autonomous learner means and which characteristics they have. First of all, autonomous learners are willing to learn and take responsibility for their learning. They use the assessment as a source of feedback, and they have the capacity to reflect on their learning progress. They also have the ability to make decisions about what, when, how, and with what resources to learn. They can adapt to the changes easily during their learning process, and as a result of their self-monitoring, they also make changes accordingly in their learning styles and learning materials. The success of autonomous learners is not limited to the assessment and their actions in the formal learning, but they can go beyond the classroom. Additionally, autonomous learners are independent and have the locus of

control instead of totally depending on teachers' control. They are also able to create their own learning ecology according to their needs, interests and learning styles. Last but not least, they make use of the collaboration with their peers and teachers to be more successful.

### *Teacher roles to promote learner autonomy*

In a traditional teacher-centered classroom, the teacher is the authority and the only person who is responsible for teaching, monitoring, evaluating the learners and all classroom management issues. On the other hand, in a learner-centered and autonomy-supportive classroom, the teacher role is supposed to shift from authoritarian and transmitter of knowledge to a facilitating position (Hedge, 2000). In an autonomy-supportive classroom, a number of roles have been assigned to the teachers who have the desire to promote learner autonomy. Dam (2008) stated that the teachers in an autonomy-supportive environment should take the role of a facilitator and a consultant. Little (2004) identified the role of the teachers as advisors, managers, and observers. Similarly, Voller (1997) proposed that the teachers should act as a facilitator, a counselor and a resource person in an autonomy-supportive classroom. Fumin and Li (2012) described the autonomy-supportive teachers as study guides, classroom organizers, resource facilitators and learning regulators.

A number of studies have revealed that most language learners are already accustomed to more traditional teacher-centered education and perceive the teachers as the authority. Therefore, while they feel the responsibility in some areas, they are not totally ready for taking control of their own learning, yet (Chan et al., 2002; Farahani, 2014; Yıldırım, 2005; Yumuk, 2002). Facing a similar problem, Inozu (2011) found out that teachers failed to promote learner autonomy because the learners were not ready for taking control of their own learning. Addressing this possible problem in the development of autonomy, Breen and Mann (1997) suggested that the autonomy-supportive teachers should be patient and persistent to keep sharing responsibilities with the learner by taking learner differences into account. Learners can differ in terms of the autonomy levels, and teachers should not turn back to their authority role, which is the most comfortable option. Similarly, Yıldırım (2012) found that learners can show resistance to sudden changes in their control level and they may not be ready for this situation. For that reason, there should be a gradual

responsibility shift from the teacher to the learner by giving small responsibilities to the learner.

In autonomy-supportive classrooms, sharing responsibilities is of great importance (Chan, 2003; Dam, 1995; Kessler, 2009; Lamb, 2011; Little, 2007). Little (1995) and Lamb (2011) proposed that supporting learners' control over their learning encourages the development of learner autonomy and teachers should give a degree of control to the learners. They can manage this by involving them in decision making on such decisions as the material, activity and topic selection, the objectives of the course, classroom management, selection of textbooks, the frequency and amount of homework (Balcikanli, 2010; Borg & Al-Busadi, 2012; Sakai, Takagi, & Chu, 2010; Yıldırım, 2012). Another important responsibility of the autonomy-supportive teachers is to promote learners' metacognitive and cognitive awareness about the new autonomous language learning experience through learner training (Lamb, 2011; Reinders & Hubbard, 2013). Teachers should guide learners about how to learn, how to plan their learning process, and what learning resources to choose. Moreover, autonomy-supportive teachers support learners' capacity for the self-assessment and reflection (Chan, 2003; Reinders, 2010). Reflection is a good way of monitoring and evaluating the learning progress, and teachers should encourage reflection for the development of learner autonomy (Fisher, 2007). Learners can be encouraged to make use of several ways of reflection and self-assessment such as portfolios, learner diaries or logs and evaluation sheets (Balcikanli,2010; Thanasolous, 2000). Besides these responsibilities, teachers could also encourage learners' out-of-class learning and strengthen the link between in-class and out-of-class learning to help learners go beyond the classroom (Toogood & Pemberton, 2002)

Learners' perceptions of their role in their learning and their feelings, values, and dispositions towards their capacities is a significant determinant of their autonomy. Thus, it is essential for teachers to have a good relationship with the learners and motivate them for the management of their learning (Spratt, Humprheys, & Chan, 2002). They are also supposed to stimulate learners' interest to learn languages autonomously (Yıldırım, 2008). What is more, supporting learners' self-confidence, one of the key elements in learner autonomy, is also essential to help learners realize their own potential (Breen & Mann, 1997).

To conclude, the literature suggests that teachers are the key people enhancing learner autonomy and take different roles as facilitator, guide, advisor, and resource facilitator.

They also have some responsibilities to help learners exercise autonomy in their formal learning as a preparation for their learning beyond the classroom.

## Technology

### Technology and language teaching

Technology has always been identified as a potential for language learning due to such opportunities as providing enhanced language input, interaction with humans and computers, and also help for linguistic production (Chapelle, 2003). In other words, online technologies can be used as language learning environments which provide rich language learning materials (Golonka et al., 2014); face-to-face interaction with native speakers thanks to mobile technologies (Mullen, Apply, & Shanklin, 2009); and language advising through online learning systems (Reinders & Lazaro, 2007). Inevitably, the use of computers and its associated applications (i.e., internet, mobile applications, web tools) has a promising value for language learning and teaching. However, before examining the benefits and potentials of technology for language education in detail, it is wise to explain the brief history of the use of computers and its related applications in language teaching.

#### *The brief history of technology in language education*

The term 'Computer-Assisted Language Learning' (CALL) was agreed at TESOL convention in 1983 to describe the language learning through computer programs specifically designed for or adapted to language learning (Chapelle, 2001, p.3). CALL refers to "any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language" (Beatty, 2010, p.7). Even though there are many versions of this term like Computer-Enhanced Language Learning and Intelligent Computer-Assisted Language Learning, CALL is the most preferred term in the field of language education. The scope of CALL has been developed through time with the advances in technology and with the evolution of educational theories. Accordingly, the definition of the term has also changed in time. One of the earliest definitions was provided by Levy (1997) that CALL entails "the search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning" (p.1). It has been more recently defined as "learners learning language in any context with, through, and around computer technologies" (Egbert, 2005, p.4). Regarding these two definitions, the scope of CALL has become more comprehensive including

electronic mobile devices besides the computers such as smartphones, tablets, and e-book readers and applications used for the language learning and teaching purposes (Yang, 2013).

The computers first appeared in the field of language education in the 1950s as in the form of mainframes, room-sized machines. These mainframes were located at universities for research facilities. Thus, the learners had to visit computer terminals for learning languages (Beatty, 2010). In time, the use of computers in language education has undergone many transformations in line with the developments in technology, educational theory, and language teaching approaches. Giving an overview of CALL in their seminal work, Warschauer and Healey (1998) provided the brief history of CALL in three phases: Behavioristic CALL, Communicative CALL, and Integrative CALL. Additionally, from a critical perspective, Bax (2003) also provided an alternative CALL model divided into three categories: Restricted CALL, Open CALL, and Integrated CALL.

Within the CALL model of Warschauer and Healey (1998), the first stage is Behavioristic CALL based on behaviorism which was the central theory guiding the language education in the 1950s and 1960s. Behaviorism emphasizes 'stimulus-response-reinforcement' chain and as a result, CALL applications echoed this learning theory (Levy, 1997). In this phase, CALL applications are dominantly tutoring systems created for mainframes. Programmed Logic/Learning for Automated Teaching Operations (PLATO) system is the first and most influential tutoring system at the computer for language learning and teaching. PLATO provides behavioristic CALL materials compromising drill and practice type language exercises and multiple choice quizzes, which allow learners to learn at their own pace and to be exposed to the same data repeatedly (Warschauer, 1996; Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

Communicative CALL took the stage in the late 1970s and 1980s. Communicative CALL emphasizes the use of forms instead of directly giving the knowledge of forms as in behavioristic view of learning. It also has roots in cognitivism which requires the active involvement of learners in their learning process and describes learning as a mental process of learner rather than purely performing observable behaviors to a stimulus (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Underwood (1984, as cited in Fotos & Browne, 2004), an eminent CALL researcher, stressed the need for communicative CALL applications and proposed five features of CALL activities;

> 1. Emphasis on use of the form for communication rather than on the features of the form.
>
> 2. Implicit grammar teaching through communicative activities rather than explicit presentation of rules.
>
> 3. Little or no evaluation of the correctness or incorrectness of student responses because this disrupts the focus on meaning; thus, rather than a single right or wrong answer, a variety of student responses should be encouraged.
>
> 4. Use of the target language as the language of instruction on the computer screen.
>
> 5. Use of qualitatively different CALL activities rather than the mere replication on the computer screen of pen-and-paper exercises. (p.152).

Given that Communicative CALL provides learners with various communicative exercises such as problem-solving tasks and simulation applications, it gives more control to the learners as opposed to the drills empowering teachers or the computer (Moeller, 1997). These tasks and applications also stimulate cognitive involvement of the learners into the language learning and interaction with other students via text reconstruction, paced reading, cloze tests, simulations and games (Braul, 2006).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the transformation of CALL continued, and "critics pointed out that computer was still being used in an *ad hoc* and disconnected fashion" (Warschaur & Healey, 1998, p.57). Thus, computer use did not contribute to the central elements of the language learning and teaching process. In this period, the educational theory also transformed, and Vygotsky's social-constructivism gained more importance, which emphasizes interaction and meaningful learning in an authentic communication context (Fotos & Browne, 2004). Based on social-constructivism, several approaches such as task-based, project-based, and content-based approach underline the importance of language use in an authentic social context and the need for the integration of language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing) for communication. Thus, these changes in educational theory have led to the emergence of Integrative CALL (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Moreover, the advances in internet and technology like computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools have also contributed to the Integrative CALL in terms of information "retrieval, computer literacy, critical interpretation, and participation in online discourse communities" (Fotos & Browne, 2004, p. 6). Given the information about Integrative CALL, it can be assumed that the internet and CMC tools as a part of Integrative CALL have the potential to integrate meaningful and authentic communication incorporating all the skills for language learning.

Warschauer and Healey's categories of CALL history shed light on the second half of 20th century, and the advancements in technology continued to be the central concern in language education. The widespread use of the internet, Web 2.0 tools, and mobile technologies paved the way for more interactive and creative use of technology for language learning, which can be considered the fourth phase (Beatty, 2010). In this phase of CALL, the focus has been on the learning environments in which computers are used, and internet serves as a learning environment (Benson, 2011). Internet and Web tools are used to enhance creativity and collaboration, mainly through the use of social networking, interactive blogging, collaboratively built websites (e.g., *Wikipedia*) and community edited websites (e.g., *Wikis*). Moreover, the internet has also provided many more opportunities for individuals such as the chance to be producers and directors like in the case of *YouTube* (Beatty, 2010).

Bax (2003) criticized Warschauer and Healey's CALL model restricting the phases of CALL into particular periods of time. He argued that because the use of computers, even today, can take various forms in different classrooms and in the hands of different teachers and learners, the CALL use can be classified in a different way, independent of time periods. Considering these points, Bax (2003) provided an alternative CALL model divided into three approaches: Restricted CALL, Open CALL, and Integrated CALL. Restricted CALL, the first approach, is quite similar to Warschauer and Healey's Behavioristic CALL. In this approach, the focus of activities is on language forms and includes drills and multiple choice exercises providing minimal interaction with the other learners. The feedback is limited to basic correct/incorrect form. The use of computers is not integrated into the syllabus and there are special computer labs the language learners can visit as extra work. As opposed to restricted CALL, using computers get more humanistic in Open CALL. CMC, internet, and games make learner involvement possible into real communication with other language learners for language learning purposes. Learners interact with computers and occasionally with the other learners. However, in this approach, the computers are not still integrated into the syllabus and expected as extra work. The last CALL approach is Integrated CALL which is identified as the ideal state to achieve. In this approach, computer technologies become ordinary parts of language learning and teaching like pens or textbooks. Integrated CALL provides learners with real communication with the other learners via CMC, internet, and related applications. A computer is just a tool for language learning and the most important thing is the learners'

needs and preferences. The central idea of Integrated CALL is the normalization of technology which means becoming an integral part of the learning environment and using technology without fear and exaggerated respect. The ultimate goal of CALL is to be normalized and integrated into life and learning.

### *The benefits of technology in language education*

For successful language learning, several conditions should be met and technology holds a great potential to meet these conditions (Beatty, 2010; Chapelle, 2001; Levy, 1997). Some researchers (Zhang, 2010; Zhao & Lai, 2007) pointed to four conditions for successful language learning (i.e., high-quality input, communicative opportunities for language practice, effective feedback, motivation and low anxiety level). For each condition, computers and related technologies play a facilitative role in language learning by increasing access to target language input, enhancing language output, promoting interaction and collaboration, providing language feedback, and increasing learner interest and motivation (Chapelle, 2003; Golonka et al., 2014).

Starting with the first condition, language learners need to have access to rich high-quality target language input (Ellis & Wells, 1980). With an emphasis on the central role of comprehensible input in second language acquisition, Krashen (1989) put forward the 'Input Hypothesis' which proposes that second language is acquired "by understanding messages" (p.440) and considered comprehensible and rich input as essential for acquiring a second or foreign language. Krashen described comprehensible input as the language input that is slightly above the language learners' level. According to Krashen's hypothesis, the input, either below or significantly higher than the learners' current level, does not help language learners to get better and lead to successful language learning. For more comprehensible language input, the simplified versions of input such as shorter sentences, lowering speech rate, using fewer advance language structures and also the dictionaries can be used as the aiding tools (Hatch, 1978; O'Bryan, 2008; Zhao, 1997). Moreover, the amount and diversity of language input is also considered as having a significant impact on successful language learning. The more learners are exposed to different sources of language input, the more chances they get to learn new vocabulary and language structures, which contribute to second or foreign language acquisition (Cunningham, 2005; Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman, & Levine, 2001). In terms of high-quality input, technology provides many opportunities for easy access to

comprehensible and rich target language input. For instance, electronic glosses and dictionaries enhance the comprehensibility of input by providing the meaning of unknown words in multiple modes (i.e., written, visual, audio). Annotations provide background information and explanation via hyperlinks for online texts (Golonka et al., 2014). Using technological advancements, learners can slow down the videos and listening tracks. They can also use text-to-speech technology for a better understanding of the language content (Zhao & Lai 2007). What is more, using corpus enables learners to have access to a great amount of linguistic data (Farr, 2008; Liu & Jiang, 2009). The internet also gives access to high-quality and diverse language input through videos, movies, and podcasts, just to name a few (Golonka et al., 2014).

The second condition for successful language learning is the need for language practice through communication and collaboration. Agreeing on the importance of Krashen's input hypothesis for language learning, Swain (1985) proposed that input is not sufficient on its own for successful language learning, but language practice is a must. Thus, Swain (1985, 2000) pointed out 'The Output Hypothesis' which assumes that language output can reveal the holes in the learners' interlanguage and can help learners to pay more attention to the syntactic structures of the target language in addition to the semantic processing of language. In addition to Swain's Output Hypothesis, Long's (1983) Interaction Hypothesis is another proposal emphasizing the place of language practice in language learning. The Interaction Hypothesis focuses on two claims about the interaction in language learning: "(1) comprehensible input is necessary for L2 acquisition; and (2) modifications to the interactional structure of conversations that take place in the process of negotiating a communication problem help make input comprehensible to an L2 learner." (Ellis, 1991, p.1). During this negotiation of meaning, learners focus on linguistic structures and communication strategies, and they notice the gap between their interlanguage and the target language.

Based on the socio-cultural perspective of language learning, these two views emphasize the importance of language practice for language learning. Considering that, computers, internet, and mobile technologies enable learners to practice language through authentic communication. One of the most prevalent technologies for language practice and communication is CMC technologies. Synchronous and asynchronous CMC allow language learners to engage in social and meaningful interaction, to collaborate and to develop communicative competence via virtual worlds, games, video-conferencing, text

messaging, e-mails, discussion boards, chat rooms, social networking, blogs, wikis and so on (Golonka et al., 2014). Course/Learning management systems, another tool for language practice, also contribute to teacher-learner, learners-learner communication, and collaboration for class projects (Can, 2009). On the other hand, automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology provides learners with the opportunity to practice their speaking skills and pronunciation individually, but there is still human-computer interaction with this technology and learners can practice simulated dialogues with a virtual interlocutor (Golonka et al., 2014).

High-quality feedback is the third condition and considered to be one of the key elements for effective language learning even though there are some controversies over the efficacy of corrective feedback or negative feedback (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2006; Truscott, 1996). Feedback plays a significant role in language learners' interlanguage development by helping them notice the gaps between their interlanguage and the target language (Long, Inagaki, & Ortega, 1998). As in the case of the first two conditions, different types of technologies serve as an assistant to give feedback to the language learners. Intelligent Language Tutoring System provides instruction like a tutor and gives immediate feedback to learners in a systematic way. As an application of Intelligent Tutoring System, ASR can help learners enhance their pronunciation by comparing learners' pronunciation with the target language and giving feedback (Heift, Toole, McFetridge, Popowich, & Tsiplakou 2000). Grammar and spelling checkers are also used as a way of getting feedback for written productions. These tools identify low-level morphosyntactic errors and get learners to notice their mistakes (Burston, 2001; Jacobs & Rodgers, 1999). Another tool, concordancers show each occurrence of a word in a corpus or in text and these can also be used for feedback by the language learners. For example, Milton (2006) reported a concordancing program called *Mark My Words*. This software provides teachers and learners with a corpus of 100 oft-repeated lexico-grammatical and style errors which occurred in the Chinese students' written texts. The program also provides short explanations for each error and give hyperlinks to show the correct form of the error. Thus, learners can use this program to correct their errors and see the correct form in the real context provided by the program.

The fourth condition is related to language learners' affective situation. Rogers (1961) argued that learning cannot be explained only by cognitive processes but also with their social and affective situation. In line with Rogers' humanistic view of learning, Krashen's

(1982) ‘Affective Filter Hypothesis’ emphasizes the place of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence for language learning. According to this hypothesis, high motivation and self-confidence enhance learners’ language learning. On the other hand, high anxiety level has a negative effect on learning. Thus, computers and mobile technologies can be considered potentials to increase learners’ motivation and self-confidence and also to lower the anxiety level of learners (Chapelle, 2001). The literature suggests that games, virtual worlds, social networking, blogs, video conferencing can increase learners’ motivation and willingness to learn languages (Gonzalez & Louis, 2002; Lai, Shum, & Tian, 2016). For example, Draper and Brown (2004) used an online voting system in lessons, and the study revealed that this system made classes fun and increased learners’ motivation. Lan, Sung, and Chang (2007) investigated collaborative learning of elementary school EFL learners with and without Tablets. They found out that tablet use lowered learners’ anxiety, increased their motivation to learn and raised their oral reading confidence. Using a social networking application, Twitter, Mompean, and Fouz-González (2016) found out that the use of Twitter has encouraged learners to participate activities with intrinsic motivation and they concluded that Twitter has a positive effect on learners’ motivation.

When all these taken into consideration, it seems that language education and technology have a close relationship and technology can be used at the service of language learners for successful language learning. With technology, learners can have access to comprehensible and rich language input. They can use the target language in authentic communication environments. They can collaborate with their teachers, the other learners and the native speakers of the target language. Learners can also get feedback on their language products, and they can give feedback to and comment on the other learner's language products. Therefore, these technologies make learners motivated and confident to learn other languages.

### Learner autonomy and technology

With the advances in online technologies, the world has been flattened as proposed by the famous author, Thomas Friedman. Friedman (2006) argues that today, people can connect to the rest of the world with more ease and convenience when compared to the past and have equal opportunities with anyone in the world thanks to digital devices. When the case considered in language education, learning was restricted to classrooms and a few language materials in the past. However, technology has already given equal conditions to

language learners. Individuals have, now, more independence to learn and collaborate with other people around the world. Today, learners can make use of online technologies in class and also continue learning beyond the classroom. It appears that digital practices have become conducive to learning in- and out-of-class and made language learning process more personal and individualized, in other words, more learner-centered (Benson & Nunan, 2004; Chik, 2018). Given the impact of digital practices on language learning, learner-centeredness prioritizing learners' active involvement and autonomy have become the focus of language teaching and the learning beyond the classroom has also turned out to be one of the leading concerns in the field of language education (Benson, 2001; Richards, 2015).

These changes in technology and language education have led the researchers to investigate the relationship between the autonomy and technology (Blin, 2004; Reinders, 2016; Schwienworst, 2003). The traces of autonomy can be found even in the early studies of CALL. For example, Curtin and colleagues (1972) stated that the idea behind PLATO was the individualization of learning and the privacy of learners' learning at their own pace. Later, Nielson and colleagues (1976) argued that computers can help learners review the grammar structures at their own speed and focus on the areas they feel weak (as cited in Beatty, 2010). In the following years, Barnett (1993) asserted that "technology can direct learner attention to metacognitive strategies such as planning, directing attention, self-monitoring, self-evaluation as well as the sorts of strategies which are required for effective exploitation of the facility itself." (p.303).

