T. R.
GAZIANTEP UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHING
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM

SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS' AUTONOMY, MOTIVATION, AND DIGITAL LITERACY IN EMERGENCY DISTANCE EDUCATION

MASTER OF ARTS THESIS

BÜŞRA KIRTIK

GAZİANTEP
JANUARY 2023

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Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet KILIÇ

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APPROVAL OF THE JURY

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Thesis Title **:** Secondary School EFL Learners' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Emergency Distance Education

Thesis Date **:** 12.01.2023

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It is approved that this thesis has been written in compliance with the formatting rules laid down by the Graduate School of Educational Sciences.

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RESEARCH ETHICS DECLARATION

The information contained here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures set out in the attached application in accordance with these guidelines, the University's policy on conflict of interest and any other condition laid down by the Gaziantep University Research Ethics Committee or its Sub-Committees. I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants.

I have declared any affiliation or financial interest in this research or its outcomes or any other circumstances which might present a perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest, in accordance with Gaziantep University policy on Conflicts of Interest.

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To my two grandfathers whom I lost in this process

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Believing that educating teachers is the fastest way of developing a society, I have dreamed of educating teachers by becoming an academician from the very early age of mine. I had the chance to pursue my master's degree at Gaziantep University in 2019 as the initial step toward achieving my dreams. This dream might not have come true without being guided, encouraged, and supported by some leading people. Thus, I want to take the opportunity to honor their names by mentioning them below.

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ÖZET

ACİL UZAKTAN EĞİTİMDE ORTAOKUL İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖZERKLİĞİ, MOTİVASYONU VE DİJİTAL OKURYAZARLIĞI

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COVID-19 nedeniyle, ülkelerin çoğu ilk kez tüm öğrenim seviyelerinde acil uzaktan eğitimle karşılaştı. Eğitim sunumundaki bu ani değişiklik, öğrenen özerkliğinin benimsenmesi için uygun bir ortam yarattı. Bununla birlikte bu becerinin öğrenciler tarafından nasıl uygulandığını ve hangi faktörlerin özerklik ile ilişkili olduğunu tespit etmek için eleştirel bir yaklaşım gereklidir. Bu çalışmada ortaokul öğrencilerinin acil uzaktan eğitim bağlamında öğrenen özerkliğine ilişkin gerçek bakış açılarını ortaya koymak ve motivasyon, dijital okuryazarlık ve demografik değişkenlerin (sınıf seviyesi, cinsiyet ve yaş) öğrenenlerin söz konusu bağlamda öğrenen özerkliği algıları ile ilişkilerinin keşfedilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu çalışmada karma yöntem yaklaşımı kullanılmış ve buna uygun olarak 180 ortaokul öğrencisine üç farklı ölçek uygulanmış ve 10 katılımcı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Nicel sonuçlar, ortaokul öğrencilerinin, orta düzeyde motivasyon ve ortalamanın üzerinde öğrenci özerkliği ve dijital okuryazarlığa sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Öğrenen özerkliği ile hem motivasyon hem de dijital okuryazarlık arasında anlamlı pozitif korelasyonlar bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, demografik özelliklerin öğrenen özerkliği üzerindeki etkisi ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre sınıf düzeyi ve yaş arttıkça öğrenen özerkliği derecesinin düştüğü, cinsiyet bakımından ise, kız öğrencilerin erkek öğrencilere göre daha fazla öğrenen özerkliğine sahip olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Yapılan içerik analizi sonucunda ise ortaokul öğrencilerinin öğrenen özerkliği algılarının genel olarak olumlu olduğu ancak öğrencilerin bu süreçte özerkliğini destekleyen veya engelleyen hem olumlu hem de olumsuz motivasyonel ve dijital okuryazarlık yönleriyle karşılaştığı belirlenmiştir. Araştırma, acil durum uzaktan eğitim sistemlerinin öğrenci-öğretmen etkileşimi, teknolojik kaynaklar ve öğretim stratejileri açılarından geliştirilmesi ihtiyacını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Acil Durum Uzaktan Eğitimi, Dijital Okuryazarlık, Motivasyon, Öğrenen Özerkliği, Uzaktan Eğitim

ABSTRACT

SECONDARY SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS' AUTONOMY, MOTIVATION, AND DIGITAL LITERACY IN EMERGENCY DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Due to COVID-19, the majority of countries encountered emergency remote education at all learning levels for the first time. This abrupt change in the delivery of education created a suitable environment for adopting learner autonomy. A critical approach is required to ascertain how this ability was perceived and which factors are related to it. This study aimed to present the perspectives of secondary school students on learner autonomy in the context of emergency remote education and explore the relations of motivation, digital literacy, and demographic variables (grade level, gender, and age) with it. Mixed-method approach was used in this thesis and in line, three scales were administered to 180 secondary school learners and semi-structured interviews were held with 10 participants. Quantitative results revealed that secondary school students had above-average levels of learner autonomy and digital literacy while maintaining a moderate level of motivation. Significant positive correlations were found between learner autonomy and both motivation and digital literacy. Additionally, the impact of demographic traits on learner autonomy was discovered. It was found that learner autonomy declined with increasing grade level and age. In terms of gender, female students had more learner autonomy than males. The content analysis revealed that secondary school students' perceptions of learner autonomy are generally positive, but that learners also encountered both positive and negative motivational and digital literacy factors that either encouraged or inhibited their autonomy. The study implicated the need for developing emergency remote education settings in terms of student-teacher interaction, technological resources, and instructional strategies.