What is more, Motternam (1997) argued that learner autonomy and technology have a reciprocal relationship affecting each other. On the one hand, technology provides many opportunities for the development of learner autonomy by giving the control of the learning to learners (Figura & Jarvis, 2007); situational freedom in which learners can use their capacity to control their learning; the chance to transfer in-class learning to out-of-class (Reinders & Hubbard, 2013); access to target language for authentic communicative purposes (Little, 2003b); social interaction with other interlocutors via social networking sites, online learning platforms, virtual world and games (Reinders & Hubbard, 2013); collaborative learning with other language learners (Hsiech, 2016) and ample language learning resources (Golonka et al., 2014). On the other hand, using technology requires some skills and strategies for autonomous language learning like making informed learning decisions according to their learning styles, preferences, needs and goals (Chik, 2014). It

also requires knowing how to control "the time, the pace, the path to the goal, and the measurement of success" (Healey, 1999, p.400). Reinders and Hubbard (2013) further added that learners need some skills to cope with the constraints of technology in the language learning procedure. Autonomous language learners need to choose appropriate language learning materials up to their levels and learning goals. In the same vein, they are supposed to make informed decisions among a huge number of choices due to the non-linearity of technology. The autonomous language learners also should have the ability to interpret the feedback from a program or a human accurately because the information could be inaccurate and irrelevant. Moreover, the learners need to distinguish the most useful forms of interaction on platforms which involve social interaction. Lastly, they are also supposed to have a critical capacity to identify what information is relevant or not for their learning.

When all the information is taken into consideration, the capacity to take control of one's own learning refers, here in this study, to two capacities of the language learners using technology. The first one refers to learning management of the learners according to their needs, preferences, and interests, same as the original definition entails. The second one refers to the learners' competence in digital literacy, which means knowing how to locate and select appropriate and quality online language learning materials in line with their learning goals (Chik, 2018). Many learners, nevertheless, does not have these two capacities and they need the help of a teacher, facilitator, or advisor (Reinders & Hubbard, 2013). Therefore, learner training has an important place in the development of learner autonomy with technology (Hubbard, 2004). Romeo and Hubbard (2011, p.217) offer three types of learner training for effective use of technology in language learning: technical, pedagogical and strategic. In technical training, learners get to know how to use and control technological tools for language learning purposes. In pedagogical training, learners' are trained for understanding why they use a specific strategy or task for a particular learning objective. Lastly, in strategic training, the learners attempt to relate learning strategies with their learning needs and goals.

### Teacher support for the development of learner autonomy with technology

Language learners mostly lack some autonomous learning skills related to the control over their learning management (Inozu et al., 2010; Lai et al., 2014; Lai et.al., 2016). These skills are listed as setting goals, selecting appropriate materials, monitoring and evaluation

of their learning (Benson, 2011). Even though learners perceive themselves responsible for their language learning out-of-the class and make some effort to learn a foreign language independent of a teacher, they live difficulty in managing their learning. On this issue, working with more than 50 EFL high school students, Bailly (2011) found that although EFL learners study English out-of-the class and use some language learning strategies, they fall short in managing their learning due to a number of factors like ineffective learning strategies, unrealistic learning goals and the mismatch between language material selection and learner needs. The learners also do not know how to monitor and assess their learning progress. Similarly, Inozu and colleagues (2010) investigated 309 university students' language learning beyond the classroom and found that learners mostly make use of receptive skill-based activities like reading and vocabulary learning. More importantly, they perceive this kind of learning as an extension of in-class learning. The authors concluded that the learners lack the ability to self-direct their out-of-class learning and they need support for their language learning beyond the classroom. In another study, Lai, Zhu, and Gong (2014) examined the quality of learners' out-of-class English learning. They showed that the learners' continuing learning English out-of-the class does not necessarily mean that their learning is beneficial. Thus, these studies suggest that learners need support to develop autonomous learning skills for successful language learning.

Besides autonomous learning skills, a variety of studies showed that learners lack the ability and confidence to use technology for their autonomous language learning (Li, 2013; Winke & Goetler, 2008). Many learners do not realize the potential of technological tools for language learning and do not know how to use them. For example, Çelik, Arkın, and Sabriler (2012) investigated the self-initiated ICT use of 399 EFL learners for language learning purposes. They found that the learners perceived themselves lack of ability to self-regulate their language learning using ICT tools. The authors concluded that the learners need learner training, teachers support and ongoing guidance for their effective use of technology in autonomous language learning. Castellano and colleagues (2011) investigated self-access center users in a Japan university. Their findings gathered from questionnaire and interviews revealed that even though learners keep studying English on their own will, they are unaware of making effective use of emerging technologies and they reported lack of ability to use technology for language learning. Considering this weakness, Reinders (2007) worked on an online support system, *Student Monitoring System,* at the University of Auckland. This system monitored the learners' progress and

gave reflection accordingly. It also provided learner training and prompts based on learner choices. However, the study revealed that most of the learners did not make use of this technology effectively due to their lack of self-directed learning skills.

Learners' lack of autonomous language learning skills and knowledge for making use of emerging technologies affect their feelings about their ability for learning autonomously with technology. To this end, they expect the teachers to support and guide them for their out-of-class language learning. Lai, Yeung, and Hu (2016) interviewed learners about the degree of learner involvement and teacher support in their autonomous language learning. Their findings showed that learners wanted the teachers to be more involved in their out-of-class learning. The learners also expected their teachers to provide them with the introduction of technological language learning tools and also with cognitive and metacognitive tips to choose and use appropriate language learning materials. Similarly, Wang (2007) investigated the learners' expectations of teachers' role in autonomous language learning. Learners perceived themselves lack the ability for learning autonomously and expected teachers to train and guide them with this purpose. The study also revealed that the learners have difficulty in sustaining their motivation and they need ongoing encouragement from their teacher.

Based on this review, it is suggested that the learners need to be supported to develop learner autonomy skills and to use the potential of technology for their language learning. In this case, it seems vital for teachers to know how they can help learners and what they are supposed to support to promote learner autonomy with technology.

### Promoting learner autonomy with technology

Development of learner autonomy requires capacity, and that capacity entails ability, desire, and freedom (Huang & Benson, 2013). Additionally, when the learners use technology for their autonomous language learning, they also need to know the potential of technology for language learning and to be aware of how to find and use appropriate technological resources (Castellano, Mynard, & Rubesch, 2011). Integrating autonomy with technology use, Bailly (2011) proposed three conditions for the development of learner autonomy with technology: motivation (i.e., willingness), learning resources (i.e., appropriate language learning tools) and learning skills (i.e., capacity for learning management).

In terms of willingness, learners can act reluctantly to take responsibility for their learning and expect teachers to be the dominant figure in their learning (Luke, 2006). For example, Chan, Spratt, and Humpreys (2002) investigated autonomous language learning of 508 undergraduates. They found that the students were not willing for autonomous language learning and their low motivation was the main problem in promoting learner autonomy. In the same vein, Farahani (2014) examined the viewpoints of 405 EFL learners with a questionnaire, follow up interviews and observations. The study revealed that the learners were not motivated to take charge of their own learning. Even though they perceive themselves responsible for their out-of-class learning, they believed that teachers should be responsible especially for methodological decisions. On the other hand, the studies showed that learners' positive dispositions and attitudes towards learner autonomy enhance the management of their learning (Garrison, 1997; Lai & Gu, 2011). Therefore, the teachers' affective support is a necessary condition for promoting learner autonomy besides raising cognitive and metacognitive awareness of the learners (Mynard & McLoughin, 2014).

Underlying the significant place of motivation for learner autonomy, Zimmerman (2011) explained that there are a number of motivation sources for learners such as goal orientation, personal interests, intrinsic motivation (i.e., learners' interest in or enjoyment of a task or activity), self-efficacy (i.e., expectancy of one's capability) and future time perspective (i.e., learners' future plans). Dörnyei (2001) also provided a long list of strategies for generating, maintaining and protecting motivation in L2 classrooms. The language teachers can use such strategies as: "enhancing the learners' L2 related values and attitudes", "increasing the learners' goal-orientedness", "making teaching materials relevant for the learners", making learning fun, "increasing the learners' self-confidence", and "promoting cooperation among learners" (p.29). Dörnyei, (2001) and Reinders (2010) also proposed that besides all the strategies to raise learners' motivation, teachers should teach self-motivating learner strategies (e.g., goal commitment, monitoring and controlling concentration, emotion control and eliminating negative environmental factors) to promote learner autonomy. Teachers can help their learners to be motivated for autonomous language learning by creating a supportive learning environment considering these sources and strategies and also by modeling self-motivation techniques.

Another oft-repeated challenge from the learners' perspective is the lack of knowledge on the potential use of technological tools for language learning (Gamble et al., 2012; Kenedy & Miceli, 2010; Winke & Goertler, 2008). Deepwell and Malik (2008) investigated 250

undergraduate and postgraduate students' technology use in their self-directed study time. They found that even though learners are proficient users of daily life technological tools, they do not use online learning platforms like ePortfolio system provided by the university to support autonomous language learning. In another study, Steel and Levy (2013) made the examination of language learners' technology use in research published from 2006 to 2011. Their findings revealed that learners use a variety of technological tools to support their independent language learning. These tools are commonly used and popular language learning tools such as online dictionaries, translators, mobile language learning applications. Interestingly, they do not prefer using technologies which also encourage social interaction and language output such as virtual learning environments, wikis, and blogs. The reason behind this fact may be that using this kind of tools can be challenging for the learners and require training by a teacher. As Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010) indicated, most participants were unaware of blogs and only made effective use of this tool after learning how to use it for reflective thinking and social interaction in a virtual environment. Another study by Figura and Jarvis (2007) also indicated that CMC materials could only be used effectively by students who know how to use them for language learning. Thus, learners' less preference to use this kind of tools may derive from their lack of awareness regarding the potential of those technologies. In this case, teachers' guidance becomes crucial to help learners be aware of a number of technologies which are available on the internet (Gonzalez & Louis, 2002). Teachers can use a variety of technological tools in their instruction and also recommend some tools for learners' out-of-class language learning.

Language learners also have some problems related to the selection of appropriate language resources through technology. For instance, Lai and Gu (2011) investigated language learners' out-of-class learning and found that the proficiency level of the learners and their use of language resources do not match. The learners use authentic materials downloaded from online platforms, and these materials are above their proficiency levels. Taking the findings of this study into consideration, it seems that teachers' resource support plays an important role in guiding learners on how to find and choose appropriate materials in line with their learning aims and proficiency levels. Teachers can help learners by resource recommendation and explicit strategy sharing on how to find and decide the appropriateness of the resources. They can include online materials into their instruction to develop learners' skills. They can also show how they access these materials during the

class time (e.g., using YouTube to find language learning materials in class) (Castellano et al., 2011; Deepwell & Malik, 2008; Lai, 2015a; Lai et al., 2016).

Bailly's (2011) last condition for autonomous language learning with technology requires a capacity to self-direct learning and several studies highlight the need for capacity support of teachers to promote learner autonomy (Little, 2007, Wichayathian & Reinders, 2015). Capacity in autonomous language learning refers to learners' having a capacity for learning management skills like planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning process, cognitive processes like metacognitive knowledge and reflection, and sociocultural skills such as using communication strategies to interact with people in the target language. To help learners develop a capacity to self-manage their learning, teachers can use various frameworks and models provided by several academics (Benson, 2011; Nunan, 1997; Reinders, 2010). They can make learners reflect on their learning needs with the implementation of needs analysis, later plan their course in cooperation with learners, involve learners into the decisions related to what, how, and when to learn, encourage learner reflection on learning by incorporating alternative assessment tools, and encourage the transfer of in-class learning to out-of-class context (Reinders, 2010).

As the reviewed literature suggests above, teacher support plays a significant role in promoting learner autonomy with technology and teachers are supposed to be ready for their changing roles in this new language learning and teaching environment. But the question is to what extent they are ready to promote learner autonomy, and they use technology for this purpose. In the following section, the related studies in this case and the place of the current study will be discussed.

### Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy with technology

Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy has been the subject of various studies through both Turkish (e.g., Balcikanli, 2010; Cakici, 2017; Doğan & Mirici, 2017; Ürün et al., 2014) and foreign contexts (e.g., Barnard & Li, 2016; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Welch, 2015). Starting with the early research in learner autonomy, this section will discuss teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards the importance of learner involvement; their perceptions of desirability and feasibility of learner involvement; the revealed constraints over the exercise of learner autonomy in the formal education contexts; and teachers' practices to promote learner autonomy. Then, the section

will explore teachers' technology integration and its impact on learner autonomy. Finally, it will present the related studies in Turkish context.

The literature revealed that teachers are mostly positive about learners' taking responsibility in their learning (Stroupe, Rundle, & Tomita, 2016; Tapinta, 2016; Yunus & Arshad, 2014). For example, Camilleri (1999), one of the earliest and most comprehensive studies, reported a project examining the teachers' attitudes towards learner autonomy in the European context including Malta, The Netherlands, Belorussia, Poland, Estonia, and Slovenia. The research findings showed that teachers are, in general, positive about the involvement of students into their learning process. On the other hand, the teachers do not accept the learner involvement in some areas like the selection of textbooks. In the following years, Chan (2003) conducted a large-scale study with 41 English teachers and 508 undergraduate students. From the perspective of teachers, learner autonomy was considered essential and perceived positively in theory. However, they, in practice, were reluctant to relinquish their responsibilities and felt the full responsibility of learning decisions.

The fact that teachers are reluctant to sharing their responsibility has led the researchers to move their studies one step further and to the investigation of teachers' views about the desirability and feasibility of learner autonomy. Several studies revealed that there is a gap between the desirability in theory and feasibility of learner autonomy in practice (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Haji-Othman & Wood, 2016; Yunus & Arshad, 2014). The desirability of learner involvement into learning and teaching processes has often been rated more than the feasibility of learner involvement (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Duong, 2014). However, the gap between these two differs in various areas of learner involvement. For instance, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) revealed that teachers perceive student involvement desired and feasible in some areas such as the selection of materials, topics, and activities. On the other hand, they found the widest gap in the decisions related to assessment and course objectives. Duong (2014) also investigated the same issue and found that teachers perceive learners' decision making important and practical including assessment and setting objectives as opposed to Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012). However, the findings revealed that teachers have a low expectancy of learners' abilities for autonomous language learning, especially the ones for identifying their own needs, monitoring and evaluating their progress. What is more, Nakata (2011) worked with 80 teachers to find out their readiness for promoting learner autonomy examining the

perceived importance and perceived use of strategies. The results showed that the teachers are not fully ready for this given role. Even if they realize the importance of autonomy in language learning, they have difficulty to use those strategies due to various factors and constraints.

The reasons for this divergence between desirability and feasibility have been attributed to several constraints inhibiting the development of learner autonomy (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Nguyen, 2014; Wang & Wang, 2016). The constraints can be divided into three main categories: contextual, learner and teacher factors. The first category includes curriculum requirements (Rañosa-Madrunio, Tarrayo, Tupas, & Valdez, 2016; Stroupe et al., 2016), exam-oriented education policies (Chan, 2003; Nakata, 2011; Nguyen, 2014 Yunus & Arshad, 2014), established teacher-directed learning culture (Chan, 2003; Keuk & Heng, 2016). The second category of constraints is based on learners' low motivation for taking responsibility and proficiency level of English (Al-Asmari, 2013; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Chan et al., 2002; Nguyen, 2014) and learners' lack of readiness for learner autonomy (Wichayathian & Reinders, 2015). The last one is caused by teachers' lack of awareness of and knowledge about learner autonomy and lack of teacher autonomy (Al-Asmari, 2013; Lai et al., 2016; Lai, Gardner, & Law, 2013; Nakata, 2011). There is a consensus in the literature that teachers should have autonomous skills and they need teacher training to help their students develop learner autonomy.

As learner autonomy is not an all or nothing concept, the related studies revealed that teachers take small steps for learner autonomy despite those mentioned constraints. For instance, teachers encourage learners to continue learning beyond the classroom and set some activities for the out-of-class learning. They also promote peer/group interaction and collaboration. Additionally, they give small responsibilities for student choice in the routines of language classes such as the decision of joining a group or the selection of activities, materials, topics. They also try to increase the motivation and self-confidence of learners to self-direct their learning (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Chan, 2003). They also perceive computers and related tools as valuable teaching aids to encourage learners' autonomous learning (Park & Son, 2009). For example, Ertmer and colleagues (2012) revealed that teachers, who have come over internal and external barriers inhibiting technology integration and the development of learner autonomy, use technology to deliver and enrich learning content; to provide student choice (e.g., using Mimeo presentation); to

promote collaboration and interaction via some tools such as Google Docs, Wordle and blogs; and to provide authentic learning environments via digital storytelling tools.

The literature of technology integration and CALL also provides fruitful findings serving as a basis for teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy because CALL and learner autonomy come from the same theoretical foundations including constructivism and communicative language teaching (Chapelle, 2001, 2003). In this case, Welch (2015) reported the results of a multisited, multiple case study investigating the impact of teachers' technology integration on the development of learner autonomy. The findings revealed that teachers use different technological tools including interactive whiteboards, tablets, Web 2.0 tools for a variety of purposes such as to promote cooperation with CMC; to help learners to take responsibility via online learning platforms; and to encourage learners' independent decision making. The findings revealed that teachers' technology use had a great impact on learners' autonomous learning. Park and Son (2009) investigated the teachers' perceptions of CALL implementation and the ways to enhance CALL practice in formal setting. They concluded that even though almost all the teachers have positive attitudes to technology use for facilitating learning, they differ in the perceptions of their roles in the CALL implementation. While half of them value technology integration as an opportunity to promote learner autonomy, the other half perceive themselves as a dominant figure having all the responsibility for students' learning. More specifically, Lai, Yeung, and Hu (2016) examined the teachers' perceptions of their roles in learners' autonomous language learning with technology out-of-the class and found that teachers perceive a minimal role in this situation due to the belief that their students are digital natives and they have the ability to use technology for self-directing their language learning. Some of the teachers also stated their concern about the linguistic accuracy and appropriateness of the authentic materials and preferred the adapted versions of online language learning materials. Finally, this study revealed that teachers do not put much effort to help learners learn autonomously using technology.

Besides the related studies in foreign context, there are also several studies on the teachers' perceptions and practices of learner autonomy in Turkish context (Balcikanli, 2010; Çakıcı, 2017; Doğan & Mirici, 2017; Ürün et al., 2014). Balcikanli (2010) worked with 112 pre-service EFL teachers and investigated their beliefs about and attitudes toward learner autonomy. Teachers prefer autonomous language learning and have positive attitudes to learner involvement in the decision making of course objectives, the classroom

management, the selection of assignment tasks and learning materials. However, the decision of the time and place of the course is perceived as the responsibility of the teacher or administration due to the teacher-centered nature of Turkish education system. Cakici (2017) also investigated 88 pre-service EFL teachers and got findings corroborating with Balcikanli (2010). Even though the prospective teachers agree on the importance of learner involvement and autonomous language learning, they are reluctant to give the responsibility of decision making pertinent to quantity and type of assignment tasks, textbook selection, learning content, time and place of the course, and evaluation of learners due to the nature of Turkish education system. Additional to pre-service context, Ürün, Demir and Akar (2014) aimed to give a picture of EFL high schools teachers' practices for the development of learner autonomy. The findings suggest that EFL teachers are mentally ready and motivated for learner autonomy. Moreover, they perform various practices for this purpose such as offering in-class activities addressing different learning styles, setting activities going beyond the classroom, and giving small responsibilities as the routines of the course (e.g., arranging the board and setting today's proverb). They also make use of technological tools to enrich their classroom activities. Another study conducted by Doğan and Mirici (2017) also shed light on the perceptions and practices of EFL instructors at tertiary level. The findings revealed that even though teachers value learner autonomy, they do not perceive it as feasible especially the learners' ability to monitor and evaluate their learning as opposed to Ürün and his colleagues (2014).

The related literature in Turkish context does not provide enough understanding of technology use for the development of learner autonomy. However, investigating the technology integration of 120 in-service and 62 pre-service EFL teachers in the context of private universities, Akcaoğlu (2008) revealed a problem in the development of learner autonomy with technology that teachers preferred using technology as teacher tools which entails "using LCD projectors to present colorful, motivating lesson material or using computers to prepare worksheets or lesson plans, which does not transform the lessons' style toward student-centeredness, but eases the teachers' work and increases student motivation" (p.8). Nevertheless, using technology as students tools is considered as the ideal state which "transforms a lesson into a student-centered one and creates learner autonomy and integration of language skills" (p.8). Therefore, the author concluded that EFL teachers' technology use does not go beyond using teacher tools and they perform limited practices to promote learner autonomy.