Keywords: Digital Literacy, Distance Education, Emergency Remote Education, Learner Autonomy, Motivation

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LA: Learner Autonomy
ERE: Emergency Remote Education
DL: Digital Literacy
CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
MoNE: Ministry of National Education
EIN: Education Information Network
TRT EIN TV: Turkish Radio and Television Corporation- Education Information Network Television

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Presentation

In this chapter, the aim of the study which is to examine secondary school learners' perceptions of learner autonomy in emergency distance education and its relationship with motivation, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) literacy, and demographic factors are explained. In the subsequent chapters, a brief introduction to the topic area and the context of the study, background information about the subject from the literature on English language teaching and learning is presented along with the study's goals, significance, and problem statements, as well as assumptions and restrictions.

1.2. Introduction

As the well-known English proverb "Necessity is the mother of invention" suggests, every necessity could serve as the impetus for a significant improvement or change in any domain. This was the exact effect of the coronavirus outbreak in the year 2019 in the field of education. Following the Covid-19 pandemic declaration in December 2019, the educational authorities of every nation encountered a significant challenge: how to maintain education while fostering social isolation among the entire education community, including administrators, teachers, students, and many others. It was clear that it would be impossible to provide face-to-face instruction to one of the largest communities on Earth when one considers that only the number of students is roughly more than millions in the world, which was stated as 131 million

schoolchildren who were affected by coronavirus in 2020 (UNICEF, 2021). Social isolation had never before been practiced with such sizable groups, and this problematic situation was the catalyst for school closures.

In order to stop the spread of coronavirus, over 150 countries closed their schools entirely, while ten more chose to only partially close their schools, according to a report published by UNICEF in 2021. Immediately after the first coronavirus case, the same decision also was taken by the Turkish MoNE on the 12th of March in Turkey and face-to-face education was disrupted for two weeks during the first phase. In parallel with the increasing number of cases, the decision of extending the closure time was announced in the following weeks. But the closure of schools was not the exact solution for sustaining education under the social isolation circumstances. At that point, the notion of distance education, or in other words online learning, in which the stakeholders of learning do not have to be in the same place, came into play. As a way to continue the educational process, the Turkish MoNE launched platforms TRT EIN TV (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation- Education Information Network Television) and EIN (Education Information Network). Since then, online courses which are designed and taught by the same teachers who teach face-to-face classes in the school setting and TRT EIN TV broadcasts have been identified as the two main pillars of emergency distance education plans. And it was intended to apply to all levels of education in Turkey, excluding universities.

Despite its widespread use in universities around the world, and even though it has been used in Turkish universities for years, the implementation of distance learning at other levels of education has been a relatively less common issue in educational designs for most countries, including the Turkish educational system. Moreover, the situation of being in an emergency made this distance learning process quite different from the ones applied under normal circumstances. What set it apart was that it was not planned and prepared in advance by specialists, and none of the educational stakeholders were familiar with this new form of learning method. Due to the pandemic issue, there was insufficient time to conduct orientation practices or prepare the necessary materials for online classes and follow-up practices. This meant that there were no pre-planned curriculums to follow, no supplementary materials to use in lessons, and not enough technological infrastructure to schedule or connect online lessons.

As a result, implementing this method proved challenging, particularly in nations with government-directed education systems in which the government traditionally provided curriculums, course materials, and other learning aspects as a framework. The reality in Turkey is somewhat similar; typically, before the school year begins, the Ministry provides a framework with learning outcomes for each grade as well as coursebooks to follow. Due to the lack of a clear framework to work within, it became apparent that everyone involved in the education community needed to be more autonomous in this emergency distance learning scenario.

This new method of learning was particularly perplexing for students who are accustomed to studying under the guidance of their teachers. The unreadiness of learners to online learning was also detected in the study by Aboagye et al. (2021). During this period, to be a successful student, one must be more engaged not only during the learning stage, but also throughout all the learning processes, including planning, observing, and evaluating. Hence, the phrase "learner autonomy" came into prominence which refers to one's assuming responsibility for their learning process and emphasizing the need of keeping one's learning process in one's hands (Holec, 1981).

With the curriculum reform done in 2006, learner autonomy had already been incorporated into the English language curriculum of Turkey, in keeping with the recognition of its importance. Given that students in a distance learning setting are presumed to be more autonomous than those enrolled in a traditional learning format (White, 2006), there is little doubt that the immediate aftermath of the pandemic provided the most favourable learning environment for researchers to observe learners' level of learner autonomy and their perceptions toward it.

In a nutshell, although post-coronavirus educational improvements appear to be negative, they offered a more conducive learning environment in which students were required to be the executive of their learning processes. In this way, in emergencies, the distance learning education process was extremely valuable in assessing students' opinions on learner autonomy as well as motivational relationships that could be advantageous on the subject. Furthermore, because of the technological characteristics of this time, it was possible to investigate the relationship between learner autonomy and ICT literacy in distance learning designs.

With this information in mind, the current study's objective is to look into secondary school EFL students' perceptions of learner autonomy and how it relates to

motivation, ICT literacy, as well as some demographic variables such as grade level, age, and gender in the context of emergency remote education.

1.3. Background of the study

With the rapid advancement of science and technology, the growth of teaching and learning methodology was unavoidable, and the teaching and learning environment got a fresh perspective. Because of technological advancements, it has become clear that teachers are ineffective as the only information source for their students, which causes them to lose interest in learning and lose motivation (Tunçok, 2010). The usage of technology in those years was mostly headed to increase the attention and motivation levels of learners with the utilization of visual and auditory materials in and out of classroom settings (Baek et al., 2008). What gained a broader technologically advanced perspective to language learning rather than simply supplying visual and audio materials was the spread of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) which broadens the definition of learning itself by providing students with various types of sources and practices to make up for their deficiencies independent of teachers and lesson length. With the widespread usage of CALL, also the belief which restricts learning in the duration of lesson time and classroom settings was demolished. Similarly, in Anderson and Dron (2010), it was mentioned that after the emergence of CALL, innovations caused a paradigm shift in language learning from cognitive-behaviorist, systematic-progressive to a concept of learning which emphasizes learner autonomy with the assertion of lifelong learning. According to Firat (2016), as a result of technological advancements, the concept of distance learning has provided the foundation for continuous learning that reaches a larger number of people, provides a wider repertoire of ingredients at a faster rate, and does so without the constraints of being in the same environment or time interval with instructors.

With the definition of King et al. (2004), distance learning is the knowledge or behavioral ability improved due to the intermediary experience unlimited by time or distance, not found in the same situation with the content learned. Or, to put it another way, it is a field of study that focuses on how students and teachers receive education and can interact with one another asynchronously or synchronously. It contains pedagogy, technology, and the design of educational systems implemented in digital

ways (Al-Arimi, 2014). However, compared to distance learning under normal circumstances, the teaching circumstances that evolved after the COVID-19 pandemic were unique. Bozkurt et al. (2020) established the term "emergency remote education" (ERE) to describe this unusual circumstance, and it was argued that the distance learning methodology selected for that time of crisis was obligated, as opposed to normal distance learning settings, where students have a preference among various teaching and learning approaches. Various terminologies were used to describe that specific distance learning situation. Given the current state of educational sciences, this thesis will focus specifically on the teaching and learning situations that have appeared as a response to coronavirus pandemic outbreak and believing that it paints the clearest picture of the overall situation, ERE will be used to refer to this process in this thesis.

Among other advantages, it is an indisputable fact that the biggest privileges of distance education are flexibility and convenience to learners' own needs and timing. Even if students have strayed from the learning process, distance learning allows them to use their learning plan as they please without adhering to a set schedule and gives them flexibility in choosing their learning path (Sadeghi, 2019). However, the flexibility inherent in distance education may also cause demotivation and dropouts of students who are unable to control their learning. Being in a highly independent learning situation, such as learning from the web, might be difficult for persons who are unmotivated and lack self-control (Artino, 2007). The idea of learners requiring autonomy and motivation to manage their learning process efficiently for the sake of achieving the projected success in both remote learning and blended learning environments (Günes & Alagözlü, 2020), has served as the foundation for research on learner autonomy and motivation in online learning environments.

From the earliest studies, learner autonomy has been defined in many ways by linguists or theorists.Although all the definitions of learner autonomy are derived from different perspectives and theories, the core of all these definitions is the idea of one learner taking the whole responsibility for his learning advancement including making decisions, choosing approved materials, observing the progression, and overall evaluation.

Under the distance learning consideration, seeing that learner autonomy is a vital constituent of distance learning and is reflected in the number and quality of learning strategies used by learners (Vanijdee, 2003), Tilfarlioğu and Ciftci (2011)

highlighted the positive relationship among learner autonomy and academic success. Similarly, in the exploratory study of Hashemian and Soureshjani (2011), the substantiveness of a positive relationship among these two variables of distance learning was proclaimed. In the consideration of the Turkey concept, Mutlu and Eröz-Tuğa (2013) try to understand whether learners become more autonomous with the strategy training given through CALL in blended learning environments which includes a mixture of distance and face-to-face learning, and found that CALL is an effective way of not only fostering learner autonomy but also increasing learner motivation.