When all these reviewed literature is taken into consideration, EFL teachers, in general, have positive beliefs about and attitudes toward the development of learner autonomy and the technology integration for this purpose. However, there is a gap, differing in degrees, between the desirability and feasibility of the development of learner autonomy with technology. In spite of some research in this domain, the studies investigating teachers' readiness and real practices to promote learner autonomy are still limited to a few. Moreover, there is little research examines the teachers' technology integration directly for the development of learner autonomy. Especially regarding the Turkish context, the majority of studies from teacher perspective are based on the data gathered from pre-service EFL teachers who have not had school experience, yet. Moreover, there are just a few studies shedding light on the readiness and practices of in-service teachers, which have contradicting results and investigates teachers at different education levels. To this end, this current study aims to give an in-depth understanding of the readiness and real practices of EFL instructors to promote learner autonomy and to give a picture of their technology use in line with this purpose.

# CHAPTER 3

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the readiness of EFL instructors to promote learner autonomy and to describe how they integrate technology into language classrooms to support the learners' autonomous technology use. The researcher fulfilled this purpose with three-session in-depth interviews of EFL instructors working at the tertiary level.

Considering the purpose, the following research questions guided this study;

1. To what extent are EFL instructors ready to promote learner autonomy?
2. How do EFL instructors use technology in promoting learner autonomy?

In this chapter, in consideration of these aims and research questions, the methodology of the study is described in detail through the following sections: research design, research context, participants, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, data analysis, and conclusion.

## Research Design

Qualitative inquiryis a research design basically focusing on the participants' experiences and on understanding the meaning that human beings have constructed (Creswell, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In qualitative research, researchers are often the primary instrument which could be "responsive and adaptive" during data collection and analysis, which is regarded as ideal (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.16). On the other hand, researchers could take advantage of verbal and non-verbal communication during which they may interpret and make sense of the data clearly. Moreover, since it is an inductive process, researchers can reconstruct hypotheses and theories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.17). Besides, qualitative research design is convenient for collecting rich descriptive data that

can allow the voice of multiple perspectives (Friedman, 2012, p.182). When these features are taken into consideration, qualitative research design is the best selection to come to an in-depth understanding of a problem in its actual setting where participants have the problem or the issue.

In qualitative research, there are five common methodologies or approaches: narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic and case study. Being one of the commonly used approaches, qualitative case studies "investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the contexts are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p.13). Moreover, this approach is used in such situations that "a how or why question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control" (Yin, 2003, p.9). There are several types of case studies differentiated by the size of the bounded case and the aim of the study. Creswell (2007, p.74) categorized case studies into three types regarding the intent: the single instrumental, the collective or multiple, and the intrinsic case study. In a single instrumental case, researchers focus on a problem to investigate the issue taking one bounded case into consideration. However, in a multiple case study, researchers also focus on a concern, but to examine the issue, they use more than one case. Moreover, in an intrinsic case study, researchers concentrate on the case itself because of the uniqueness of the case (e.g., studying a person having financial problems). This type of case study gives an in-depth description of the case and undergoes analytical procedures. Given the descriptions of the various types of case studies, a single instrumental case study design was adopted in this study. The research design with the primary goal of the study was shown in Figure 1.

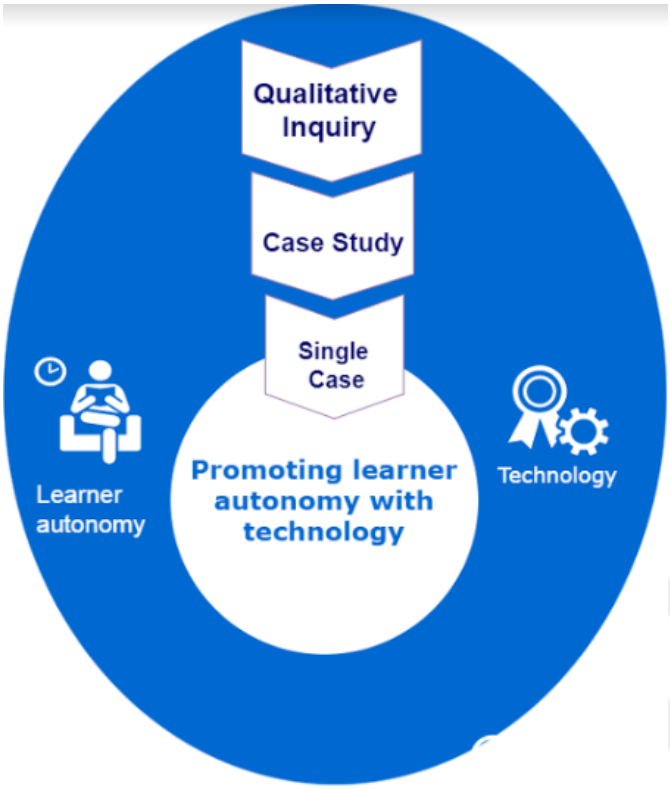



*Figure 1.* Research design

In this study, the researcher intended to find out the readiness and practices of EFL instructors to promote learner autonomy with technology in a real-life context and addressed the barriers while they promote learner autonomy with technology. In line with the intent of the study, the principles of qualitative research design were implemented in every step of the data collection, analysis and presentation. First of all, the data were gathered from the instructors through one-on-one semi-structured interviews in three sessions. During and after the data collection, theoretical thematical analysis, a qualidative data analysis method, was adopted to analyze the data. Then, the themes which emerged from the data were also presented qualitatively with the sample excerpts from the related themes.

**Research Context**

The study was conducted in the foreign languages school at a university in the eastern part of Turkey. The foreign languages school provides general and professional English courses to English-based departments such as civil aviation, engineering, and pharmacology. The courses are conducted either face-to-face or online. In this university, there are no

language-only classrooms available and a variety of courses are held in regular classrooms comprising desks in rows, a desktop, and an overhead projector. The classroom size ranges from 10 to 90 in face to face classes, depending on the course and the departments. In online courses, the number of students registered for the course might increase up to 200 and the focus is mostly on grammar instruction.

Fourteen EFL instructors works in this school. At the beginning of each semester, the classes they will teach are appointed according to the needs of the departments. The instructors with their colleagues decide on a coursebook accordingly by taking the quality and availability of the books into consideration. The instructors are supposed to teach according to the chosen book throughout the semester. However, they are flexible in using extra language materials. They mostly evaluate the students by the exams consisting of questions in various forms such as multiple choice, true-false, and matching questions as in the other undergraduate courses.

It is important to note that the foreign languages school served as a preparatory school which provided intensive English courses for first-year students for two years before this current study was conducted. In prep-classes, the courses were mainly skill-based and the hours of English lessons were about 20 hours a week as opposed to the current situation. The class size was limited to around 20 students and the instructors were inclined to take the learner needs and differences into consideration thanks to the small number of students in a class and the instructors' long-hour of interactions with students. Another significant information for this study is that the university has a small library in which there is a limited number of language learning materials and has no self-access center to help language learners study a foreign language independently.

**Participants**

Participants in this study were 11 EFL instructors (four females, seven males) working in the foreign languages school. They were chosen using purposeful sampling. In purposeful sampling, the researcher determines the purpose of the study and conducts the study with the participants specifically chosen by him/ her to collect the data (Patton, 2002, p.230). The purposeful sampling has different types such as criterion, typical, snowball, and convenience. Convenience sampling, one of the types of purposeful sampling, includes the most accessible participants in the study and is an economic sampling strategy in terms of money, time, and effort (Marshall, 1996). In this study, convenience sampling was

preferred due to the location of the study where the researcher was working and the availability of the respondents in the site who suited the aims of the study.

The sample size was limited to 11 interviewees based on the concept of saturation. Saturation means that the researcher starts to get the same answers and does not get any new information at a point of the data collection process (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Saldana, 2011; Seidman, 2006). The researcher continued to conduct the interviews and at the same time, she kept doing the preliminary data analysis to check the saturation of the gathered data. When she decided that she reached the saturation, she completed the data collection procedure.

As for the recruitment of the participants, first, the researcher made contact visits in person with the potential participants to introduce the study. After the first meeting, willing participants signed an informed consent form "minimizing the risks participants face when they agree to be interviewed" (Seidman, 2006, p.61). Overall, the participants were selected because they were accessible to the researcher, willing to participate, suitable with the intent of the study and could respond in detail. Their demographic details are provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1

*Participant demograhic details and interview durations*

| Participant | Gender | Age | Years of Experience | Graduation (Department) | The Highest degree | Interview Duration (In minutes) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marry | F | 28 | 4 | T&I | MA | 58,47' |
| James | M | 31 | 6 | ELL | MA | 50,00' |
| Sarah | F | 30 | 6 | ELT | PhD (Student) | 52,23' |
| Sheila | F | 29 | 6 | ELT | MA (Student) | 53,03' |
| Emily | F | 32 | 7 | ELT | PhD (Student) | 57,61' |
| Ryan | M | 32 | 8 | ELT | MA (Student) | 46,58 |
| Adam | M | 32 | 8 | ELL | PhD (Student) | 40,42' |
| Christian* | M | 40 | 12 | LTC | Bachelor | 94,23' |
| Michael | M | 35 | 12 | ELT | MA | 43,12' |
| David | M | 56 | 30 | ELT | Bachelor | 80,04' |
| Andrew | M | 54 | 30 | ELT | MA | 26,37' |

Note: F=Female; M=Male; T&I=Translation and Interpretation; ELL=English Language and Literature; ELT=English Language and Teaching; MA=Masters Degree; PhD=Doctor of Philosophy, LTC=Language Teaching Certificate

*He was a visiting teacher from a foreign country

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the participants were male and the average length of teaching experiences as a language teacher was 11.7 years. While the least experienced instructor worked for four years, the most experienced two instructors had 30-year-experience in the field. Moreover, it can be seen in the table that most of the participants continued their post-graduate education in different departments related to English language and half of them were master or Ph.D. students. However, ELT graduates outnumber the graduates of different departments. The duration of the interviews of each participant also differed in length ranging from 26,37' to 94,23' minutes. The total duration of all the interviews were 10 hours, and the interviews took 55,13' on average.

Lastly, the confidentiality of the participants was of great importance in this study. The risks which may occur during and after the interviews have been minimized with the informed consent form (Appendix 1). The rights of the participants have also been protected: The participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time they wished. Moreover, the researcher utilized pseudonyms for the participants to protect the anonymity of the individuals.

**Data Collection Instrument**

As well as what type of research design to select, the selection of data collection instruments plays an important role in the process of conducting research. Yin (2003, p.86) proposes six most common information sources to collect data in a case study design: (a) documentation, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, (d) direct observations, (e) participant observations, and (e) physical artifacts. Interviews, one of the most commonly used data collection instruments in qualitative research, mainly present focused and insightful information related to the main concern or the topic of the study. With a well-structured interview, researchers can reveal participants' points of views, experiences, feelings, and perceptions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011, p.40).

Interviews can be conducted in three ways; structured, semi-structured and unstructured which can be regarded as a continuum. (Friedman, 2012, p.188). However, the most common interview type is a semi-structured interview which utilizes pre-prepared interview guides (questions) consisting of open-ended questions encouraging the participants to elaborate on a problem in an explanatory way (Dörnyei, 2007, p.136). Despite its advantages, conducting interviews has a time-consuming feature. Considering that, in this qualitative case study, semi-structured interviews were preferred to give more

space to the participants to share their opinions comfortably, despite its time-consuming characteristicThe researcher conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Before the implementation of the data collection procedure, she constructed an interview guide based on the literature review (Appendix 2). Then, the interview guide was reviewed by two experts in the field using "Expert Opinion Form" and after expert review, it was piloted with an EFL instructor. Based on the suggestions and the results of the piloting, the questions were revised accordingly. The details of this pre-data collection procedure will also be explained in detail in the following section "Data Collection Procedure".

The interview consisted of 22 open-ended questions divided into three sessions based on the design of "three series of interviews" proposed by Dolbeare and Schuman (Schuman, 1982, as cited in Seidman, 2006) to allow the interviewer and participant to delve into the experiences while building the context (Seidman, 2006, p.17). In this design, the context of the participants' experiences is established in the first interview and in the next session, the interviewees reconstruct their experiences in the context. Building on the previous meetings, the final interview aims to make participants reflect on their experiences and practices (Seidman, 2006). Considering this design, the researchers conducted the interview series, each of which included different themes of the study. The themes of each session, the number of the questions in each theme and the resources the questions based on, were presented in the following table.

Table 2

*Description of the interview guide*

| Session Number | Themes | Number of questions | Resources |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st Session | Learner Autonomy | 3 | (Lai et al., 2016; Welch, 2015) |
| | Technology Integration | 3 | |
| | Classroom Setting | 1 | |
| 2nd Session | Promoting Learner Autonomy | | (Nakata, 2011) |
| | - Learning management | 4 | |
| | - Motivation | 1 | |
| | - Out-of-class learning | 2 | |
| | - Decision-making | 1 | |
| | - Cooperation among learners | 1 | |
| 3rd Session | Technology Integration | 3 | (Lai, 2015a; Lai et al., 2016; Welch, 2015) |
| | Autonomous Language Learning with Technology | 4 | |

The sessions were organized in line with the design of Dolbeare and Schuman (Schuman, 1982, as cited in Seidman, 2006), three series of interviews, as mentioned before and the interview questions were adapted from the resources listed in Table 2. In the first session, the researcher aimed to get informed about the context of the study, to get familiar with the participants and to build a knowledge base for the following interview sessions. The general questions pertinent to learner autonomy, technology integration, and classroom setting were posed to the participants. In the following session, the interviewees answered nine questions investigating to what extent they help learners to be autonomous learners. In the last session, the link between technology integration and learner autonomy was intended to be created and seven questions under two different themes were asked to induce the participants' experiences and reflections.

**Data Collection Procedure**

In this study, three-series of semi-structured interviews were used to gather in-depth information about the real-life practices and experiences of the EFL instructors. The researcher followed a sequence of steps as illustrated in Figure 2.

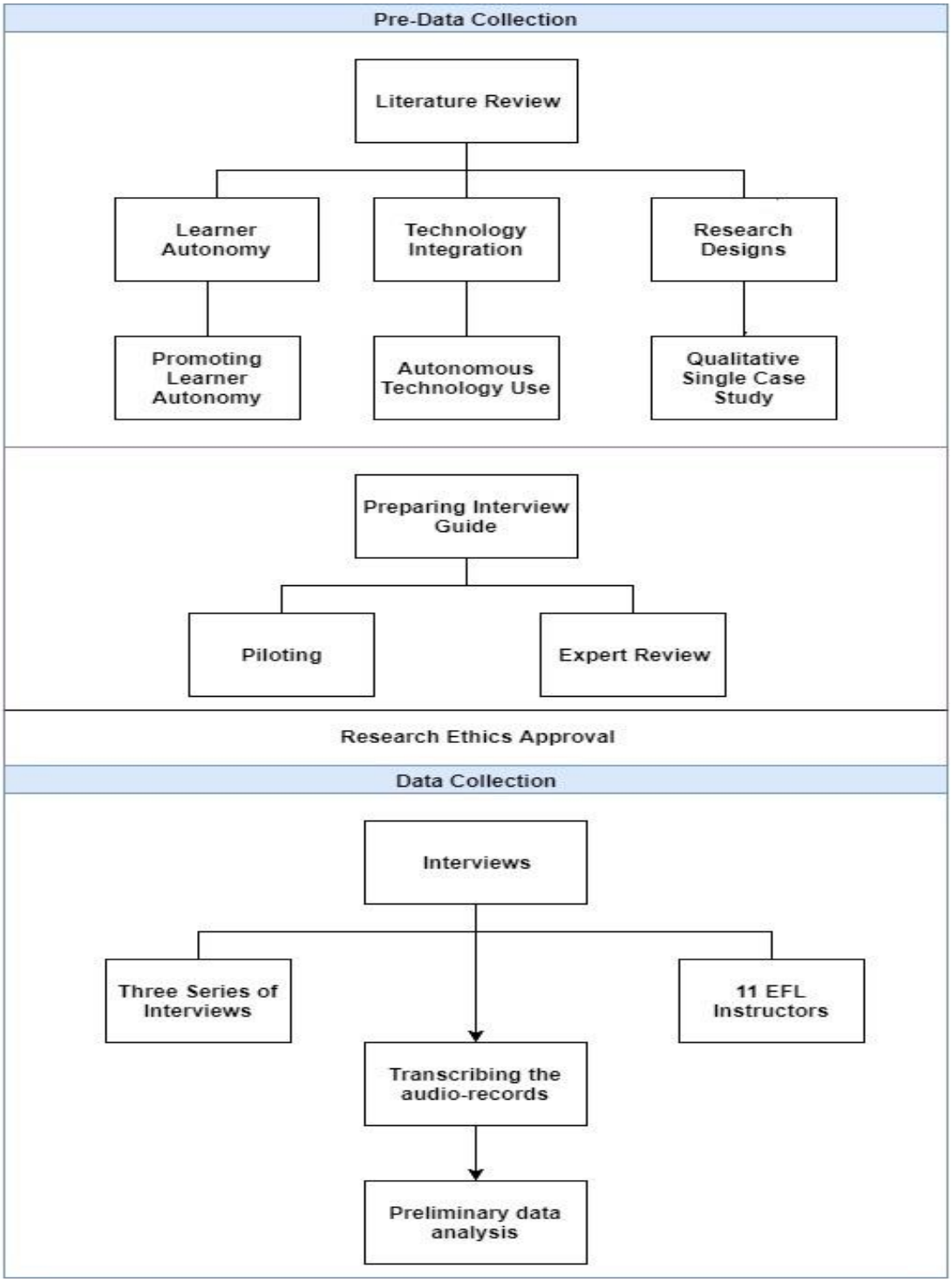



*Figure 2.* Data collection procedure

First of all, the researcher reviewed the literature about learner autonomy, technology integration in language learning, autonomous technology use, and qualitative research designs. Based on the literature review, the researcher created a detailed interview guide with the aim of answering the research questions. A carefully designed interview guide helps the researcher in different areas: "(a) by ensuring that the domain is properly covered

and nothing important is left out by accident; (b) by suggesting appropriate question wordings; (c) by offering a template for the opening statement; and (d) by listing some comments to bear in mind" (Dörnyei, 2007, p.137). After the creation of the interview guide, it was reviewed by two experts in the field and revised regarding the experts' suggestions. Before the interviews, a small-scale pilot case study was conducted to try the data collection instrument in a real context (Seidman, 2006). The pilot study conducted with one participant meeting the general criteria of the study. The instrument was applied to an EFL instructor for four years in a different university. After the piloting, the questions in the guide and the structure of the guide were revised as needed.

In the next phase of the qualitative data collection, the proposal of the study was submitted to the research ethics committee to gain the approval for conducting the research in foreign languages school. After getting the research ethics committee approval (Appendix 3), the researcher made contact visits to the EFL instructors and introduced the study. The purposefully selected and volunteer instructors signed two copies of the informed consent form which presents the study in detail and guarantees minimizing the risks of the study.

In the first interview session, the researcher got the demographic information of the participants and they established the context for the study. The questions related to learner autonomy, technology integration, their technology journeys and their classroom setting were directed to the participants. Besides constructing the context, the researcher tried to establish rapport with the participants and to prepare them for the second interview session which focused on the experiences and practices of the participants. Moreover, this session enabled the researcher and the participants to share the same understanding of the terms related to the study: learner autonomy, technology, technology integration, and promoting learner autonomy (Welch, 2015). In the second interview session, the questions were related to the practices of the EFL instructors for promoting learner autonomy. In this session, the participants were expected to share their real practices and experiences in detail. Finally, in the third interview session, the researcher asked questions related to both learner autonomy and the use of technology for promoting learner autonomy and she encouraged the participants to reflect on their experiences and their previous answers.

The interviews were conducted face to face in three different sessions to provide participants with the chance of clarification of and reflection on their statements (Polkinghorne, 2005).The language of the interview was selected according to the participants' preferences: Turkish, English or code switches between both languages. The

duration of the interviews showed differences depending on the participants' answers and their levels of willingness. The sessions were audio recorded and the oral data was transcribed after each session "to allow the detailed and to-and-fro reading required in the analysis of the qualitative data" (Polkinghorne, 2005, p.142). The researcher continued to conduct the interviews until she reached the saturation which means that the researcher stops adding cases since no additional information is available anymore for the development of the concepts (Dörnyei, 2007, p.127).

To sum up, the data collection procedure was divided into two steps: pre-data collection and data collection as shown in Figure 2. Starting with the literature review, the researcher created the interview guide. The interview guide was expert-reviewed and piloted to create a reliable data collection instrument. Finally, in the data collection procedure, the interviews with 11 EFL instructors were conducted and the researcher started to analyze the transcribed data.