Alongside learner autonomy, motivation is also one of the foremost considerations of language learning achievement and failure (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2002) and this is true for online or distance learning environments as well (Jones & Issroff 2005; Hashemian & Soureshjani 2011). In a broader context, White (2003) asserted that motivation plays a critical role in the success of second language learners in distance education. According to Radovan (2011) motivation, strategic determinants, and academic success are all positively related in distance learning conditions.

Having been defined from different perspectives, learner motivation had different theoretical backgrounds. From the socio-psychological angle which mostly sprang from the propositions of Gardner (2006), learner motivation consists of learners' attitudes and willingness about the language to learn. On the other side, for the cognitivist theories, learner motivation also involves cognitive aspects of human behavior in various ways; motivation towards learning a language is affected by attributions of one's success (attribution theory) (Weiner, 1986); motivation is bound to the expectations of learners about accomplishing a language task and valuing their acquirement (expectancy-value theory) (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002); motivation base on the beliefs of learners about their competences in planning and implementing the actions need to be fulfilled (self-efficacy theory) (Bandura, 1997); motivation includes constraining, being aware and nourishing one's own motivation throughout learning (self-regulation theory) (Zimmerman, 2008). Alongside these two main groups of approaches to motivation, Ryan and Deci (2000) combined socio-psychological and cognitive presumptions under the heading of self-determination theory, which centered on the contextual factors that will either advance or regress self-motivation. The identification of that theory is essential for studies of e-learning or distance learning

(Gronchi, 2021) as well as for this investigation because it ensures a layout of online learning for gaining insight into the roles of autonomous learners (Dembo & Lynch, 2004).

Within the framework of distance learning setting, the motivational studies especially focused on self-determination theory whose impact (specifically intrinsic) on academic achievement was proved by various studies (Réka, et al., 2015; Dincer, et al., 2019) and self-regulation theories. The reason behind this is comprising both determinants of accomplishment in that context which are learner autonomy and motivation and inductions displayed the positive connections between the two. In open and distance learning environments, the level of intrinsic motivation, one of the key facets of self-regulation theory, awakens and maintains learners' attention while they are learning autonomously (Fırat et al., 2018). Because distance learning is more flexible, student-centered, and autonomous than face-to-face instruction, learners must be more self-regulated and constantly use self-regulation learning skills (Delen & Liew 2016).

Given school closures and social isolation, after the pandemic, educational facilities became more flexible, leading to a focus on learner autonomy and motivation, both of which can have significant impacts on the controls and self-efficacy of learners to continue their education on their own. Despite the fact that several previous studies have shown a positive relationship between the two (Godwin-Jones, 2019; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019), this study also sought to shed light on how students perceive these two ideas from the perspective of a particular group of students in the context of Turkish education.

According to Bozkurt et al. (2020), a learner's advantage over others in the current state of crisis learning, a term used to refer to educational studies conducted while dealing with the effects of the coronavirus, was DL as much as self-directed learning skills and self-regulation skills. As a result of a more self-centered and innovative entity of learning from away, students’ conscious use of DL became one of the conditions for succeeding in emergency remote education. Though initially limited to learning how to use technological devices, the scope of the concept of DL has expanded in tandem with the era's digitalization in a way that allows for opportunities for individuals' fundamental practical and academic development (Tejedor et al., 2020). As a result of this, DL became essential for preparing for both daily and professional life. Additionally, a prior study (Erdem, 2021) and analyses of academic

success in distance learning programs (Girgin Ozturk, 2020) both demonstrated a significant impact of internet technology proficiency on learner satisfaction levels.

Specifically, in that extraordinary distance learning context, both teachers' and learners' digital literacy skills convey the utmost importance to keeping pace with all the training studies which are reasonably unusual after the coronavirus impacts. By canalizing digital native learners who matured in the period of prevailing technology and computer (Prensky, 2001) to employ their knowledge about digital tools and literacy skills in educational studies maintains not only behaving more autonomously in language learning but also enriches the efficacy of the remote learning process itself. In the study of Firat (2016), the effectiveness of the level of ICT skills on learner autonomy in an e-learning atmosphere was exposed and it was asserted that for supportive autonomous behaviors in remote education, accelerating the learners' computer literacy, internet literacy, or in broader term media literacy is immensely essential. Additionally, it is possible to encounter studies in related literature about the correlation between DL and LA (Ates Cobanoglu et al., 2022; Istifci & Goksel, 2022) in that hotly contested learning situation.

The importance of learner autonomy, motivation, and DL in distance learning is abundantly clear in light of the studies discussed above. It is still necessary to look into these important ideas of language teaching and learning in an emergency remote education context, though, as it is a relatively new and distinct problem. In that vein, those terms will serve as the main variables in this study. Additionally, this thesis will shed light on how learners' perceptions related to learner autonomy, were influenced by their motivation, digital literacy, and demographic characteristics. This study will differ from earlier research in five ways: it fills a knowledge gap in the literature regarding secondary school students; it reflects the effectiveness of the process on socioeconomically disadvantaged students; it bases its argument on both quantitative and qualitative data; it examines all three variables in one study, and it offers an assessment of the entire process in terms of its effectiveness on all study variables.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

In order to investigate the concept of learner autonomy and learner perceptions of it, remarkable studies in the field of language teaching and learning were conducted in various learning contexts such as face-to-face, distance learning, blended learning,

and massive open online courses (MOOCs) in previous years. Parallel to technological enhancements and educational reforms, the investigations changed their direction to distance learning settings (Fotiadou et al., 2017; Mısır et al., 2018; Warni et al., 2018). As a result, it was established by general agreement that students' perceptions of that specific concept and their levels varied depending on the elements of the learning environment, learning grade, gender distributions, or age differences. Assuming that both learner autonomy and ideas can change in response to educational advancements and adjustments in learning environments opens the door for research that shows those variations and the causes of each new learning particular instance.