**Data Analysis and Presentation**

In the beginning of data analysis, the data driven from audio-recorded interviews were transcribed using "InqScribe" software which enables to transcribe audio or video files in ease. After the transcription, all data were uploaded into NVivo 11, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), used to code the data into themes. Since this software improves the reliability of the coding process and it shows not only the final product but also the process of coding (Baralt, 2012, pp.227-228), Using NVivo 11 allowed the researcher to manage a great deal of data in a single file. It also enabled automatic search of words or themes in the data.

In this study, thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is a realist qualitative data analysis method used "for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). This kind of analysis includes iterative readings of data, coding and developing themes or categories (Baralt, 2012, pp.230-233; Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chick, 2014, p. 75). In this study, theoretical thematic analysis was conducted according to the steps of Braun and Clarke (2006). First of all, the researcher read all the data driven from the interviews to get a general sense of the data and took notes for the coding phase. Secondly, she generated initial codes for the potential themes. After listing a great number of codes, she sorted different codes into the potential themes and reviewed the themes during the analysis procedure. While the researcher was constructing the

themes, she also engaged in reviewing the related literature as a requirement of the theoretical thematic analysis. She first defined and then named the themes as a result of the literature review (e.g. Dörnyei, 2001; Hobbs & Dofs, 2015; Lai et al., 2016; O'Bryan, 2008). Lastly, 25% of the data were given to two inter-coders to validate the findings and overcome the issue of the subjectivity of the qualitative analysis (Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p.428)**.** The text was coded by two experts and later the coding results of all the coders were compared and discussed. After the intercoder discussion, the researcher revised the codes and themes and finalized the analysis.

As a result of the thematic analysis, three main categories/themes emerged: (a) autonomy behaviors, (b) technology integration and (c) problems inhibiting learner autonomy development. Under the first category, various themes emerged such as language advising, motivation, language learning strategies, promoting cooperation, learner differences, out-of-class learning, authoritative teaching practices, strict curriculum-based teaching and limited opportunities for monitoring process. These themes were categorized under two main themes: autonomy-supportive and non-autonomy-supportive behaviors. The second category consisted of four themes including instructors' perceptions of technology, reasons for technology integration, instructor' practices for promoting learner autonomy with technology and supporting autonomous technology use of students for language learning. Lastly, the third category revealed the problems instructors face while promoting learner autonomy with technology. This category also had two themes which are institution based and learner based problems. For the presentation of these categories and themes, various figures are created to give the general picture of the themes. Participant excerpts were also used to support the emergent themes using pseudonyms of the instructor.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, the methodology of the study was presented in detail. Firstly, the research questions were presented and then the research design was discussed with the reasons why the researcher chose this kind of inquiry. Later, the participants and the context of the study were thoroughly described. The details of data collection and analysis procedure were also presented. In the next chapter, the findings of this study will be uncovered and explained to the fullest extent in light of the research questions.

# CHAPTER 4

# RESULTS

## Introduction

This chapter explores the findings of the case study in the light of the data gathered through three series of interviews which focus on Turkish EFL instructors' practices in promoting learner autonomy and their technology use supporting in-class and out-of-class language learning. Three main themes emerged at the end of the thematic analysis: (a) Autonomy Behaviors, (b) Technology Integration, and (c) Problems Inhibiting Learner Autonomy Development. In this part, the results are introduced in terms of these emerging themes respectively by answering these two research questions guiding the study;

1. To what extent are EFL instructors ready to promote learner autonomy?
2. How do EFL instructors use technology in promoting learner autonomy?

While the first theme responds to the first research question, technology integration represents findings which are respondent to the second research question. Additionally, the last theme serves as an answer to both questions, which unfolds the problems the instructors faced with in the process of promoting learner autonomy with technology.

## Autonomy Behaviors

To start with the first research question (i.e., To what extent are EFL instructors ready to promote learner autonomy?), two distinct categories emerged: instructors' autonomy supportive and non-supportive behaviors. While instructors' autonomy-supportive behaviors include such themes as language advising, motivation, language learning strategies, promoting cooperation, learner differences, and out-of-class learning, non-autonomy-supportive behaviors contain three themes: authoritative teaching practices,

strict curriculum-based teaching and limited opportunities for monitoring process. These emergent categories with the themes are shown in Figure 3.

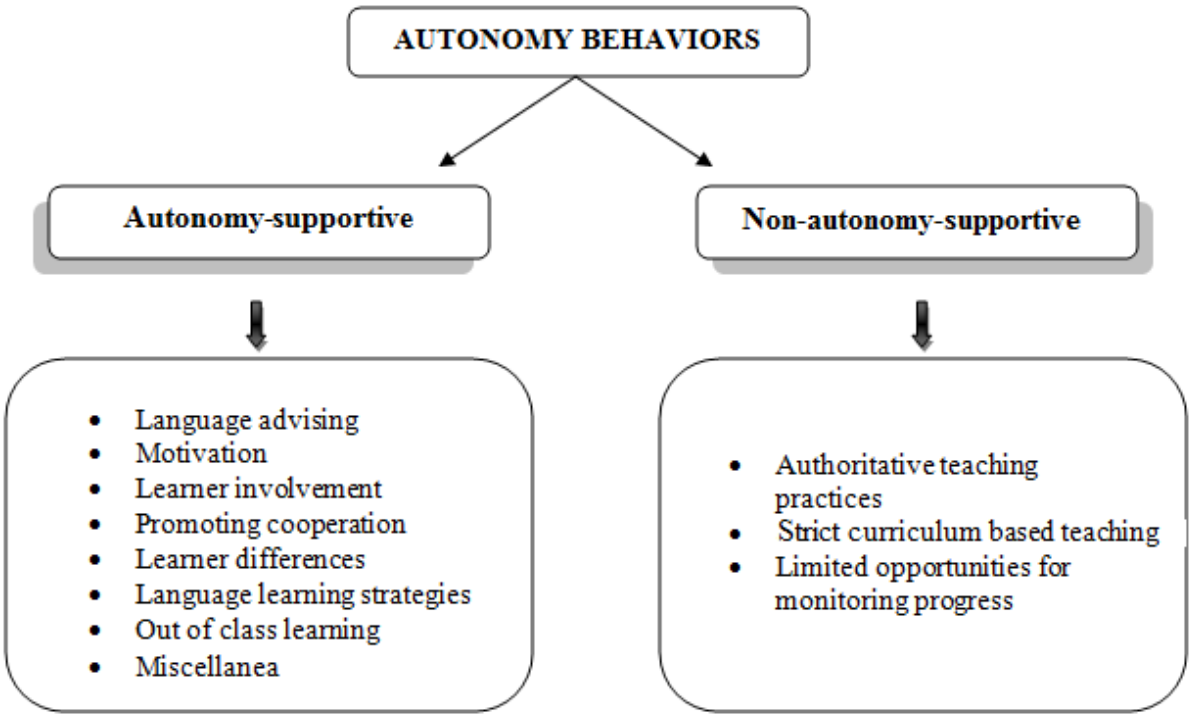



*Figure 3.* Emerging categories and themes under "Autonomy Behaviors"

Further details regarding the sub-themes under each theme will be provided and explained sample teacher excerpts in the following parts.

### Instructors' autonomy-supportive behaviors

#### *Language advising*

The language instructors expressed that they help learners in many ways in terms of language advising. They provide the learners with language resources and content of the learning with both in-class and out-of-class support. While they provide resources, they also take the learners' willingness into consideration and guide the learners according to their needs and interests.

In terms of learning resources, most instructors claimed that they provide learners with language learning resources whenever they ask for help. On this issue, one of the instructors, Emily, expressed that when learners demand help for their out-of-class learning, she guides the learners according to their learning goals.

*Excerpt 1: They [students] ask me how they can get a high score on a language exam. (...) I give them resources about language exams. I also recommend some language learning websites which give English courses.*

In addition to providing learners with language learning materials, Marry also further indicated that she uploads resources online, even if learners do not demand, so that they can have access whenever they want. She said that;

*Excerpt 2: I upload all the language learning materials on Edmodo [an online learning management system] so the students can study them whenever they wish.*

However, when asked whether all the students use these resources, she said that;

*Excerpt 3: Not all of them take the advantage of these materials but willing students to learn English well or those students inclined to languages. Those who aren't interested in learning a foreign language ignore them.*

From this response, it seems evident that even though instructors provide learners with many resources, the willingness of learners qualifies how effectively they use those resources. So, almost all the instructors were aware of this factor and stated during the interviews that the learners' willingness to learn English enables them to put much more effort in helping them for their out-of-class learning. For instance, Sheila expressed that;

*Excerpt 4: (...) I do my best to help demanding learners but I can't say I spend much time on those not interested in learning.*

James agreed with Sheila on this issue telling that;

*Excerpt 5: We [language teachers] mostly focus on the learners who are interested in and aware of the importance of learning a foreign language.*

In addition to instructors' autonomy-supportive efforts based on learners' willingness to study English, the instructors underlined the importance of the learners' needs and interests while providing help. The following excerpt shows how one of the instructors, David, guides the learners according to their needs and interests;

*Excerpt 6: If a student wants some techniques for getting a high score from an exam, I lead him to study on those techniques by recommending some resources. But the others just want to learn spoken English and I also lead them to speaking clubs which are available at the university.*

Lastly, the instructors said that not only do they provide resources, they also suggest the content of learners' out-of-class learning based on their needs and goals. Considering this fact, James, who pays regard to the proficiency level and goals of the learners, indicated that;

> *Excerpt 7: I suggest freshmen and sophomores to study on daily language expressions in case they can use them abroad.*

The findings, in general, conclude that the instructors adopt the role of a language advisor or a resource person to support the willing learners for their out-of-class learning. They also pay attention to the learners' needs and interests while guiding learners and recommending resources.

### *Motivation*

The responses showed the instructors are aware of how important the willingness is to learn a language autonomously and they motivate the learners in several ways. They attempt to increase the learners' goal-orientedness by verbal encouragement, use interesting technological tools, try to increase learners' self-confidence, establish a good rapport with learners and create opportunities for peer support.

First of all, almost all the instructors claimed that they try to increase the learners' goal-orientedness by introducing study-abroad chances. For instance, Sarah shared how she introduced a mobility program to motivate her students;

> *Excerpt 8: At the beginning of each year, I give information about Erasmus [student mobility program]. So they [students] realize how important English learning is to be accepted for Erasmus Program.*

Additionally, Emily who worked in Erasmus Office of the university for a while, also attempted to motivate her students with study-abroad chances and she stated that;

> *Excerpt 9: I say if you [students] study and improve your English, you have a chance to go abroad. I observe that they set their goals in this way.*

Apart from abroad chances, the instructors try to motivate the learners by showing the value of speaking a foreign language and spend time on explaining the importance of English for learners' future career especially for engineering, civil aviation and pharmacology students, for whom being an English speaker is of great importance for their

profession. Arranging some meetings in class or in his office for this purpose, James expressed that;

> *Excerpt 10: I explain that speaking English is a prerequisite to have a better career and to be a distinguished engineer.*

Agreeing with his colleague, Christian also described how important English is for civil aviation students and how he makes them aware of this fact.

> *Excerpt 11: I tell them you [students] can't survive without the English language nowadays. So they know if they don't know English in our department, aviation, they cannot find a job. Even the interviewers don't bother to ask if you speak English [in job interviews]. (...) They ask how many other languages you speak. So they know but we [*instructors*] do motivate them on top of that.*

The instructors not only motivate their students verbally but also use technological tools to make language learning more attractive. They usually use educational tools and games using learners' mobile phones. They believe technology encourages learners to learn English and engages all the students in the class. For example, Marry stated that she uses *Kahoot*, an online classroom response system, and her students love this game-like activity. Marry said she gets feedback on her instruction and monitors the learners' progress through a fun activity while motivating learners.

> *Excerpt 12: With Kahoot, I ask many questions about what I taught and get feedback about their [students'] progress. They enjoy having their mobile phones in their hands and do something with it. They always want me to use this tool.*

Another instructor, Michael also uses *Kahoot* and agrees with Marry for the effectiveness of this tool. He also mentioned another tool named *Augmented Reality* and he pointed out that this tool motivates his students in the class. He explained how he managed to use this tool in the following excerpt;

> *Excerpt 13: The teacher creates the content adding digital layers to a certain real-life object beforehand on its website. Students just point their mobile phones to anything you have created before and see the digital layers you added before there.*

In terms of motivation, many instructors also underscore the importance of students' self-confidence for learning a language. Because the learners perceive English as too difficult to learn, the instructors stated that they use simple questions or simple learning materials to enable learners to feel the achievement and thus to increase the learners' self-confidence. For instance, Andrew said that;

> *Excerpt 14: While teaching a structure in class, I ask a few simple questions. When they [students] see they can answer the questions, they get motivated.*

Christian agrees with Andrew and also shared his practice.

> *Excerpt 15: I use the traditional way of giving homework. But my homework is also a little bit easy but long. Easy, I mean if they [students] are not really lazy, they don't make any mistakes.*

Michael also shared his practices on this issue and uttered these words;

> *Excerpt 16: I use simple Wikipedia, simple version of Wikipedia. The sentences are not complex, in basic English so I just look for a word and just copy the text and take it to the classroom. I give it to students as translation homework. Because it is simple English, they think they can do it. It keeps them motivated.*

Another point made by the instructors is about creating a good rapport with the learners and this relationship decreases the anxiety towards the language classes. Some instructors noted that their students can access them whenever they need via e-mails or telephone calls. For example, James said that;

> *Excerpt 17: My students can call me whenever they want and they try to speak English on the phone*

Furthermore, Christian added that;

> *Excerpt 18: Some teachers don't have a good communication with their student. This is, of course, a bad thing for the students but I am kind of friends of my students."*

Given that, these responses verify that the instructors pay special attention to the communication with their students.

Last but not least, the instructors also highlighted the importance of peers for increasing motivation for learning English out-of-school. Supporting this finding, one of the

instructors, Sheila, pointed out that she creates mixed groups for in- and out-of-class activities and these activities contribute to the success of the learners with low proficiency level.

> *Excerpt 19: In my mechanical engineering class, there are students who have really high proficiency level and I make mixed groups in which there is one student with high proficiency level.*

Sheila added that she heard a conversation between two students during a group work activity in class;

> *Excerpt 20: I [the student] was in your level but you [the student with lower proficiency level] learn English gradually. If you put some effort, you can achieve."*

After hearing this conversation, she realized that while group work increases the learners' success, peers have also an important impact on language learners' motivation.

Overall, the responses revealed that the instructors use a variety of strategies to increase their students' motivation by encouraging learners verbally, using technology, increasing students' self-confidence, building a good rapport with students and taking advantage of peer support.

### *Learner involvement*

Involving learners into the decision-making process, one of the cornerstones of learner autonomy development, emerged as another theme. The majority of instructors, nine out of 11, expressed that they pay special attention to the learners' preferences and make changes in the way of their teaching according to the learners' decisions. For example, Ryan claimed that he asks the learners' needs and preferences at the beginning of each semester and then he takes those decisions into consideration while preparing his syllabus. Christian further added that he tries to help learners to find out their learning needs.

> *Excerpt 21: I have my own curriculum. (...) First, I suggest what I teach and give them [students] two weeks to think and tell me what they need. Then I prepare my material according to their needs. (...) Since in the beginning, they don't know what they need.*

In this way, he helps learners to make decisions on their learning in line with their needs by giving a period of time to think. Furthermore, some instructors also drew attention to getting learners' feedback and reflections through all the semester. The instructors claimed that learners' decisions play a role in the construction of the syllabus and they make changes based on learner reflections. For example, even though she gives the syllabus of the course beforehand in the beginning of each semester, Sarah changes it according to the learners' preferences.

> *Excerpt 22: I ask for their reflections about the lesson and ask what they want to learn next week. (...) I revise the next week's syllabus accordingly.*

Another instructor who revises her teaching according to the learners' reflections was Emily and similarly, she revised her teaching based on the learners' reflections.

> *Excerpt 23: I think language teachers should get feedback from students and share the responsibility of taking decisions about learning with the student. Firstly, I started teaching English on "OBS system [a learning management system]" but the students found it boring. Also, I spoke just English in the class, they didn't understand anything. So I tried to find different ways to transfer the knowledge. I made a lot of experiments according to the students' reactions and preferences.*

Besides taking decisions about the syllabus and the way of their teaching, some instructors give learners choices about the content of the assignments. The learners have the freedom to choose what they want to study out-of-class. Accordingly, Sheila said that;

> *Excerpt 24: If I give presentation or writing assignment, I give a few alternative subjects and I ask them [students] to choose one and study on it.*

All in all, the findings suggest that the language instructors value the learners' needs, preferences, and decisions, which is an indicator of a learner-centered approach and a step in the development of learner autonomy. By involving learners into decision making, they give voice to learners in their own learning.

### *Promoting cooperation*

The majority of the participants, nine out of 11, promote cooperation among the learners both inside and outside the class. They believe the usefulness of peer/group learning and

take advantage of peer feedback in class activities for promoting learner autonomy. In this case, Emily stated that;

> *Excerpt 25: Peer feedback instead of teacher feedback really supports the learner autonomy. In groups and in the whole class, students should give such comments to their peers.*

Emily also added that instructors should use peer or group work to support learning in addition to peer feedback. Another instructor, Marry, expressed that supporting peer learning decreases her responsibilities especially in large classrooms where it is too hard to communicate with each student. More specifically, some instructors benefit from peer learning in writing activities. Here are some examples of how they benefit from peer learning, Adam stated that;

> *Excerpt 26: I want students to write two or three sentences in a paper about anything they like. I ask them to change what they have written and to give feedback to each other. (...) I do believe peer feedback is useful but it is not easy to use in a crowded class.*

In this case, while Adam uses peer feedback, he also gives learners freedom in their writing which includes whatever learners choose to write. Sarah also takes advantage of peer feedback in the writing session and her case is in the following excerpt;

> *Excerpt 27: I mainly use [peer feedback] for writing sessions. After each student finishes their writing, I randomly distribute the papers to the class to identify grammar and vocabulary mistakes. (...)Sometimes they make a mistake on their own paper, which they aren't aware of but when they see it in their peers' paper they can easily see and correct it. That is why they can learn better.*

This comment highlights that while giving feedback to their peers, the learners use their metalinguistic knowledge and this case helps them learn better.

While many instructors claimed to support peer feedback/learning for in-class activities, some of them asserted that they also prefer to encourage students to work together outside the classroom. They explained the effectiveness of peer learning outside the class and why they make use of expert-novice matching. For instance, David reported he encourages his students to study together for the exams and to learn from each other. Interestingly, he found out that the low-achieving students getting help from high-achievers could get

higher scores because they learned different things from each friend before the exams. James also agreed with David on expert-novice matching and he added that;

> *Excerpt 28: I cannot help outside the classroom all the time and I match my students to complete out-of-school activities and assignments together. I ask academically weak students to present the work done outside the class to the friends in class time. Thus, they can learn and develop better.*

This case shows that the instructor, James, try to coordinate in and out of class activities while promoting peer learning. Besides doing this, he also transfers the responsibility of the learning to the learners by encouraging them to learn from each other. Additionally, Sarah also mentioned how important the learning groups are and said;

> *Excerpt 29: I prefer expert-novice matched groups for out-of-class projects because while weak students fail, the better group can create brilliant projects. So those heterogeneous groups are more beneficial for my students.*

To conclude, the findings showed that the language instructors make use of peer support for language learning in and out of school. Underscoring the benefits of peer feedback, they expressed the importance of peer learning to develop language skills. In a nutshell, these findings also appear to be a signal of language instructors' effort for the development of learner autonomy.

### *Learner differences*

Another finding of the study is about instructors' awareness of the learner differences. They value these differences and adapt their classes according to the learners' learning styles, proficiency levels, interest areas and their needs for their future life. They consider learner differences as an advantage for their teaching environment. For this case, Christian uttered the following words;

> *Excerpt 30: I have lazy students, smart students, who like me and hate me. Some of them are neutral. They come and sleep in the classroom. I see them as a different experience and I really enjoy it. I feel as if I walk in the garden of flowers of different colors with different smells.(...) I don't like all smart students in a class. I would be in a big trouble!*

Some instructors stated that they plan their courses addressing different kinds of learning styles and preferences. One of the instructors, Marry, expressed that she has many students with different learning styles and she uses different types of activities to engage all of them.

> *Excerpt 31: I integrate different language skills and activities to draw the attention of all the students. Instead of adopting just one way of teaching, I prefer using a mixed approach to teaching.*

Additionally, Sarah pointed out that a teacher should not only be aware of learner differences, but also each and every learner should be aware whether they are visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. She believes their awareness is a prerequisite to being autonomous language learners.