In Turkey, Mutlu and Eröz-Tuğa (2013) tried to understand whether Turkish learners become more autonomous with the strategy training given through CALL in blended learning environments which includes a mixture of distance and face-to-face learning, and found that CALL is an effective way of not only fostering learner autonomy but also increasing learner motivation. Similar to that research, Günes and Alagözlü (2020) worked on the correlations among learner autonomy, motivation, and academic success in asynchronous distance learning and blended learning environments. The implications of that study exhibit positive correlations among the three with different rates for the two aforementioned learning environments. As a result, alongside demographic variables, the impact of motivation on learner autonomy was proven in distance learning conditions.

In the aftermath of pandemics around the world, investigations of learner autonomy in distance settings focused more on those conducted in emergency condition, assuming that this urgently required situation provided a fruitful learning environment for learners to reveal their autonomous learning actions. In the studies of Melvina et al. (2020) and Hidayati and Husna (2020), the views of learners about autonomy in distance arrangements were examined and it has been concluded that students exhibit more autonomous behaviors throughout emergency education process and their autonomous behaviors impressed by the experiences they have in online learning. In the Turkish context, a study was done by Bucak (2021) and unveiled the magnitude relationship between learner autonomy and motivation in emergency remote learning. The relations among these two variables are explicated as ‘‘the more autonomous the students were in English lessons in distance education, the more motivated they were, and vice versa’’ (p. 42). In addition, this study also included the gender variants to show their effects of them on the autonomy and motivation of

attendants, and the aheadness of females in both variables proved. The value of the topic to work on more and the possibility of the gender effects on learner autonomy and motivation was also supported by that research.

In addition to studies looking at motivation, and gender as determining factors on learner autonomy, DL was found by several researchers to have effects on learner autonomy and motivation while enrolled in online courses. This made the argument that the challenges students faced in digital learning systems encouraged students' autonomy for problem-solving by taking ownership of their learning (Ting, 2015; Alzieni, 2021). At Turkish Open University, Firat (2016) examined the digital capacities of learners and their relatedness with their e-learning autonomy along with the academic achievement of learners and confirmed the association between the three. Similarly, the effectiveness of ICT-based instruction on the development of learner autonomy and self-discipline levels was suggested by Mayasari and Widyantoro (2021). As a result, it is possible to construct the hypothesis that, in an emergency situation, learners may be forced to engage in autonomous behaviors that will, in turn, affect their ability to exercise learner autonomy.

Aside from the notable studies about learner autonomy in distance learning processes found in the literature currently available on language teaching and learning, there is a need to take this issue into account in emergency remote education, which is a relatively new setting for both students and the field of educational sciences. Investigating learners' levels of autonomy as well as how they view it will be important in light of the premise that each learning environment differs in terms of learning features. Reviewing this brand-new learning environment is also anticipated to highlight features that need to be improved and those that should be taken into account in order to be ready for potential emergency learning scenarios. Also, it is worthwhile to broaden the literature on this subject in terms of the study population, given the notion that the early years are crucial for the development of autonomous learning behaviors.

Regarding the factors that make learners autonomous in that procedure, the necessity of resolving the connections of learner autonomy with learner motivation, digital literacy, and demographic variables like gender, age, etc.are quite apparent. Moreover, increasing the number of studies done with various participant groups will be very beneficial for depicting the differences between these groups.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

Even though it had been given value and been accepted since the early years when distance education surfaced in tandem with technological developments and the emergence of CALL, the need for and significance of learner autonomy peaked after the emergency learning occasion that occurred after the COVID-19 school closures. Due to a lack of experience with this type of learning, emergency remote education situations left a gap in the perspectives of both learners and the entire education community, including authorities, administrators, and teachers, regarding how to proceed with learning. Similar to the case of other nations where educational practices are achieved predominantly in an authority or teacher-centered manner under normal circumstances, the learners in Turkey had the opportunity to experience for the first time an education method that proceeds much more student-centered, and to test and reveal its autonomous learning features. This is also an opportunity for researchers to identify the concept of learner autonomy with students from other grade levels rather than university students with different maturity and perspectives. Even the studies reached in literature positioned this topic as required to be updated due to the ever-evolving circumstances. In this vein, the primary goal of this thesis is to determine the autonomy levels of secondary school learners newly encountering distance learning, as well as to provide information on how they perceived and experienced autonomy in that specific ERE setting. As a sub-objective, this study will examine the autonomy of students with socio-economic handicaps in the ERE setting, where many functions rely on technological infrastructure and equipment. Consequently, it will guide the consideration of these students' conditions for future ERE planning. Beyond these objectives, the research also aims to show how, in this particular learning context, demographic factors like age, gender, and grade level relate to autonomy. The existence of variations across previously stated demographic variables will either be confirmed or disproven through the analysis of quantitative data. The causes of the variances will then be identified and provided in order to shed light on subsequent adjustments to make up for them.

As the second research area, this thesis also sought to link learner autonomy with two other concepts that have been extensively studied and published with regard to their contribution to the literature. Given that Lynch & Dembo (2004) identified motivation as the primary driver of autonomous learning and Lai (2019) identified digital literacy as an engaging and mutualistic determinant of LA, this study will

attempt to add to the body of literature by illuminating the connections between these concepts and LA within the ERE methodology.

With an additional effort, the qualitative findings of this thesis will highlight both the advantages and disadvantages of ERE implementation in Turkey in terms of the three investigated variables. By achieving that goal, it is intended that the necessary authorities will be informed of the areas that need improvement and consideration.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The research's significance rests on its effort to fill in the gaps in the body of knowledge already available on English language teaching and learning by looking at a brand-new distance learning environment where learner autonomy plays a crucial role in success. The concept of learner autonomy has been thoroughly studied since the beginning of language learning studies (Holec, 1981; Dickinson, 1995; Little, 2003) it has also received additional attention with examinations in the context of distance education (White, 2006; Hashemian & Soureshjani, 2011). However, the unique features of ERE have prompted the creation of a new research area to investigate that idea under these novel circumstances. With the proposal of this research, it is anticipated that the opinions of the learners and the number of their autonomous actions, as well as the areas where their autonomy is higher or less so, will provide data for reviewing the ERE implementation process.

Another intention of the current study is seeking to magnify previous research on the subject within the framework of the Turkish educational system. According to Hebebci et al. (2020) and Tümen Akyıldız (2020), improvements must be made in order to counteract the drawbacks of emergency distance learning, which was implemented for the first time in Turkey. It is believed that the study's results will pave the way for future advancements in educational curricula, approaches, tools, and resources that can be made for potential upcoming distance education processes.

Given the wide range of ages and grades, it is initially anticipated that knowledge about secondary school students' perceptions and their current level of readiness to manage their learning autonomously will play a vital role in the design of future distance learning programs. This study also aims to broaden the literature by including secondary school students as participants.

From a different vantage point, identifying the interconnection between learner autonomy and a few other factors, the effects of which were unearthed in preliminary studies may have a favorable impact on future academic programs. Recognizing students' motivation levels to learn autonomously is just as crucial as being aware of their LA levels and the learning tasks they can complete independently, according to Bucak's (2021) suggestion, in order to overcome the drawbacks of distance learning in emergency situations. Accordingly, this research offers details on motivation, digital literacy, and demographic characteristics, that may have the biggest effects on the degree of learner autonomy experienced by distance learners. As a result, the current study is profitable for highlighting the areas on which educators must concentrate in order to facilitate learner autonomy in ERE processes by determining whether each variable affects learner autonomy and, if so, in what direction (positively or negatively).

Despite having been addressed on learner autonomy in face-to-face educational settings, investigation of this concept in predetermined conditions stayed underresearched. The study presented here will therefore can be used to promote learner autonomy and thereby raising student achievement in emergency distance learning, which is likely to be encountered in the future.

1.7. Statement of Research Questions

For the aforementioned purposes, this study addresses four research questions:

Research Question 1- What are secondary school EFL learners' perceptions of autonomy in emergency remote education?

Research Question 2- Do secondary school EFL learners' motivation and autonomy have a relationship in emergency remote education environments?

Research Question 3- Do secondary school EFL learners' digital literacy and autonomy have a relationship in emergency remote education environments?

Research Question 4-Is there a significant difference among learners with varying demographic characteristics (grade level, gender, and age) in terms of their learner autonomy in emergency remote education environments?

4a. Is there a significant difference among learners in different grade levels in terms of learner autonomy levels and perceptions in emergency distance education?

4b. Is there a significant difference among learners in different genders in terms of learner autonomy levels and perceptions in emergency distance education?

4c. Is there a significant difference among learners in different ages in terms of their learner autonomy levels and perceptions in emergency distance education?

1.8. Assumptions

Participants in this study included secondary school students who participated in the distance learning program that was put in place after the covid-19 pandemic broke out at the start of the 2020s. Before gathering data on learner autonomy, it was assumed that learners had formed their perceptions of the concept after spending at least one learning period in the context of ERE.

All data of the research was gathered through 3 distinct pre-planned and pre-applied scales about learners' experiences. Participants received background information on the topic before completing the scales, and it was made clear that they should focus on their prior experiences. The researcher believed that by doing this, she can produce data that faithfully capture the participants' perspectives. For gathering the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were held with ten participants after school closures ended and the location of the interviews was chosen as the learners' school under the presumption that it was beneficial to increase the accuracy of learners' answers.