Another point made by the instructor is about the learners' needs and they adapt their courses in line with the needs of learners. In this case, Michael reported that;

> *Excerpt 32: I just start teaching some general basic English in the first weeks but when I see their levels, I start to change [my syllabus] like a tailor. (...)In the public administration department, I am supposed to teach some departmental terms. (...) but, firstly, I need to teach them some basic English grammar first or basic translation methods to help them understand those agreements."*

Besides observing the class in the progress, Emily put more emphasis on need analysis beforehand to identify the learners' needs and expectations for the current language course especially for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. On this issue, Adam also believes the adaptation of courses according to the needs of the learners and uttered that;

> *Excerpt 33: I choose the reading texts used in my classes according to [students' majors such as] economics, business administration and engineering. (...) the passages are fully about their major and they get more interested in it.*

Lastly, some instructors drew attention to learners' being technology natives. They expressed that their students were born with technology and their learning preferences are shaped by this fact. So, they should arrange the courses to keep up with the needs of this technological era. Considering this fact, Emily and Michael's responses are provided respectively below;

*Excerpt 34: (...)I think technology has changed their [students'] learning habits and they are used to take the information in small pieces. (...) So we [teachers] should transform our environment to support their learning. Also, if a learner gets information and communicates with technological devices rather than face to face, then we should put the content of what we teach through these devices.*

Emily's excerpt highlights that the instructors put some effort to change their way of teaching as much as possible in accordance with the learners' way of learning. Michaels' ideas, in this case, are also very similar to Emily's.

*Excerpt 35: (...) in classical teaching, students get bored easily because they are always accustomed to different input [such as] images, sounds, and videos but if they have just a teacher, his lecturing, in the class, sometimes they get bored. We need to design a curriculum that integrates all the affordances of technology provides us and to use them for helping them learn things easier.*

All in all, it is revealed that the language instructors seem to be aware of learner differences and arrange their teaching environment according to these differences. They also benefit from the technology in this procedure.

### *Language learning strategies*

The data analysis revealed that instructors act as a guide for language learners and provide learners with language learning strategies by expanding their strategy repertoire. Based on their own language learning experiences and pre-service learning experiences, the instructors give clues about how to learn a foreign language effectively. Accordingly, Ryan and Emily pointed out that they share their learning experiences and what methods they used to learn English. Therefore, they offer those methods to students and the willing learners often benefit from their suggestions. Also, Ryan added that he observes his role as a guide in the class and he spends time on how to learn a foreign language, how to improve language learning skills and how to speak English fluently at the beginning of each semester. He thinks explaining all the alternatives to learn a language helps learners become more independent in their learning. Agreeing with Ryan, James also explained that he makes learners think about the nature of language learning and expressed that;

*Excerpt 36: I sometimes direct my students to do research on how to promote their language learning and how to learn a language. Also, I try to give them clues."*

In addition to metacognitive awareness about language, some instructor give some specific cognitive strategies to learn and use the language better. For example, Adam said that;

*Excerpt 37: I recommend them to memorize some more words. The more they memorize the longer sentences they can write."*

In conclusion, the language instructors put effort to help language learners by giving language learning strategies based on their experiences and their previous education on teaching a foreign language. They spend time on teaching how to learn a language in and outside the classroom.

***Promoting out-of-class learning***

The interviews revealed that the language instructors support language learners with out-of-class learning activities by convincing them they can use English for their daily life. For instance, Christian, always talking to students in English in and outside the class, gave an example from his practice;

*Excerpt 38: A few weeks ago, we [teacher with the students] went to a little place in the basement and we played paintball. Everything was in the English language. We also went skiing and picnic to different places. This is another way of taking the English language outside of the class. Doing such activities, I try to convince them it is language and they [language learners] can use it in their daily life.*

Like Christian, many instructors encourage learners to continue using and learning English after the class time. For instance, Emily explained how she turned her course into a flipped classroom which requires studying the language content and doing related tasks out-of-the classroom. Emily further added that;

*Excerpt 39: My students are gradually getting used to studying in their free time and it is an important way of fostering learner autonomy.*

Emily mentioned the significance of technology in this procedure as well. Regarding the use of technology for autonomous language learning, Sarah explained how she uses an application to promote vocabulary learning;

> *Excerpt 40: I started to use an application for vocabulary practicing, Vocabulary on the Move. Some messages are sent to the students' cell phones twice or three times a week and those messages include weekly vocabulary. So they can revise while they are at home, while walking, on the bus, wherever they are.*

Moreover, James said that he provides learners with some web pages to study language content and reported that his students study the content at home and come to class with some questions about the studied points. They revise the content in class shortly. On the other hand, some instructors focus on a few learners who have difficulty in understanding the content of the lesson or have low proficiency level by comparison with their peers. For example, Sheila stated that she gives academically-weak learners extra work to improve their language skills out-of-the classroom. Supporting with extra assignments, she helps her students. James also explained a couple of practices which he uses to support out-of-school language learning as in the following interview excerpt;

> *Excerpt 41: I sometimes give an assignment to some students who need extra effort. For students who have difficulty in speaking skills, I ask to create a conversation with a friend and record this conversation. Once, I asked them to shoot a short movie about their hometown for foreigners as well. I also keep the records of those assignments and use them to monitor their progress. I try to encourage the students by giving this kind of interactive activities.*

After all, it can be concluded that the language instructors promote out-of-class learning by changing their teaching methodology, by assigning extra assignments and by transferring the language use to outside the classroom.

### ***Miscellanea***

This theme consists of four sub-themes including “preferring process-oriented assessment”, “giving learners the responsibility of learning”, “providing learners with a learning map” and “guiding learners to set learning goals”. These sub-themes didn’t fall

under any main themes or match with a current theme. Thus, they were aggregated under the theme named “Miscellanea”.

Many instructors expressed that they give particular importance to the assessment of learners not only through a one-hour-exam but also by looking at their performance throughout the semester. For instance, Marry indicated that;

> *Excerpt 42: My students evaluate themselves according to the results of exams but the exam scores are just numbers. I do speaking and writing activities in addition to grammar-based teaching. Then I observe their progress through those activities. I also add extra points to their general grade for their performance in my classes.*

Agreeing with Marry on this case, James also commented that he keeps track of out-of-class assignments and projects completed by the students in addition to their performance in class activities. So he assesses the learners with multiple sources of evaluation. Moreover, Sarah also drew attention to formative assessment besides summative assessment. She expressed that;

> *Excerpt 43: Each and every week I administer mini quizzes in the classroom. So students can revise and see their progress. (...)So they can see their own weaknesses and strengths.*

Thus, while she assesses and evaluates her students with mini quizzes, she enables learners with figuring out their weaknesses and strengths. The learners also monitor their own learning, which is a crucial step in fostering learner autonomy.

The other sub-theme comprises the findings on giving the responsibility of learning to learners and some instructors believe that in today's learner-centered language teaching environment, the instructors should transfer the learning responsibility to the learners themselves. For instance, Marry give responsibility for the preparation for the next week’s class and said that;

> *Excerpt 44: Every week, I upload the materials and the next week’s requirements on Edmodo and the students have to download them and be prepared for the following class. Doing this, I try to give them the responsibility for their learning because I don’t give any choice they need to sign in the system, get the material or assignment and do it.*

This excerpt highlights that Marry benefits from technology to enable learners to take the responsibility for their learning. Another instructor, Christian also uses a different technological tool to give learners responsibility for their learning.

> *Excerpt 45: Every day one student is responsible for sending one paragraph, an easy paragraph at night [as a Whatsapp message to the learners in the group]. We read that paragraph in the morning before saying good morning.*

Taking small steps in transferring the responsibility, they believe that they make student responsible for their learning. In addition to these comments, Emily changed her teaching method into flipped learning and puts much emphasis on learner autonomy. She proposed that;

> *Excerpt 46: I observe that by forcing students to study the content themselves, they take the responsibility of learning; I [learner] should learn this, I should study this on my own rather than waiting for the teacher to expose these. (...) So I guess it supports learner autonomy.*

Another point made by the language instructors was to provide learners with a learning map. Some of them pointed out the importance of giving syllabus at the beginning of the semester and they expressed that the learners know what they will learn and see in the following sessions. By giving the syllabus, the instructors believe that the learners monitor and evaluate their learning according to the objectives of the course. In line with this finding, Emily' comment is as follows;

> *Excerpt 47: I believe whatever we [teachers] teach, we should tell them [students] 'at the end of this lesson, you can gain these skills' to help them monitor their learning. (...) They should have a mind map. One of my students told me that I gave tasks of every week in the beginning, just in the first session, and that enabled her to have a general picture of what she would learn.*

Lastly, instructors expressed that setting goals is crucial for learners to be motivated and to be autonomous language learners. They put effort into helping their students to set their goals. Also, in some instances, they try to persuade them English is important by showing what they can do with learning English. For example, Sarah said that their students come to class without any learning goals because they always fail through their language education. She noted that she shows something valuable to learn a foreign language in the

first session of the semester and try to persuade them to learn English for these specific aims.

### Instructors' non-autonomy-supportive behaviors

#### *Authoritative teaching practices*

The findings showed that while the instructors put effort on more learner-centered teaching, some of them still take the full responsibility of their students' learning and perceive themselves as the major source of information. For instance, even though Michael is aware of the importance of learner autonomy, he explains his controlling behavior as in the following comment;

> *Excerpt 48: Most of my colleagues including me sometimes forget about student autonomy. We think we are the only responsible person for their learning. But we forget that at least in some parts of learning experience they [students] need to be in charge. But we take control of everything happening in the classroom.*

Like Michael, some instructors are conscious of learner autonomy and do many things to develop learner autonomy. They, nevertheless, sometimes act the other way around. For example, even though Adam takes the needs of learners into consideration while choosing teaching materials, it is clear from his response that he takes all the responsibility of the decisions taken for the learners and prefers to have the authority of his class. On this concern, he expressed that;

> *Excerpt 49: I choose all the passages. Maybe if students offer something so I can accept it. But, so far I haven't got any offers from my students so my courses are basically teacher-oriented.*

Also, Marry experiences the same situation. While she is in favor of peer learning, she doesn't want to lose control and take an authoritative role during the group or peer work. The following quote illustrates this point.

> *Excerpt 50: I make groups of three to create a dialogue in speaking sessions. But I check all the groups one by one and correct their grammatical and pronunciation mistakes if they have. It is most of the time me who corrects the mistakes.*

On the other hand, there are two instructors who have 30 years of teaching experience and are more inclined to the traditional way of teaching in comparison with the other instructors. Both of them prefer to be the only person who controls all the things happening in the classroom. For instance, David's response is an indicator of authoritative teacher behaviors.

> *Excerpt 50: I love to be the one who teaches in class. (...) While using technology in class, I need to stop the video and get involved in the teaching by giving extra information, making things clear or correcting some parts. If I have to use technology, it should be under my control.*

In short, even though the instructors can be considered as autonomy supportive in many areas, some of them are authoritative. That is, they want to control the students' learning and perceive themselves as the major authority in the class.

### *Strict curriculum-based teaching*

Another sub-theme of non-autonomy-supportive behaviors is strict curriculum-based teaching. Four instructors stated that they teach English in line with a curriculum and they need to teach all the points in the curriculum throughout a semester. Curriculum issue will be handled under the category "Problems inhibiting learner autonomy development" but here instructors' strict curriculum-based teaching is highlighted. It can be understood from the responses of the instructors that they need to adhere to the requirements of the curriculum. For example, Michael expressed that;

> *Excerpt 51: At the end of the term, I need to finish everything in the curriculum. So I am in a hurry.*

When they are asked if they change the curriculum according to the students' demands, some of them said that they change the way they teach or add suggestions as extra activities. On this issue, Ryan said that;

> *Excerpt 52: Actually I am trying to go according to the curriculum but I ask the students to tell what kind of learning styles they like most. Then I decide how to teach them.*

This response highlights that even though instructors attempt to tailor their teaching to make it more learner-centered, they are still under the pressure of institution requirements.

### *Limited opportunities to monitoring progress*

When each instructor was asked to what extent they help learners to monitor or evaluate their own learning progress, the responses of many instructors didn't reveal many practices in this phase of learner autonomy development. Three instructors stated explicitly that they do not do anything special for monitoring process. Their comments are as follows;

James:

> *Excerpt 53: I don't think I do anything to support my students in this phase.*

Christian*:*

> *Excerpt 54: I have never asked my students how they monitor or evaluate or done anything special.*

Sarah:

> *Excerpt 55: I am not doing something special for it. We use CEFR but we don't do something especially for checking their progress in each level like self-assessment parts in the CEFR. There are parts like [in the book] that but I don't use it in my classes. So just midterm exam and final exams or mini quizzes we use to learn their progress.*

It is seen from these excerpts that the instructors do not pay much attention to guide the learners on how to monitor their learning progress even if they do many autonomy supportive activities.

## Technology Integration

The second research question was related to language instructors' technology use in promoting learner autonomy. One main theme emerged from the analysis and there are four sub-themes that fall under this theme: perceptions of technology, reasons for technology integration, promoting language learning with technology and supporting autonomous language learning with technology. These emergent themes are shown in Figure 4.

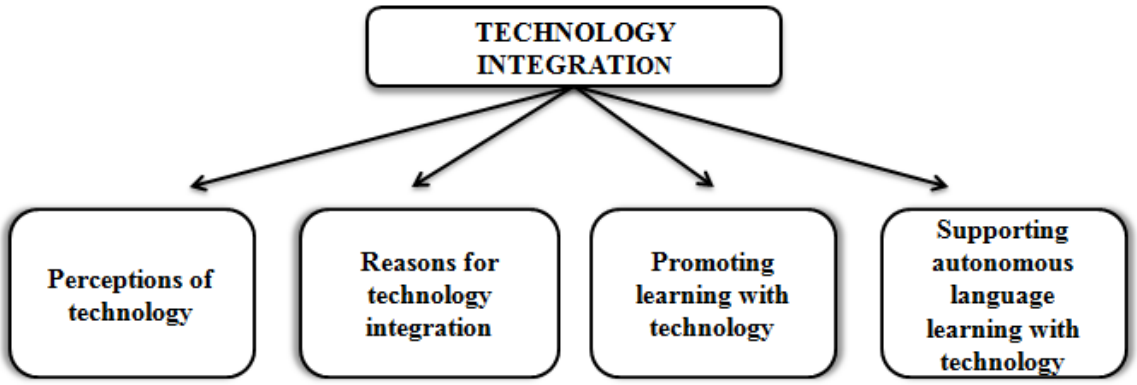



*Figure 4.* Emerging themes under "Technology Integration".

### Perceptions of technology integration

When the participants were asked how they think about the relationship between technology and language teaching, the instructors' perceptions of technology aggregated under two sub-themes: positive and negative. The findings are explained with the excerpts from the interviews below.

#### *Positive perceptions of technology*

The findings revealed that almost all the instructors have positive perceptions of technology use in today's language classrooms. The instructors defined technology for language learning differently from each other and positively as important, fundamental, a must, the spirit of their teaching and so forth. Defining technology as the spirit of his teaching, Christian explains the relationship between technology and language teaching as in the following excerpt;

> *Excerpt 56: Nowadays, teaching a language with technology is almost fundamental. Because, whenever asked, every teacher suggests watching movies, listening to music, and other stuff to learn a foreign language, which is impossible without using technology. (...) We have to have access to technology all the time whenever we teach English or any languages.*

In addition to Christian's response, Ryan expressed the importance of technology not only for language teaching but for all kinds and levels of education.

> *Excerpt 57: Technology is very important in education, I mean in every kind of education such as basic learning at primary school, high school, at university*

*or college. I think each lecturer has to try to benefit from technology as much as possible.*

Another point was the importance of technology integration for attracting students' attention and Emily stated that;

*Excerpt 58: I am in favor of putting technology in especially today's learning environment.*

In the following excerpt, Michael describes why technology is inevitable in today's classrooms.

*Excerpt 59: Students in our class were born with these [technological] devices. (...) so we [teachers] need to create some activities for those technology-native students. So, those activities can easily attract their attention and keep them busy during the lessons. (...) So we can use the tablets and mobile phones students have in their pockets. They already use those devices for messaging, watching videos but we can use them to help them learn things easier.*

On the other hand, some instructors emphasized the limits of technology use in class even if they find it useful. On this concern, Adam explained that;

*Excerpt 60: It's beneficial but we [teachers] should control the limits to what extent we should use the technology. If it fully depends on technology then I don't think it is language teaching but it is just like technology teaching.*

These findings suggest that technology has a positive impact on language instructors and is perceived as a useful tool for their language teaching environment.

### *Negative perceptions of technology*

While many instructors talked about the advantages of technology use in language classrooms, some instructors also highlighted some disadvantages such as being addicted to technology, distracting attention during class time, difficulty of preventing misconduct and making individuals lazier. Indicating his concern about the overuse of technology in learners' daily life, Andrew pointed out that;

*Excerpt 61: I am afraid our students have been technology addicts and that terrifies me.*

One of the instructors, Sheila, also added that the learners act like addicts and they continue to use their mobiles phones during the class time. For example, they take photos and upload them to *Instagram*. Another concern was about difficulty of preventing misconduct. Marry and Sarah commented on this concern and Sarah's comment is as follows;

> *Excerpt 62: There is a disadvantage like controlling. For example, we can administer testing by using technology. But we cannot control the students. I mean cheating. And also students sometimes copy paste a lot [in their writing assignments] and we may not control their copy paste things all the time.*

Lastly, Christian, who believes individuals cannot learn English without reading much, claimed that the decrease in reading rates has resulted from the use of technology. He explains his ideas in these words;

> *Excerpt 63: The disadvantage of technology is that it makes us lazy. Look at these books [pointing to his library], we have around 300 English language students but none of them or let's say at most ten of them have borrowed books from me. They just read short messages or things like that. I think the technology is the reason of why we do not read and I am concerned about the future. I think we are in the wrong direction using technology.*

Given these excerpts, it can be concluded that although the instructors are in favor of technology integration in language classes, the problems that current technology bring about make them anxious about the effective use of technology in the classes.

### Reasons for technology integration

Through the interviews, the participants expressed why they prefer using technology in their classes and explained the reasons behind their technology integration. The findings related to those reasons were divided into three sub-themes as "attracting learners' attention, making language teaching easier and saving time". These sub-themes are described in detail below.

#### *Attracting leaners' attention*

When asked how and why they started to use technology in their language classes, many instructors uttered these recurrent words; "boring without technology". The instructors oft-

repeatedly expressed that taking advantage of technology was a necessity to attract their students' attention in language classes. Considering this fact, Christian described how he started to integrate technology in these words;

> *Excerpt 64: I had to change my way of teaching. The necessity was to attract my students' attention. The necessity taught me how to teach.*

Sheila, sharing the same experience with Christian, said that it was a necessity to use technology since her language classes were boring and she felt unsatisfied with her teaching. So, she expressed that;

> *Excerpt 65: I tried to use some different things like blogs, educational games, interactive activities and so forth.*

Some of the instructors also stated that they started to use technology with the CDs and i-tools, complementary tools of course books. Then, they realized that their teaching was more effective ever before and started to use many different educational tools. In this case, Emily's explanation is as in the following excerpt;

> *Excerpt 66: I observed that students are more interested in. Rather than just staring at the book, they have another thing to do. Then I went further and started using learning management systems. This year, especially I focused on these systems such as Edmodo and Edpuzzle.*

As another point made by a few instructors, teachers' successful technology use evokes admiration among the learners. Michael's comment is one of the examples of this situation.

> *Excerpt 67: Generally they [students] do not expect you to know much about technology. Because they think they are the younger generation and supposed to be the one who knows best in the class. When you [teacher] just show them what they do not know already, they get interested in what you do. So they start asking questions. So I think it motivates them.*

From the responses of the participants, it seems that the language instructors desire to attract the learners' attention during the lessons and try to create more interactive activities for their students. To this end, they benefit from technology itself.

### *Facilitating language teaching*

The responses showed that the instructors use technology also to facilitate their teaching both for in class and out-of-class activities. For example, Marry stated that while using learning management systems enables communication between the teacher and the learner, they decrease the burden of hard copy issue.

> *Excerpt 68: I use Edmodo to communicate with my students easily. I can send my materials and they also can share their resources and assignments on this platform. I don't need to spend time to have the materials photocopied. Everyone has an account and they cannot claim they haven't seen the shared materials, announcements, assignments and so forth.*

James also takes advantage of technology for in-class activities and for his preparation for the class. He expressed that;

> *Excerpt 69: [Technology] provides the teacher to differentiate the instruction and provide them with easy Access to language teaching resources.*

Apart from these reasons, Adam approached this issue basically and stated that;

> *Excerpt 70: It is wise to use the projector instead of the blackboard. Because it easy to write and clean what I have written on the board. Students can easily see what I write.*

Moreover, Andrew uses online dictionaries in his classes and he talked about the advantages of using online applications.

> *Excerpt 71: I don't want to limit my students with a paper and a pen. We used to have hard copy dictionaries but now nobody would like to carry those things. Because of this fact, I want to make things easier for my students and I encourage them to use dictionary applications during the lessons.*

In conclusion, the findings revealed that technology makes instruction, communication and teaching activities easier. Therefore, the language instructors prefer easier way of teaching thanks to the technological advances.