1.9. Definition of the Terms

1.9.1. Learner Autonomy

The capacity of learners to be conscious of and take ownership of their learning (Holec, 1981), which is later expanded to include planning, carrying out, monitoring, and evaluating their learning (Little, 2022).

1.9.2. Emergency Remote Education

The distance learning system emerged urgently as a result of the closure of schools due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The term "emergency remote education" is preferable

because it does not identify the same matters as other distance learning settings like online learning, homeschooling, or mixed methods like blended (Bozkurt, et al., 2020)

1.9.3. Digital Literacy

It is the ability to recognize the data that can be gleaned from technological devices as well as the practical utility of hardware and software technologies (Gilster, 1997).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Presentation

This section has been authored to outline prior research on the key ideas of the study and their important aspects. The background information on the emergency remote education setting, where the study was conducted, is presented in the chapter's opening part. After that, a summary of each study variable is provided, first within the context of distance education and then in the context of emergency remote education.

2.2. Distance Education

While distance learning has been around for about two centuries, it can be said that it has reached its pinnacle since the Covid-19 pandemic caused schools to begin closing and the need to maintain social distance in educational institutions to emerge. The most widely adopted solution created for sustaining education away from the effects of the pandemic was the use of distance learning. Even so, it can be said that it was the only technique used. In order to interpret recent applications of the concept and comprehend the upcoming possibilities of future generations, it is currently necessary to investigate the fundamental principles of distance education and the revisions applied to it.

The emergence of distance learning corresponds with expressive revisions as society adopts new communication technologies (Moore et al., 2011). As a result of these shifts that occur simultaneously with changes in social relationships and

educational advancements, a plethora of approaches were proposed by scholars for identifying distance education.

One viewpoint, which is also known as a generational model (White, 2006), concentrated on how the delivery of educational materials changed as a result of advancements in technology and social life after they occurred in the distance education process. Based on this model, Wang and Sun (2013) provided a model in which there are four stages in the development of online learning, starting with the first generation, which was dominated by print-based courses as a method of course delivery in the 1970s, and ending with the fourth generation, which uses standard internet-based modern technology. Similar to this, Aydemir et al. (2015) divided the progression of distance education into three stages: correspondence, telecommunications, and computers, whereas Anderson and Dron (2010) outlined this evolution as being made up of Web 2.0, mass media, and conferencing under different but related names.

Besides the studies which provide categorizations of advancements in distance education, some studies preferred to abstract them. According to Sherry (1995), the earliest generations of distance education were mediated in Europe through the concept of correspondence courses up until the instructional media and television became commonplace. In accordance with Sadeghi (2019), the first and second generations of distance education covered the years between the 1850s and the 1980s and consisted of materials like printed materials, radio broadcasts, and television, while the third generation covers attempts made by open universities that offer a combination of printed materials and broadcasts.

By dividing them into two, Saykili (2018) encapsulated the studies that sought to define distance education and what it entails. In his opinion, earlier studies had a stronger foundation in the print materials used in correspondence studies, whereas later studies relied on the industrial view of distance education, which takes into account revisions brought on by technological advancements and their effects on educational materials, including how they are produced and disseminated as well as how people interact and communicate in distance education. On the other hand, Katz (2002) asserted that the primary goal of the first and second generations of distance education models was to create and provide educational resources to the extent that the available technology permitted while ignoring interactive communication between students and teachers. In contrast to earlier generations, the third generation

placed a higher value on student and teacher interaction. With the rapid development of third-generation distance learning platforms that use interactive video, e-mail, and World Wide Web technologies, the definition of distance learning has augmented to include teacher-student engagement.

Besides the studies that define distance learning in terms of developmental stages, it is possible to come across studies that give descriptions or highlight the characteristic features of the concept. It is described as "the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance" (p. 192) in the study by Roblyer et al. (2000). According to Sherry (1995), the trademarks of distance education include the detachment of the teacher and the student in terms of time and space, the transfer of control over learning from the teacher to the student when they are apart, and the non-contiguous interaction between the teacher and the student made possible by print or technological possibilities. Saykili (2018, p. 5) outlined the following definition of distance education in his argument that it needs to be updated in light of technological and social advancements similar to growth processes:

> Distance education is a form of education that brings together the physically-distant learner(s) and the facilitator(s) of the learning activity around planned and structured learning experiences via various two- or multi-way mediated media channels that allow interactions between/among learners, facilitators as well as between learners and educational resources.