### *Saving time*

Several instructors also drew attention to the time-saving feature of technology. Andrew with 30-year-teaching experience compared today' teaching conditions with the past. He

stated that technology helps him save much more time. In the past, he used to prepare the language materials by hand or typewrite one by one. Also, he used to write all the points he taught on the blackboard in each class. However, he prepares slides on Microsoft Office once and uses the same materials many times now. Michael also agreed with Andrew on the time saving feature of technology and similarly stated that;

> *Excerpt 72: If you [as the teachers] prepare [PowerPoint slides] beforehand, it will save you a lot of time so you can have plenty of time for extra exercises in the class. However, if you just teach in the class, you don't have time for exercises.*

Approaching this subject from a different perspective, Emily also talked about the practicality of technology. As mentioned before, she used learning management systems and gave students task on this platform to study the content of the lesson outside the class. Her comment on this issue is given in the following excerpt.

> *Excerpt 73: In crowded classes, giving feedback to every student is not much possible. But by using the technology, I mean by using some learning environments on the internet, this is possible. For example, I try to put notes, comments, feedback under each task and it is not very manageable on paper.*

Her comment highlights that using technological tools saves time for both the teacher and the learners. In this way, the learners can get more feedback and quick access to that feedback whenever they need.

### Technology to promote learning

The majority of instructors, nine out of 11, reported on their practices with technology to support their instruction and the learners' language learning. They uttered a number of different websites and applications they used to support language learning such as formative assessment tools, learning management systems, vocabulary learning websites and dictionaries. They shared how these applications help develop language skills as well. One of the instructors, Adam, aims to develop his students' speaking and listening skills. To this end, he believes that his students should listen to native speakers of English language to develop better pronunciation and listening skills.

> *Excerpt 74: (...) because I am not a native speaker. Their listening skills and also their pronunciation can develop well only when they listen and watch*

*videos in English. (...) Sometimes I let them watch a video twice or three times. (....) The more they hear correct pronunciation; the more automatically they can check and control their own pronunciation. I think the technology help me to develop my students listening and speaking skills.*

Similarly, Christian takes advantage of technology to help learners have better pronunciation and listening skills. He expressed that the language learners need to hear native speakers to be better English speakers and he is not a native speaker. The following excerpt explains how he used a technological tool to overcome this problem.

*Excerpt 75: Microsoft Word has an option called 'Speak'. If you activate that option, [it] enables MS Word to read the text. So one day I used that tool. I copied the text and pressed the button. Then it started reading.*

Christian also added that he also actively uses *YouTube* to explain a structure or to find additional information.

*Excerpt 76: We do watch some videos for example if we have a reading text we watch a lecture related to this text on YouTube or explanation of some grammatical rules. I explain something and we find the sampling on YouTube.*

Apart from the use of technology to improve speaking and listening skills, some instructors also mentioned using technology for writing skills. For example, Marry explained how she used technology in writing sessions.

*Excerpt 77: We used blogs for a while for writing classes and the students gave feedback for each other's work. I also had a chance to give online feedback on this platform. Moreover, I was making them watch a silent short movie and write a few paragraphs on that movie accordingly.*

Another activity done in class using technology was mentioned by many instructors. *Kahoot*, an online game like classroom response system, was one of the most popular applications used in the school where the study was conducted. This application was used by many instructors for formative assessment purposes. They talked about the advantages and how the learners reacted to this activity in a positive way. One of them, Sheila stated that;

*Excerpt 78: I use Kahoot to check the students' understanding of grammar or vocabulary taught previously. Especially with this tool, they realize their*

*misunderstanding related to a certain subject and study more on it. While they have fun, they check their knowledge.*

Like Sheila, Sarah also uses two classroom response systems named *Formative* and *Socrative*. She administers mini quizzes to check the learners' progress and understanding. She explains these systems in these words;

*Excerpt 79: Students can see their wrong answers with the correct answer so they can get immediate feedback and they can use it on their cell phone. When they see their wrong answers with the correct answers they can learn something. (...) I mean the washback effect is very important in this program. I observed that they revise their learning after these tests.*

Many instructors also expressed that they use learning management systems like *Edmodo* and *Edpuzzle*. One of those instructors, James, stated that he used this system for communication and supporting out-of-class language learning. His explanation is provided below.

*Excerpt 80: I share some information, materials, and activities on this platform which can sound like homework but it is not. I want them to do extra activities on Edmodo and I try to see my students' progress through these activities.*

Additionally, Emily suggested some internet websites to support learners' independent language learning. One of them was *myacademicconnectionslab*. Emily explained how she used that website.

*Excerpt 81: I used a book with interactive CDs during the class in the civil engineering department. But outside the class, the book had a website. The syllabus of the book was on writing and speaking skills and there were activities on the internet website. Students had access codes which are labeled on their books. It was also very effective.*

Overall, the findings showed that the instructors use a variety of different technological tools to support the learners' language learning. However, most of their activities were teacher-directed and gave little freedom to students except for out-of-class activities.

### Supporting autonomous language learning with technology

The findings, in general, showed that nine instructors support the learners' autonomous language learning with technology in several ways. For this purpose, they use the technology itself in class, teach how to use technology for language learning and verbally recommend educational technology tools. A sub-theme also emerged under this theme named "Technology use inside school affecting outside school technology use" and revealed the importance of teachers' role in supporting learner autonomy. This sub-theme is introduced in detail after presenting the findings of the main theme.

Nine instructors, expressing the importance of technology for language learning, explained how they use different strategies to promote the learners' independent learning with technology and listed their perceived successful practices pertinent to this issue. For example, Adam stated that he showed how to use some websites and interactive tools and offered some applications to study language independently.

> *Excerpt 82: I show them some websites like the website for the preparatory class students of METU [Middle East Technical University] and I suggest my students to use them. I also offer them some applications on their smartphones. (...) and share my i-tools and DVDs with them. I tell them you can take it, install it on your computer and bring it back to me.*

Another instructor who always encourages the learners to study a foreign language independently, Christian uttered those words;

> *Excerpt 83: I always encourage [my students] that we [as teachers] are not needed anymore. Because we have plenty of teachers on YouTube. (...) I just show these mountains of materials. That is all I do in the classroom. I tell them that just go and do it, you don't need me anymore, I can correct your big mistakes, but the rest is up to you.*

As an answer to the question whether she influences the learners' autonomous language learning with technology, Emily stated that;

> *Excerpt 84: I do it with the flipped classroom.*

She also expanded on one of her practices which influenced her students' autonomous technology use.

*Excerpt 85: My students got used to asking Google whatever they wonder during my classes. For example, when they translate a piece of text, they google some confused expressions like "take on, take it, take in" and find out the real-life usages of that kind of expressions. The students stated they would use this strategy in their professional life.*

Another instructor, James also shared how he encourages autonomous language learning with technology.

*Excerpt 86: I frequently use a website named "Busy Teacher" and I showed students how I use this website. Sometimes my students come to my office and ask me to check their papers of which they download on this website and did the activities. I think I influence their out-of-school learning. (...) I also encourage especially freshmen to use Skype or similar applications to chat with foreigners and to develop their communication skills.*

Similar to James' case, Ryan underlines the importance of speaking skills and offers the learner to chat online. Alternatively, he suggests different kinds of out-of-school activities for different skills.

*Excerpt 87: If a person has difficulty in speaking, I offer them to find some people on the internet and to chat and communicate with them. If a student's pronunciation is not very good, I offer them to listen to voice records or the TV or radio channels broadcasting in English.*

Some instructors also stated that they suggest some language learning websites such as *Busuu* and *Duolingo* and some applications for specific language learning skills and areas. For instance, Sarah said that;

*Excerpt 88: I suggest them [students] some mobile applications they can use for vocabulary learning or there are some special programs to learn different languages like Duolingo, being good for practicing language out-of-the class. I suggest it to my students because they can practice and they can learn something new outside of the class. Also, I want them to listen to music with their lyrics. Because they can see, memorize and unconsciously learn something from music.*

As in the case of Sarah, Michael suggests *Busuu* and *Duolingo* to the learners. Michael also explains why it is essential to support autonomous language learning with technology and how practical it is with today's technological conditions.

> *Excerpt 89: Everybody now has smartphones in their pocket so they can easily download and install them [language learning applications] on their mobile phones and use them whenever and wherever they want. (...) We [people] always have them [smart phones] in our beds, in toilet wherever we are. So if we have something like our own body, we just need to do something better with it. Instead of just spending time on social media, our students can also learn new things.*

All in all, the responses revealed that the instructors put effort into autonomous language learning with technology beyond the classroom. The instructors follow different paths but they have the same objective to achieve, which is to help their students to learn English independently.

**Technology use inside school affecting outside school technology use**

Many instructors claimed that their courses affect the learners' digital literacy and their technology use habits in a way. They gave a number of examples of their practices and how they affected the learners' technology use out-of-the classroom. In this case, Emily shared many experiences of her as in the following except.

> *Excerpt 90: Some of my students didn't have even an email address and among them, there were some students who didn't have computer literacy. But now they have, at least, an e-mail address since they had to have one to sign up Edmodo and follow my classes. Also, they didn't know how to use Google Drive and they learned to send videos sharing on Drive since one of their tasks was to shoot a video on a subject and to send it to me. Another thing was about Microsoft Word and while they were preparing a brochure, they figured out that this program was more complicated than they expected.*

Emily's list was longer than the one provided here and she stated that her class was not a technology teaching class but her tasks helped her students to learn a lot about computers and other digital devices. Like Emily, Sheila shared her experiences on this issue and she stated that what she did in the class affected her students' out-of-class learning.

*Excerpt 91: During classes, I was making my students listen to a song and take notes of the words they heard. After that, I was asking them to write a short poem with those words. I realized that they did this activity at home. Also, I was using a TV series in our video lesson in my preparatory language class. My students really liked to learn English from a TV series and many of them continued to English series and movies to learn English.*

Another instructor who contributed to her students' technology use was Sarah. She explained how her students were affected by the way of her teaching.

*Excerpt 92: Some students didn't know what Blog is. Today they have some special blogs they read in English. It is good to hear that they follow and read blogs now. One of my students also told me that he didn't even have an e-mail address even if it sounds epic today but to log in the blog, he had to have one.*

Moreover, another instructor, Adam is aware that his behaviors affect the learners to a great extent and he further added that;

*Excerpt 93: If I use some programs on my phone, I show them to my students. I do believe that my students will be encouraged by that and they will say 'ok the teacher uses it and so we can also use it.' If I don't use it or if I skip the listening part in the book, they will think listening is not important because the teacher skipped it. (...)That is why I use technology and of course the technology that I use inside the classroom interests my students.*

Lastly, Michael also stated that his technology integration affected his students and they transferred what they learned in his class to a different subject.

*Excerpt 94: Sometimes they want to apply the things that they have learned in my class to other subjects. For example, I did 'Augmented Reality' with my engineering students. They thought they could do it on a DC motor as well.*

To sum up, the excerpts collectively show that what teachers do in the class seems to have a significant impact on learners' way of learning. In other words, teachers' practices in the class can play a role in learners' out-of-class learning behaviors and practices.

**Problems Inhibiting Learner Autonomy Development**

The last theme, "Problems inhibiting learner autonomy development", emerged as a result of thematic analyses. The instructors focused on many problems while describing to what extent they help the learners develop language learner autonomy with technology. This theme includes two themes: institution- and learner-based problems. While institution based problems contain such sub-themes as crowded classes, poor technological infrastructure, overloaded curriculum and limited class time, and inappropriate seating arrangement; learner based problems include two sub-themes: low motivation and teacher-directed learning culture. These emerging themes with their sub-themes are shown in Figure 5.

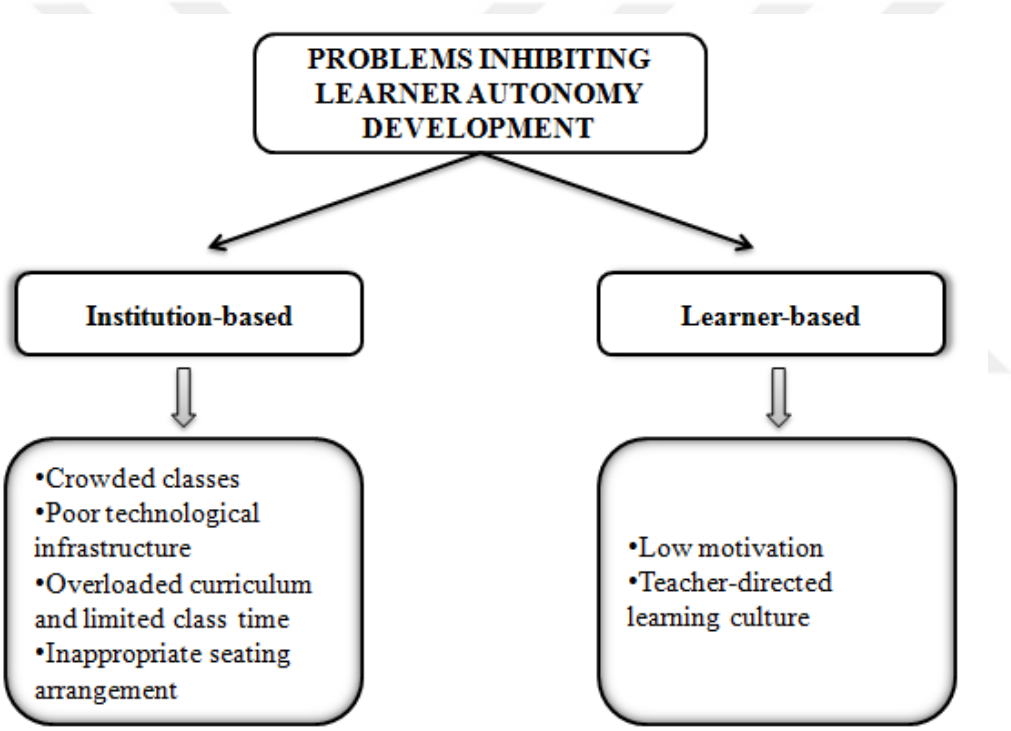



*Figure 5.* Themes and sub-themes under "Problems Inhibiting Learner Autonomy Development"

The results show that the problems the instructors faced with while promoting learner autonomy with technology are mainly caused by the physical conditions of the institution. Besides these problems, learners' motivation and their learning culture are also some factors inhibiting learner autonomy development.

Further details related to the themes and subthemes are explained with sample responses in the following parts.

### Institution-based problems

Instructors addressed many problems pertinent to institutional factors through the interview series. They expressed that they fall short of practices for promoting learner autonomy with technology due to those problems such as crowded classes, poor technological infrastructure, overloaded curriculum and limited class time, and inappropriate seating arrangement.

#### *Crowded classes*

The most oft-repeated problem in the process of promoting learning autonomy with technology was crowded classes. The instructors stated that they cannot provide enough support for each student to be autonomous language learners. More specifically, they fall short to provide enough support for identifying learners' strength and weaknesses, promoting cooperation among learners and giving chance to offer opinions about their learning. They underlined the advantages of the preparatory classes in the past since those classes had a small number of students. The classroom size was ranging from 20 to 25 which made it easier on the part of the instructor to pay closer attention to each and every student. However, the classroom size of the current foundational English courses is quite larger than that of the preparatory classes.

When the instructors were asked how they help learners to identify their own strengths and weaknesses in language learning, many instructors addressed the excessive number of the students in the classrooms. For example, Marry, who claimed giving individual attention to each preparatory school student in the past, stated that she couldn't have enough time and energy to pay attention to every learner anymore due to a large number of learners. Regarding that, Marry said that;

> *Excerpt 95: I used to observe my students and help them to realize their weaknesses [in preparatory classes] but I don't have time to observe and help all my students now.*

Instead, she supports the enthusiastic students who demand help to continue study English out-of-the class.

The issue of the large number of the students was also a negative factor for some instructors while doing group or pair work in language classes. Since it is difficult to manage the classroom and to control every group/pair whether the given task is sucessfully

carried out, some instructors expressed that it is almost impossible to promote cooperation among learners inside the class. Regarding this issue, Michael stated that he never uses pair/group work activities in crowded classes

> *Excerpt 96: You [as a teacher] can't just do some pair/group work in a big class including 75 students.*

Furthermore, Adam focused on the reason why it is almost impossible to benefit from pair/group work and explained the reason behind this concern.

> *Excerpt 97: (...) when I ask for creating a group and doing some tasks with their [students'] partners, unfortunately, many of them do not do the activity. So I tried it once or twice during the courses but in the crowded classes, I don't think it is useful.*

His answer showed that he had some classroom management problems during group work and avoided to use this kind of activity again.

The responses of the instructors also revealed that involving learners into decision-making process gets harder in crowded classes and instructors themselves take all the decisions about the learning in those classes. For instance, James indicated his willingness to share the decision-making process. However, he said that;

> *Excerpt 98: I would like to do this [offering students chances to decide about learning] with 20 students but I should admit it is almost impossible with 60 students in a class.*

So, it can be concluded from these comments that even if the instructors wish to share their responsibilities with the learners and help learners to learn a language independently, the excessive number of students hinders their efforts for the development of learner autonomy.

### *Poor technological infrastructure*

The findings, in general, prove that the language instructors integrate technology into their classes to promote language learning and also support learners with technological tools or applications for their out-of-class language learning. However, the findings also revealed that the instructors have problems with the poor technological infrastructure of the classrooms. Most of the classrooms are limited to a desktop computer with a poor internet

connection and an overhead projector. The instructors also had some problems using those tools during their instruction. Ryan described the problems caused by inadequate technological equipment and poor internet connection.

> *Excerpt 99: There is only one computer and only the teacher can use it. The students only listen or watch.(...)We [students and teacher] want to watch a movie or a video related to the lesson online. But we can't because of the slow internet connection.*

Parallel with Ryan's excerpt, Marry also mentioned the same problem.

> *Excerpt 100: I want to make students watch TED talks on YouTube in class but it might get impossible because there is no internet connection in some classes.*

Regarding these responses, while this problem hampers technology integration to support learning in class, it also leads to a teacher-directed classroom atmosphere where all the responsibility of teaching is on teachers. Thus, students are passive information receivers.

On the other hand, there are some classes with no technological equipment and instructors need to take their own materials and equipment to the classrooms. So they stated that it is a burden for them. Sheila affirmed that;

> *Excerpt 101: (...) in some classes we don't have even a projector so we take our laptops with us to the class and use them.*

Likewise, Emily further added that;

> *Excerpt 102: Besides not having a language lab or interactive whiteboards, we [teachers] sometimes have difficulty to find a microphone or headphones, or sometimes difficulty in finding computers in the university.*

Facing those problems, the instructors expect some administrative support to improve the conditions of the classrooms. But the instructors claimed that while some faculty directors ask for better language education for their students, they often fail to provide better opportunities for language education. On this issue, James articulated these following words;

> *Excerpt 103: The faculty managements claim they put the most emphasis on language learning but when it comes to giving support, I don't think they do their best, even if we [teachers] ask for better classroom conditions in the beginning of every semester.*

All in all, even if the instructors try to support their students with better language education and their autonomous language learning, they face many difficulties. The poor technological infrastructure in the university causes limited language activities with technology in class and leads to teachers' predominantly verbal suggestions for out-of-class language learning with technology.

### *Overloaded curriculum and limited class time*

Another institution-based problem, making teachers' promoting learner autonomy difficult, was the challenge for getting the objectives of the curriculum done in time, which is the workload of the teachers in a limited time period. Three instructors expressed that they had so many other things to do apart from helping students to be autonomous language learners. Therefore, there should be another department to help learners for their out-of-class language learning. For example, Michael stated that curriculum limits his efforts for the development of learner autonomy and he spends all his time in class to teach what is in the curriculum. He added that;

> *Excerpt 104: Because our job is to teach a foreign language, we need to do it. But I think there must be another department like [language] guidance department here [at university]. That can help students achieve their goals or realize themselves and their needs.*

From his comment, it is obvious that he adopts the role of a language teacher who focuses on just teaching rather than a language advisor leading students to be more independent in their learning. On the other hand, another instructor, Sheila highlights the fact that she had difficulty in doing extra activities supporting the development of learner autonomy such as helping learners to monitor and evaluate their own progress in class due to time restriction. She stated that;

> *Excerpt 105: I have only two hours of teaching [for one of her language classes]. Because I have a curriculum to follow so I cannot have time to make other things.*

It seems evident from the responses that the curriculum poses a problem for the instructors either they mention it or not. The instructors spend time for helping learners in their free time out of the class, but in class, they need to manage their time to complete the curriculum requirements even if they wish to be flexible and take students interest and

needs into consideration. On this issue, Marry gave an example of her experience with two different language classes. One of them was an ESP class which didn't have a rigid curriculum but the other one was a foundational English class which was required to go in line with other teachers' classes and curriculum since the learners would take the same exam at the end.

> *Excerpt 106: [In the General English course] We had to teach all the grammatical structures provided in the curriculum but for the other course, I asked my students what they want to learn and took those ideas into consideration. I gave all the vocabulary and tasks in small steps because I didn't have time pressure on me.*

So, if the same instructor acts differently in two different classes it is not because of his/her readiness for a situation but because of an external factor which affects the teacher in a positive or a negative way. Therefore, a rigid overloaded curriculum may have relatively a negative effect on teachers who wish to promote language learning autonomy.

### *Inappropriate seating arrangement*

One of the institution based problems inhibiting learner autonomy development was inappropriate seating arrangement of language classes. The instructors explained that the desks are stable in rows and David said that;

> *Excerpt 107: The seating arrangement of the class isn't suitable for a language classroom.*

Thus, they had difficulty in organizing a group or pair work in class. For example, Sheila stated that;

> *Excerpt 108: The chairs are stable so we cannot move them. So it is very hard to work in groups or with peers.*

They also perceived this seating arrangement as a negative factor to promote learner autonomy. For instance, Michael said that;

> *Excerpt 109: The sitting arrangement itself directly limits the students. Because they cannot easily see their friends or the teacher so I think that's the first problem in terms of autonomy.*

So, it can be concluded that the seating arrangement is of importance based on instructor responses not only for language classrooms but also for the development of learner autonomy.

### Learner-based Problems

The gathered data also revealed that the instructors face many problems caused by learner-based factors such as their low motivation to learn a foreign language and their teacher-directed learning culture in which they bring their past learning habits to their current learning environment.

#### *Low motivation*

The instructor frequently talked about the low motivation of their students and focused on the reasons for their reluctance to learn English in and out-of-class. They reported that there were three or four students in a class who wish to learn a foreign language and the aim of the rest was to pass the exams and complete the course which is a requirement of the coursework. For instance, Andrew stated that;

> *Excerpt 110: My students tell me they just want to pass the class, it doesn't matter to learn English or not.*

James further added that;

> *Excerpt 111: They [students] perceive English lessons as a class to increase their academic average or to take for getting rid of a required class to get the degree."*

So, this situation affects the learners' behaviors towards English lessons and the teachers as well. Because of that, most instructors focus on just enthusiastic students instead of spending their time on students with low motivation as in the case of Sheila;

> *Excerpt 112: I do my best to help demanding students but I can't say I spend much time on those not interested in learning.*

Sheila also had low expectation of what the learners can do and added that;

> *Excerpt 113: In this school, I do not think learner training will be efficient because of their unwillingness to learn a foreign language.*

Moreover, some instructors also face some discouraging students' behaviors or statements as can be seen in David's excerpt;

> *Excerpt 114: The majority of students tell me that they want me to add extra 5 points to their grades instead of giving advice about how to learn English better.*

On the other hand, another instructor, Ryan, expressed that;

> *Excerpt 115: I want to help them as much as possible even if they are very stubborn not to learn English.*

Some instructors also drew attention to the reasons behind this reluctance to learn English. They thought that the students are not aware of the value of English for their future life. On this issue, Adam said that;

> *Excerpt 116: Our students are not very much informed about the language education because their major isn't language education.*

He also added that very few of them want to learn English for going abroad instead of for their future career. In line with this response, Andrew stated that his students put much emphasis on their professional courses.

> *Excerpt 117: If they have time apart from their major courses, they prefer to learn English.*

So the students perceive learning a foreign language as an extra work which can be delayed. However, David said that the senior students realize the value of speaking a foreign language when they start to look for jobs. However, it becomes too late to start studying English.

### *Teacher-directed learning culture*

The findings revealed that the students' learning culture has an effect on learners' language learning habits, beliefs, dispositions, and values. The students bring their past learning habits to the current system and it becomes a challenge to change them. Even if the instructors try to establish a totally new language learning environment, the students have difficulty to adapt to the recent changes. For instance, Emily changed her teaching method by using a totally different approach, flipped learning. Emily expressed how difficult for her students to get used to this new system because of the reason she stated;

*Excerpt 118: The students are used to teacher-directed and spoon-fed way of learning and studying for only the exams not for their development since the very early stages of their education.*

So that she described her experience as a challenge and used the word "force" to define her efforts to make them study in a new way. She also expressed that even if her students were continuously complaining about the classical language teaching methods, when they faced some difficulties in the new way of learning, they wanted to go back to the past system. For instance, they demanded to be evaluated with exams instead of with their progress through the semester.

*Excerpt 119: I [Emily] wanted to evaluate them on the tasks they did during the course but they didn't want to be evaluated in this way because they didn't believe it would be objective. They preferred classical exams instead.*

However, it is evident from her interview that Emily achieved what she aimed at the end and her students affirmed their satisfaction of this new way of learning.

Another instructor, Sarah, also attempted to change the classical way of teaching and she also talked about how difficult to change the learning habits of the learners as provided in the next excerpt.

*Excerpt 120: I always ask for the students' reflections about my instruction or the activities at the end of each class and ask for their demands for the following class. However, they don't come up with critical ideas since they aren't used to criticize a teacher's way of teaching. They believe if the teacher does something, it is unchangeable and hundred percent correct. This belief is caused by their teacher-centered learning culture.*

The responses show that when teachers attempt to change the way of their teaching, firstly they need to change the learners' learning culture including their habits, beliefs, and dispositions, which may be a hard job to achieve.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings of the study related to the research questions were presented in detail with tables, figures, and excerpts from the instructor interviews. The findings were

explained under three main themes: (a) autonomy behaviors, (b) technology integration, and (c) problems inhibiting learner autonomy development.

As a response to the first research question investigating the EFL instructors readiness for promoting learner autonomy, the findings suggest that the language instructors display many autonomy-supportive behaviors such as guiding learners for their autonomous language learning, raising their motivation, training them on some language learning strategies and involving them into the decision-making process. On the other hand, some instructors behave in the opposite direction and can act as an authority in the classroom. They experience some problems while sharing their responsibilities with the learners.

For the second research question which investigated the EFL instructors' technology practices for promoting learner autonomy, the second theme, technology integration, serves as an answer. What is more, in the first theme, there is also evidence for instructors' technology use for promoting learner autonomy. The instructors, in general, perceive technology use positively and integrate technology into their language classes due to three reasons; to attract the learners' attention, to facilitate language teaching and to save time. Furthermore, besides using technology for their instruction, the instructors also support the learners' out-of-class autonomous language learning with technological tools. They manage that by using technology in class as a role model and recommend some language learning tools for out-of-class language learning.

The third theme partially answers the first question and adds on the findings pertinent to the second research question. The theme reveals the problems the instructors face with in promoting learner autonomy with technology and suggests that even though teachers are mentally ready to encourage learners to be autonomous, they face some difficulties in this process. There are some institution-based and learner-based problems inhibiting promoting learner autonomy such as crowded classes, poor technological infrastructure, overloaded curriculum and low motivation of the learners.

In the next chapter, the findings of the study will be interpreted based on the aims of the study and discussed with the relevant literature. Additionally, pedagogical implications and suggestions will be provided.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

## Introduction

In this chapter, the interpretations of the findings presented in the previous chapter will be provided and discussed with the relevant literature. Then, pedagogical implications based on the findings of the current study and limitations of the study will be presented. Later, the directions for future studies will be explained, and this chapter will summarize and conclude the study in the end.

## Discussion

In this section, the findings related to the two research questions will be dealt in detail with the literature under three sub-sections: EFL instructors' readiness for promoting language learner autonomy referring to the first research question, EFL instructors' technology practices to promote language learner autonomy referring to the second research question and problems inhibiting language learner autonomy development related to both research questions.

### EFL instructors' readiness for promoting language learner autonomy

The data gathered from the three-session interviews were analyzed thematically. As a result, two main categories related to EFL instructors' readiness for autonomy-support emerged: autonomy-supportive (i.e., language advising, motivation, learner involvement, promoting cooperation, considering learning differences and supporting out-of-class learning) and non-autonomy-supportive instructor behaviors (i.e., limited opportunities to support monitoring progress and authoritative teaching practices).

The findings of the study indicated that the instructors in this study value learner autonomy and learners' out-of-class learning. Thus, they perform a variety of autonomy-supportive behaviors. The most frequently mentioned autonomy-supportive teacher practice is language advising which consists of guidance and resource recommendation. Language advising is considered essential for the development of learner autonomy and aims to raise the learners' awareness about how to learn a language addressing individuals' needs and preferences (Darasawang, 2011; Mynard & Carson, 2012; Reinders, 2008). In this very case, the instructors make advisory sessions with willing and demanding language learners in their office hours. They lead learners to online language learning platforms and learning groups in line with the learners' objectives and needs. Thus, they take the role of a language advisor besides their teaching role.

In this study, the instructors perceive learners' awareness of learning strategies important for their independent language learning. Learning strategies are "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p.1) and learners' awareness of these strategies is of great importance for the development of learner autonomy (Oxford, 1990). The findings of the current study revealed that the instructors share language learning strategies based on their previous learning experiences and pedagogical knowledge. However, the instructors tend to share learning strategies verbally as an advice for learners' out-of-class language learning instead of giving a planned strategy instruction in their language courses. There is a consensus that integrated strategy instruction is crucial for the development of learner autonomy (Rubin, Chamot, Harris, & Anderson, 2007; Yang, 1988). However, in this current study, no instructor mentioned this practice. The underlying reason behind the instructors' downplaying the role of strategy instruction could be the limited class hours and their limited knowledge pertinent to this subject. As Rubin and colleagues (2007) suggested, teachers' inabilities and the amount of time needed could cause a problem for the integration of learning strategies in their instruction.

Another significant finding of the study related to instructors' autonomy-support was that the instructors recommend and provide language materials for students' out-of-class learning. Lai, Yeung, and Hu (2016) revealed that learners need teacher help for selecting appropriate language learning materials for their out-of-class learning and teachers should take the role of an advisor and a guide to help them. The current study showed that the instructors believe they should take the role of an advisor and a resource person for

learners' out-of-class language learning. This finding is consistent with the literature suggesting that teachers should provide guidance and direct learners to select appropriate learning resources (Gardner & Miller, 2008; Morrison, 2008; Nguyen, 2014). It is also found that while the instructors guide learners by recommending resources, they also use online platforms like *Edmodo* to provide various learning materials in line with learners needs. Thus, it could be argued that this teacher practice enables learners to access the language learning materials (Welch, 2015). Moreover, this case reveals an optimistic picture in which learners could have access to the learning materials in ease even though their university does not provide them with a self-access center or a large library for their autonomous language learning.

The importance of willingness to take control of learners' own language learning was also a concern for the instructors in the study. It is widely argued in the literature that learners' willingness to take the responsibility of their learning is of importance for language learning and the development of autonomy (Dörnyei, 2001; Huang & Benson, 2013; Reinders, 2010; Zimmerman, 2011). Bailly (2011) also referred to motivation as one of the three conditions for autonomous learning in a technology-enhanced learning environment. However, parallel with the findings of related literature (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Chan et al., 2002; Farahani, 2014; Okay & Balçıkanlı, 2017), the instructors in this study expressed that many students are not quite motivated to learn English autonomously. The instructors consider learner motivation one of the primary conditions for successful language learning and the development of learner autonomy. They use different strategies to raise learner motivation in their classrooms. Parallel with Dörnyei's (2001) suggestions to generate, maintain and protect motivation in language learning classrooms, the instructors attempt to increase learners' goal-orientedness, raise their self-confidence in language learning, establish a good rapport with them and use technology to make language learning more interesting.

Another autonomy-supportive teacher behavior in the study was involving learners in the decision-making process. A capacity for decision making is a prerequisite for learner autonomy (Dickinson, 1987; Dörnyei, 2001; Little, 1991), and Reinders (2010) also emphasized the importance of learner involvement in decisions on when, where, how and why to learn. It is found in this study that despite some limitations, the instructors put effort to arrange the learning content regarding learners' preferences and needs, revise their syllabus and the way of their teaching in line with learners' reflections and give choices for

the content of assignments. The previous research showed that even though teachers perceive learner involvement positively and involve learner decisions in some areas of classroom teaching, they still need much more effort in practice (Balcikanli, 2010; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2017; Chan, 2003; Duong, 2014). Concurring with the previous research, the instructors do not fully involve learners in all the decisions related to language teaching in spite of some supportive practices. The underlying factors behind the inadequacy of learner involvement could be the strict curriculum requirements, exam-oriented learning context, socio-cultural factors and established teacher role as the authority of the classroom who makes all the decisions (Nakata, 2011; Nguyen, 2014; Yunus & Arshad, 2014).

Promoting cooperation was another finding of the study referring to the social aspect of autonomy. The instructors expressed that they are in favor of putting learners into small groups to interact and learn from each other in and out of the classroom. In line with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), the instructors make heterogeneous groups (i.e., including at least one high achieving student) to help low achieving learners reach their potential development level by working cooperatively with more capable others. The instructors also valued peer feedback in the form of peer correction especially in writing sessions and expressed its usefulness for language learning. Nevertheless, even though the instructors created peer feedback sessions, they did not provide learners with any detailed guidelines on how to give effective feedback, which is contradictory to the assertion of Braine (2003) on explicit guidance on giving feedback. Thus, it could be argued that the instructors' approach to peer feedback seems to be oversimplified and the sessions do not appear to be quite planned and well-thought.

The instructors also emphasized the need for considering learners' individual differences while planning their lessons, selecting their teaching materials and deciding on the mode of delivering information. As Sakai, Takagi, and Chu (2010) revealed, learners expect the teachers to involve their individual differences and preferences in the classroom learning. The participant instructors expressed that learners' learning style, needs, preferences, and expectations should be considered as a major factor while designing their courses. Similar to Ürün, Akar, and Demir (2014), the instructors make use of different types of in-class activities to address different learning styles and needs. One instructor also put emphasis on need analysis at the beginning of each semester to engage learners in the learning process. Furthermore, the instructors identified their students as 'digital natives', and they

stated that the mode of their teaching should be suitable to the learners of the 21st-century. This is consistent with Ertmer and colleagues (2012) that language teaching should address the needs of digital natives. The 21st-century learners are born into a technology-enhanced environment and use technology far more than the previous generations. They are also used to get information through technology with ease and a few clicks. Thus, their education needs to reflect the learners' way of learning and their life, and teachers should find ways to integrate technology as much as possible.

Another significant finding pertinent to instructors' autonomy-support was promoting out of class learning. In line with the literature suggesting that teachers should link in-class and out-of-class learning, and encourage learners to go beyond the classroom (Inozu et al., 2010; Lai et al., 2014; Toogood & Pemberton, 2002), the instructors valued learners' out-of-class learning as well as their in-class learning. With this purpose, they set activities for out-of-class learning, introduce technological applications for language learning purposes and support low achieving learners with extra work beyond the classroom. One of the instructors, Emily, also changed her mode of teaching into the flipped classroom model which requires learners to study the content of course outside the classroom. In this sense, it can be argued that besides supporting learners' active learning, the instructor encourages learners to continue learning out-of-the classroom. Thus, it might be a good way of practicing learner autonomy by giving the responsibility of learning to the learners beyond the classroom.

The findings also revealed that the instructors give small responsibilities to the learners as the routine of the language teaching such as sending a reading paragraph to their peers using *WhatsApp* periodically and downloading language materials uploaded by the instructor on *Edmodo* before each lesson. This finding is consistent with the previous research revealing that teachers give small responsibilities to practice learner autonomy in and out-of-the class (Chan, 2003; Yıldırım, 2012; Yunus & Arshad, 2014). As Yıldırım (2012) suggested, learners might not easily get adapted to take the full responsibility of their learning in a short period of time and they may need time to get used to their changing roles. Thus, autonomy-supportive teachers need to start promoting learner autonomy by giving learners small responsibilities for their learning and gradually increase the number of their responsibilities in time. Another finding is that some instructors take their initiative and give importance to process-oriented assessment by administering mini quizzes periodically, keeping track of learners' assignments, and monitoring learners' in-

class performance, even though they teach in a predominantly exam-oriented environment. This issue may lead to a conclusion that some instructors act autonomously and attempt to change the exam-oriented culture, which is consistent with the assertion of Gao (2008) that highlights the need for changing the exam-oriented learning culture and addresses teachers' role on this issue.

When all the autonomy-supportive practices discussed above are considered, the instructors, in varying degrees, contribute to the development of learner autonomy. In terms of Bailly's (2011) three conditions for autonomous language learning beyond the classroom, teachers are supposed to give language learners three supports including affective, resource and capacity support. The instructors in this study mainly fulfill two conditions by providing affective and resource support. They help learners get motivated for autonomous language learning by affective support. They also give resource support to guide learners to select appropriate materials and use online language learning platforms according to their learning needs and preferences. However, the instructors appear to fail to provide enough capacity support which requires guiding learners about how to manage their learning (i.e., identifying needs, planning, monitoring, and evaluating the learning process).

Besides their autonomy-supportive behaviors, the instructors also perform non-autonomy-supportive behaviors. Most of them still perceive themselves as having the full responsibility for teaching in classroom and learning of the students, which also supports the previous research (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Chan, 2003; Nakata, 2011; Nguyen, 2014). More specifically, they give learners fairly limited opportunities to monitor and evaluate their learning. Namely, they do not encourage learners to reflect on their learning or do self-assessment about their progress. These all might be resulting from the instructors' lack of knowledge about how to help learners manage their learning. As Wichayathian and Reinders (2018) suggest, this underlines the need for in-service teacher training designed explicitly for guidance on how to help learners to develop language learner autonomy.

Taken as a whole, some instructors perform more autonomy-supportive behaviors than the others. Notably, younger instructors with postgraduate education are more inclined to be learner-centered and share their responsibilities with the learners. On the other hand, the older generation having 30-year-experience in language teaching mostly perceive themselves as the authority of the class and tend to take all the control and responsibility in

the classroom. This could be due to their previous teacher-centered learning culture and their background education. However, in spite of their autonomy-supportive practices and positive attitudes toward learner autonomy, most of the instructors, even the younger ones, still act reluctantly to share their full responsibilities with the students and they desire to be the leading figure in the classroom. Overall, it can be speculated based on the findings that they are not fully ready for relinquishing their roles as the authority of the classroom and have not fully achieved the characteristics of being autonomy-supportive teachers, which is similar to the findings of a number of studies (Al-Asmari, 2013; Doğan & Mirici, 2017; Nakata, 2011; Nguyen, 2014; Yunus & Arshad, 2014).

### EFL instructors' technology practices to promote language learner autonomy

EFL instructors' technology integration emerged as another theme which is a response to the second research question. The theme gives evidence for the instructors' perceptions of technology, their reasons for technology use, their practices with technology to facilitate learning and more importantly their efforts to promote autonomous language learning with technology.

First of all, the findings indicated that the instructors have mostly positive perceptions of and attitudes towards technology integration. In parallel with the previous research (Akcaoğlu, 2008; Albirini, 2006; Park & Son, 2009), they believe that the use of technology is inevitable for the 21st -century students. They also consider that the technology-enhanced language learning environments supported with computers and mobile technologies are fundamental for autonomous language learning. Ertmer and colleagues (2012) revealed that an increase in knowledge and skills about the student-centered use of technology has a positive impact on teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Parallel with this finding, this study indicated that the teachers with limited technology integration and negative perceptions seem to be unaware of the potentials of technology and have little knowledge about technology for language learning purposes. Specifically, older teachers with 30 year of experience do not frequently use technology due to their lack of knowledge and are not much in favor of technology use in their classes. Thus, it could be speculated that in-service teacher training could increase teachers' awareness and might change their perceptions of technology use (Buabeng-Andoh, 2012; Mueller, Wooda, Willoughby, Ross, & Specht, 2008; Son, Robb, & Charismiadji, 2011).

In the same vein, the increase in teachers' knowledge could enhance the quality of technology use. In line with the findings of Akcaoğlu's research (2008), the instructors expressed that they started using technology due to a necessity to attract their students' attention in the classroom. Moreover, the participant instructors' technology use in the classroom is mostly teacher-centered, that is they use technology as 'teacher tools' which means that the instructors use technology mainly to motivate students, ease and facilitate instruction rather than to encourage learner autonomy (Akcaoğlu, 2008). The instructors use such tools as interactive CDs of the coursebooks, classroom response systems like *Kahoot, Formative,* and *Socrative*, and *Microsoft Office* programs, which necessarily require teacher control. However, a few instructors reported that they use technology in the classroom as 'student tools' to provide more learner-centered language teaching and encourage learner autonomy. This very case showed that the more they learned about the potential of technology for language teaching, the more they enlarged their scope from a teacher-centered to learner-centered technology use. For example, Emily adopted a flipped classroom model to give learners responsibility and freedom to practice learner autonomy. Marry also used a learning management system to provide a learning environment for learners to control their learning.

When considered out-of-class learning contexts, the instructors put much more effort to support learners' out-of-class autonomous language learning with technology than their efforts to use technology as 'student tools' in class. There is a consensus in the literature that many language learners are not aware of the potentials of technology and also lack the ability to use the technology even though they are digital natives (Castellano et al., 2011; Çelik et al., 2012; Lai & Gu, 2011; Lai et al., 2016; Wang, 2007; Winke & Goetler, 2008). The previous research concluded that teacher guidance is of importance for learners' autonomous language learning with technology and teachers are supposed to use various strategies to be supportive (Castellano et al., 2011; Deepwell & Malik, 2008; Lai, 2015a; Lai et al., 2016). Parallel with this assertion, the instructors in this study expressed their willingness to help learners and reported their practices for this aim. They use and model various language learning technologies in their classes (e.g., using *YouTube, Blogs, Google Drive, Microsoft Office* for language learning in the classroom) and give technical training on how to use them for language learning purposes (e.g., showing how to find some websites like *Busy Teacher* and choose appropriate language materials). In addition, they recommend technological tools for out-of-class language learning (e.g., suggesting

language learning websites such as *Busuu* and *Duolingo* and CMC to communicate with the other language learners via such tools as *Skype*, *Virtual Games*, and *Chat* programs).

Another significant finding of the study is that the instructors' in-class technology use affects learners' out-of-school technology use. Concurring with various research (Fagerlund, 2012; Lai, 2015a, 2015b; Lai & Gu, 2014), the participant instructors indicated that their efforts enhanced the quality of the learners' technology use for language learning and also increased their digital competence. For example, after using *Blogs* for writing classes, the instructors witnessed that some learners voluntarily use and read *Blogs* in English beyond the classroom. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers' efforts to engage learners into the activities with technology might have a positive impact on learners' awareness about the potential of technological tools and increase the technology adoption of language learners.

Considered as a whole, it could be speculated that the instructors integrate technology to promote the learners' out-of-class autonomous language learning even though most of them use technology in class mostly as 'teacher tools'. However, the important issue, here, is that technology integration in English classes still has not reached the ideal state. Bax (2003) identifies Integrated CALL as the ideal state which requires the normalization of technologies like a pen or a book in learning. But in this very case, it appears that the instructors' technology integration is in the phase of Open CALL which also involves learners into their learning and provides real communication with other learners. Nevertheless, the use of computers and other mobile technologies are considered as an extra component of the lesson which does not support learner autonomy sufficiently. Moreover, they are not fully integrated into the syllabus in this phase of CALL. Given that, the use of technology is still not normalized in the context of this current study.

**Problems inhibiting language learner autonomy development**

Another theme that partially responds to the first and second research questions was the perceived problems that prevent instructors from promoting learner autonomy with technology. The instructors highlighted various problems during the interviews. Those problems could be aggregated under two sub-themes: institution-based (i.e., crowded classes, poor technological infrastructure, curriculum and limited class time) and learner-based problems (i.e., low motivation and teacher-centered learning culture).

One of the most frequently mentioned institution-based problems was the crowded classes including various language learners with different proficiency levels and learning styles. Even though this problem has not been oft-repeatedly identified as a significant hindrance in the related literature, the instructors in this current study addressed crowded classes as the primary constraint in their context. The underlying reason behind this could be the difference in the context of the study in which language classrooms including more than 70 students are not rare. The instructors reported that even if they desire to involve learners into decision making, encourage peer learning and help each learner manage their own learning, it seems almost impossible to reach their desired state in their current situation. This finding concurs with Alibakhshi (2015) which was conducted in a similar context and identified the challenges in promoting learner autonomy. Alibakhshi (2015) concluded that crowded classrooms are one of the big challenges for the teachers who desire to involve their students in the learning process and some precautions should be taken to eliminate this problem. Thus, the best solution to this problem could be to reduce the classroom size to 20 or 30 at most, so the teachers could consider individual differences and involve each learner in the class learning (Fumin & Li, 2012).

Another problem emerging from the interview data was poor technological infrastructure provided by the institution. The instructors stated that the classrooms include just a computer with poor internet connection and an overhead projector. Interestingly, some classes in the university do not even have these infrastructures. They perceive this situation as a hindrance in promoting learner autonomy incorporating technology. This problem was also found as a significant problem in various research (Akcaoğlu, 2008; Nguyen, 2014; Park & Son, 2009). For example, Akcaoğlu (2008) revealed that technological infrastructure of the language classrooms is far from the ideal level even in private universities and this issue has a negative effect on teachers' technology integration. Only one private university in his study was technologically well-equipped and it is found that the teachers in this university tended to use technology as student tools more than the other teachers working at other universities with poor technological infrastructure. Given that, it could be argued that if the teachers have better technological conditions in the language classrooms, they can make use of the available technology to adopt a student-centered language teaching approach in their instruction and to promote learner autonomy.

As an important finding addressed in the previous section, the instructors' autonomy-support with technology for in-class learning is considerably less than their support for out-

of-class autonomous language learning with technology. Moreover, their in-class technology use is predominantly teacher-centered and does not necessarily involve learner control. Given that, this tendency could be explained by the poor technological infrastructure available at the institution. It appears impossible with a computer and an overhead projector to engage all the learners and give the control of the activities to the learners. Therefore, as Aslan and Zhu (2016) stressed, teachers' access to appropriate equipment is of importance for their in-class pedagogical practices, and the institutions should make more technological investment regarding this issue.

Concurring with the previous research (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Nguyen, 2014; Rañosa-Madrunio et al., 2016; Stroupe et al., 2016), the instructors addressed the problem caused by the strict curriculum requirements in limited class hours. The instructors feel obliged to meet the curriculum at a certain pace. Thus, the situation limits the instructor' autonomy-supportive behaviors in their class hours. Alternatively, they help enthusiastic learners learn about how to be an autonomous language learner in their office hours, which is also a challenge for them. Regarding this situation, the underlying factor behind this problem could be the teachers' lack of teacher autonomy which refers to "the capacity, freedom, and/or responsibility to make choices concerning one's own teaching" and the solution could be provided by the institution giving teachers more freedom for decisions on what and how to teach (Aoki, 2000, p.19).

Considering the learner-based problems, the instructors identify their students as reluctant to learn English autonomously. This issue has been widely discussed in the related literature and this finding supports the previous research revealing that learners are not willing to take the responsibility of their learning (Al Asmari, 2013; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Brown, Smith, & Ushioda, 2007; Chan et al., 2002; Farahani, 2014; Luke, 2006; Nguyen, 2014; Yunus & Arshad, 2014). The instructors reported that there are just a few motivated students in each class and this situation also hampers their efforts for promoting learner autonomy. Given this situation could be discouraging for the majority of the instructors, they mostly focus on and help willing learners in their office hours, even though they put some effort to motivate learners in class using different motivational strategies.

The other learner-based problem inhibiting the development of learner autonomy was learners' previous teacher-centered learning culture which affects the learners' learning habits, beliefs, dispositions, and values. This finding is also in line with the findings of

various research (Al Asmari, 2013; Balcikanli, 2007, 2010; Chan, 2003; Keuk & Heng, 2016; Yıldırım, 2012). The instructors underlined this issue by explaining how challenging to change the learners' previous learning habits. As Balcikanli, (2010, p.99) describes, the promotion of learner autonomy is difficult in the Turkish context because of the nature of the Turkish educational system in which "the authority is not shared, individuality and creativity are less encouraged." Therefore, the learners can resist changing and taking control of their own language learning.

**Pedagogical Implications**

This current study has provided valuable insights into how EFL instructors incorporate learner autonomy and technology in their instruction. The study revealed significant implications for in-service teachers, teacher educators, and institutions.

Given that teachers are supposed to create an autonomy-supportive learning environment in their classes, they could make a few little changes in their routines. One of them could be to learn more about the learners' autonomy levels and technology competence by conducting simple surveys at the beginning of each semester. Therefore, they can redesign their classes and share their responsibilities based on the learners' readiness for autonomous language learning with technology. Another point is that teachers could inform learners of everything going on in the class. As such, learners get more involved in the learning process, and there might be an increase in their awareness of learning processes. One way of doing this might be talking about the reasons for every initiative such as the purpose of tasks, selection of books, and reasons for formative assessment. More specifically, teachers can inform learners of the procedure of their material preparation and show how they find and prepare teaching materials in line with their objectives in the classroom. The mentioned points might contribute to the autonomy-supportive atmosphere of the learning environment.

The professional development of in-service teachers is another significant implication of the study. On the basis of the findings, teachers' knowledge and skills affect their pedagogical acts. Specifically, the more teachers know about and use technology tools for language teaching purposes, the more they tune into a learner-centered technology use involving the practice of learner autonomy. Given that, teachers can participate in in-service teacher training programs pertinent to their professional needs. Alternatively,

cooperation with their colleagues might be a good way of increasing their knowledge base and developing related skills.

The implications of this study are also of relevance to teacher educators. The primary aim of teacher education should move away from teaching only the theoretical foundations of autonomy and technology to preparing pre-service teachers to be autonomy-supportive teachers of digital natives. Before doing this, there is also an important issue of pre-service teachers' readiness for learner autonomy. How can one expect a teacher to promote learner autonomy without being autonomous? Thus, teacher educators should provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to develop and reflect on their own autonomy. Furthermore, this study revealed a variety of constraints teachers face in practice. This case suggests that pre-service teachers should be aware of and get ready for these possible challenges they will encounter in their future career. Teacher educators should encourage them to reflect on the constraints of the current educational system and help them find solutions accordingly. Classroom observation could also be very beneficial for pre-service teachers. In this way, they can observe successful autonomy-supportive teachers in the real teaching context and experience the real-life challenges with the possible solutions.

This study also provides some implications for the institution directors because the findings showed that the instructors face institution-based problems. Thus, institutions should make some improvements and enhance the conditions for both teachers and learners. First of all, classroom sizes in the context of the study were huge, and they need to decrease the classroom size below 20 or 25. The insufficient infrastructure level of the classrooms is also one of the most frequently mentioned problems according to the instructors. Thus, the technological infrastructure could be improved to give teachers more chance for promoting learner autonomy in class. What is more, another issue was strict curriculum requirements and the instructors perceive these requirements as a burden. Moreover, the instructors have limited opportunities to be involved in the decisions pertinent to the class time, selection of books, decision of classroom size and the assessment type. Therefore, institution directors need to provide flexibility on behalf of teachers for the decisions related to assessment models, syllabus, and course books. Lastly, the institutions should implement context-sensitive teacher training programs to narrow the gap between the ideal pedagogy and real teaching conditions due to the fact that pedagogy does not reflect the real teaching atmosphere in class and address all teaching contexts around the world.

## Limitations of the Study

Like every other study, this current study has a few limitations related to sample size, data collection source, and subjectivity issue of qualitative data analysis. First of all, this study is limited to a small cohort of instructors working at a university in Turkey due to the nature of qualitative research design. Given that, the findings cannot be generalized and may not be applicable to different contexts. Nevertheless, the data were gathered from instructors with different backgrounds, ages, and education levels. Thus, the data reflect teacher practices from various perspectives.

Another limitation could be based on the data collection source. In this study, only one data collection source, semi-structured interview guide, was implemented because it was not possible, for the researcher, to triangulate the study by different information sources such as observation and documentation. However, the researcher chose the most frequently used data collection instrument which provides rich information. Moreover, to diversify the data, she used the design named "three series of interviews' which allows the interviewer and participant to delve into the experiences of the participants and enables the participants to reflect on their previous responses in different sessions.

The other issue in this study could be the method of data collection. The qualitative data were gathered through interviews, and the findings are based on self-report data. This situation is potentially susceptible to 'social desirability bias' (Grimm, 2010). Namely, the interviewees might have described their practices as better and more socially desirable than their actual state, which may have a negative effect on the reliability of the data.

The last limitation might be derived from the nature of qualitative data analysis, and the findings could be interpreted differently by another researcher. However, the results of the analysis were coded and confirmed by two other experts in the field to eliminate the subjectivity issue and enhance the reliability of the study.

## Future Research

This study revealed significant findings about teachers' readiness and practices for promoting learner autonomy and it provides several further research directions. The first possible recommendation is that instructors' demographic details were not taken into account in the data analysis given the limited number of participants. However, the researcher observed and noted some differences in the perceptions and practices of the

instructors with a different education background and the length of teaching experience. For example, the instructors who were PhD candidates were more positive about the involvement of the learners into the classroom teaching and learner-centered use of technology. The younger instructors were more inclined to integrate technology than the older instructors. As such, the findings would be more sophisticated if more instructors could have been involved to see whether such variables as their educational background, experience years and gender make any significant differences in their pedagogical practices. Second, the sample of the study included both autonomy-supportive and non-autonomy supportive instructors and the findings showed different teacher practices which sometimes revealed contradictory qualities. The focus of the further research could be on the autonomy-supportive teachers and their perceptions of and practices related to learner autonomy. Third, the findings showed that an instructor behaved differently in two classes differing in classrooms size and curriculum requirements. Thus, it can be argued that teachers' perceptions and practices are affected by contextual factors. The detailed examination of contextual factors on teachers' perceptions and in-class practices could be the aim of the further studies. Fourth, the findings also revealed that teachers' knowledge base on technology integration has a significant impact on their autonomy-supportive technology use in class. The researchers could utilize action research cycle to improve the teachers' knowledge base and investigate the quality of their autonomy-supportive practices incorporating technological devices in the further research. Fifth, this study is based on the self-report data gathered from the instructors. Similar studies conducted with teachers and their students could also give a broader picture of the case. Furthermore, given the complexity of learner autonomy, further research making use of mixed method research design and incorporating different research instruments (e.g., questionnaires, observations, diaries) could be beneficial to gain a broader perspective of teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy with technology.

## Conclusion

This case study aimed to investigate the EFL instructors' readiness for promoting learner autonomy with technology at tertiary level. More specifically, it has given insights into teachers' autonomy-supportive and non-supportive practices, and their technology integration for learner autonomy. 11 EFL instructors (seven males and four females) with different educational backgrounds and the length of teaching experience participated in this

study. The data were gathered from instructors using a semi-structured interview guide which was created by the researcher and consisted of 22 items. The interviews were conducted in three sessions. In the first session, the researcher aimed to get instructors' perceptions of learner autonomy, technology integration and the conditions of classrooms regarding autonomy and technology. In the second session, the researcher directed nine questions investigating instructors' autonomy-support, and in the last session, the participants answered seven questions linking technology integration with learner autonomy. Thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the data gathered from the interviews. The data analysis was done following the principles of theoretical thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

The findings retrieved from the interview data revealed three themes: autonomy behaviors, technology integration and problems inhibiting learner autonomy development. In line with the intent of the research, the first theme, autonomy behaviors, served as an answer for the first research question exploring the readiness of EFL instructors for promoting learner autonomy. This theme showed that the instructors display a number of autonomy-supportive behaviors such as providing language advising, raising motivation, involving learners in decision making, promoting out-of-class learning and so forth. It can be concluded that they give affective and resource support for learners' autonomous language learning. On the other hand, the majority of the instructors fail to give capacity support which provides help for the development of learning management skills. Moreover, they still behave as the authority of the class even though they believe in the importance of learner autonomy and act reluctantly to relinquish their role as the leading figure in the classroom. The second theme, technology integration, responds to the second research question investigating instructors' technological practices for the development of learner autonomy. The theme revealed that the instructors perceive technology integration positively and use a range of technological tools to facilitate learning in class. However, the findings revealed that most of the instructors mainly use technology in class as teacher tools to facilitate and ease their instruction and motivate learners. A few instructors incorporate technology as student tools which give the control of learning to learners and promote learner autonomy. On the other hand, instructors put much more effort to support learners' out-of-class autonomous language learning and guide learners on how to use technological tools for language learning purposes. The last theme, problems inhibiting learner autonomy development, partially answers the first and second question and give

background for instructors' inadequacy in being an autonomy-supportive teacher. In this theme, it is found that instructors face institution and learner-based problems such as crowded classes, poor technological infrastructure and learners' low motivation for autonomous language learning.

Taken as a whole, it is revealed that even though Turkish EFL instructors are not fully ready for promoting learner autonomy, they consider learner autonomy important and take small steps to create an autonomy-supportive learning environment in spite of some institution and learner-based constraints. The instructors also make use of technology to facilitate their instruction in class and encourage learners to go beyond the classroom as autonomous language learners. The findings give an optimistic picture for the development of learner autonomy in the Turkish context that the instructors put effort to encourage their learners to become more independent and responsible for their learning.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Informed Consent Form

**Informed Consent Form**

**Study Name:**

Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy with technology

**Researcher:**

Tuba IŞIK / Graduate Student

*Email:* tuba.turkel@erzincan.edu.tr *Office Phone:* 04462240089-42110

**The purpose of the research:**

To investigate how ready English Language instructors are to promote learner autonomy and what technology tools they use to promote learner autonomy.

**What you will be asked to do in the research:**

Your interview will be carried out in three sessions. In the first session, the terms in this study will be clarified and you will be asked to explain your teaching environment, to discuss your general opinion about language teaching, learner autonomy, and technology integration. In the second session, you will be asked to answer questions about to what extent you support your students' autonomy. In the last session, questions about technology integration into your teaching and technology use in promoting learner autonomy will be directed to you.

**Benefits of the research:**

This study contributes to the understanding of learner autonomy and the role of teacher in promoting learner autonomy. It will also shed light on the place of technology to foster learner autonomy and reveal the teachers' actual practices to promote learner autonomy using technology. Suggestions and educational implications will be presented based on your answers.

**Voluntary participation:**

Your participation in the research is completely voluntary and that participants may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to continue participating will not influence your relationship or the nature of your relationship with the researchers or with the staff of Erzincan University either now or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the study:**

You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you decide so. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher. In the event that you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

**Confidentiality:**

In this study, the data will be gathered through one-on-one interviews. Your interview will be recorded by an audio recorder. The data will be accessed just by the researcher and you as long as you want. The information will not be shared with anyone else and your name will not be used in any reports. Your confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

**Legal Rights and Signatures:**

I ……., consent to participate in this study "Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy with technology" conducted by Tuba IŞIK. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

**Signature Date :**

Participant:

**Signature Date:**

Researcher:

**Appendix 2. Interview Guide**

**Interview Guide;**

*First Session:*

1. How do you define/interpret

   a.learner autonomy,

   b.technology, and

   c.technology integration into your language class?

2. Can you tell me about the physical structure of your language classroom? (seating arrangement, technological devices)
3. How does your teaching environment affect the development of learner autonomy?
4. How conscious are you of learner autonomy as a goal of your teaching?
5. What do you think about the relationship between technology and your language teaching?
6. Can you tell me about your technology journey as a teacher? How did you start utilizing technology in your language classroom?

*Second Session:*

1. Do you think your students can build up their own language learning process?
2. To what extent do you help learners to identify their own strengths and weaknesses?
3. To what extent do you help learners to set up their own learning goals? *How and in what ways?*
4. To what extent do you help learners to monitor/evaluate their own learning and progress?
5. To what extent do you help learners to stimulate their own interest in learning English?
   a. How do you motivate your students to continue learning English out of the class?
   b. What motivational strategies do you use?

6. To what extent do you help learners to decide what to learn outside the classroom?
    a. What resources do you provide with?
7. To what extent do you help learners to learn from peers not just from the teachers?
    a. How do you make use of pair and group work?
8. To what extent do you help learners to be more self directed/autonomous in their learning?
    a. Do you think you support your students to be more self directed in their learning?
9. To what extent do you give learners chances to offer opinions in their learning?
    a. How do you involve learners in decision making? (content, assignments, objectives, evaluation etc.)

*Third Session:*

1. What technology tools do you use outside the class for learning and entertainment?
2. What technology tools do you use inside school to promote learning?
3. For what purposes do you use the technology you have shared before? How frequently do you use them?
4. Can you share some examples and details about your technology practices in your language classroom?
5. Have you ever encouraged your students to use technology outside the class to learn the language? Why? How?
6. Do you think your technology use in class encourage your students' self directed/autonomous language learning?
    a. Do you think you influence your students' autonomous language learning with technology outside the classroom?
7. What knowledge and skills have your students gained from your current technology use in your language classroom? How will these skills help them in the future?

## Appendix 3. Committee Approval

| Kayıt Tarihi: 25/05/2017 | Protokol No: 04/09 |
|---|---|

25 /05/2017

**T.C**

**ERZİNCAN ÜNİVERSİTESİ**

**İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU KARARI**

| | |
|---|---|
| **ARAŞTIRMA BAŞLIĞI** | Teachers' Readiness for Promoting Learner Autonomy with Technology |
| **ARAŞTIRMANIN TÜRÜ** | Nitel Araştırma |
| **SORUMLU ARAŞTIRMACI** | Araş.Gör. Tuba IŞIK<br>Doç.Dr.Cem BALÇIKANLI |
| **KARAR** | Araştırmanın etik açıdan "uygun" olduğuna karar verildi. |

| **ETİK KURUL BAŞKANI** | **TARİH** | **İMZA** |
|---|---|---|
| Prof. Dr. Paşa YALÇIN | 25/05/2017 | |



*GAZİLİ OLMAK AYRICALIKTIR...*