The studies that concentrate on the terms used for reflecting its characteristics are the second most popular area of study for distance education. From a terminological standpoint, the term "education" was criticized by King et al. (2001), and the term "distance learning" was suggested to use in place of distance education to cover all three behavioral, cognitive, and psychological perspectives. While both are still constrained by differences in place and time, distance learning emphasizes the ability while distance education refers to the activity within the ability (Moore et al., 2011). Another advantage of using distance learning over distance education is that it suggests that in those settings, learning occurs voluntarily and without bias (Moore & Kearsley, 2012). Additionally, In order to promote open-mindedness and social fairness, the terms "open" and "distance learning" were employed to mirror the

transmission of distance education toward a more social and learner-centered perspective of learning (Bozkurt, et al., 2015).

The "open learning" movement emerged during the third generation of distance education, making it one of the most popular subjects for educational studies in the years that followed (Simonson et al., 2015). As a result, the dissemination of open universities that enrolled a lot of distant students (Saykili, 2018) contributed to the expansion of distance education. Open universities were the next significant location for distance learning inquiries, which resulted in the formation of various learning formats under this catch-all term. The terminology of distance learning has since been augmented to include additional distance learning classifications, such as online learning, e-learning, technology-mediated learning, online collaborative learning, virtual learning, web-based learning, and more (White, 2006).

Although all of these current suggestions can be used interchangeably, it has been found that e-learning and online learning are the most widely accessible ones. Online learning, according to a number of studies, is an experiment in learning where students are exposed to course material via technology, real-time materials, and course materials (Andrade, 2015; Fedynich et al., 2015; Bagrıacık Yılmaz, 2019). E-learning is a technique for delivering education, information, and learning materials using computers and cutting-edge information and communication technology (ICT) (Selim, 2007; Harsasi & Sutawijaya, 2018). According to Moore et al. (2011), the similarities between each description are the use of a variety of instructional materials, the involvement of two people (a student and an instructor), and the occurrence of instruction at various times and/or locations.

In conclusion, despite being viewed from different perspectives and undergoing significant changes, the concept of distance education has always been addressed at the same points: the separation of two educational properties which are learner and instructor, two-way communication between both companions, and technology mediation for designing and providing learning resources.

2.2.1. Distance Education in Emergency Conditions

The COVID-19 threat compelled educational authorities to adopt any alternative strategy to satisfy students' educational needs in the event that face-to-face

engagement is not practical (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Toquero, 2020). Distance learning was chosen as the method of sustaining education in all grades of learning after taking into account the recommendations of UNESCO (2020), which claims that online learning may be useful to stop the spread of the virus by avoiding direct human contact. A wider variety of learning opportunities for students, encouragement of interaction between learner and instructor, the resilience of learner needs, and the potential to save a significant amount of money and time are some additional benefits of distance education mentioned in the literature (Al-Arimi, 2014; Ferri et al., 2020), whereas disadvantages pointed like the high chance of being sidetracked, an overreliance on technology, a lack of social engagement, and a lack of educator affiliation. Thus, the adoption of distance education seemed to be an appropriate strategy.

Even though blended learning, online learning, homeschooling, and other approaches of a similar learning have been widely used for some time, they cannot be used to characterize preserving education in these challenging times. In line, Hodges et al. (2020) indicate that online courses offered during times of crisis or emergency differ significantly from well-designed online learning activities pursued during regular times. According to Bozkurt, et al. (2020), in contrast to a high-quality distance education strategy, the educational response to the emergency that emerged after the coronavirus pandemic involved moving or copying activities meant for face-to-face instruction to distance learning environments without the required facilities (even infrastructure), appropriate methods and techniques, teacher preparation, or planning, among other things. Therefore, it is preferable to call this unprecedented process "emergency remote education (ERE)". The other variations of the term used for interpreting that unusual process noted in the study of Seabra et al., (2021) like "emergency remote teaching (ERT) " (Hodges et al., 2020), "emergency remote teaching and learning (ERTL) " (Czerniewicz, et al., 2020). Therefore, in order to preserve education during the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and institutions should be aware of the distinctions when reviewing this emergency remote teaching.

The primary dissimilarity between the ERE and distance education is; distance education is an elective, and well-designed activity that is based on theoretical and practical backgrounds whilst ERE is an obligatory, lifesaving style of education undertaken in critical situations using all available resources, including offline and/or

online means (Bozkurt, et al., 2020). Therefore, emergency distance learning should be understood as a necessity in order to survive in dire circumstances rather than as an alternative. The primary goal of ERE is to ensure that education continued in spite of obstacles and technical constraints (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020; Seabra et al., 2021). As a parallel to that point of view, Duncan and Young (2009) remarked the aim of emergency remote instruction is to build the most adaptable, efficient, and profitable learning environment. Only alternative activities intended for traditional face-to-face learning or hybrid learning are included in this educational process, which is viewed as a "temporary shift" Hodges et al. (2020). In most cases, it is frequent to transfer traditional classroom practices purely to the virtual world (Crawford, et al., 2020; Aguilera-Hermida, et al., 2021). Taking into account all terminological approaches and definitional efforts, the idea of emergency distance education can be summed up as follows: It's a way of addressing all elements of education, including methods, techniques, interactions, materials, and the way of delivering them in a way that is responsive to the rapidly evolving circumstances in the emergent circumstances in the occurrence of an emergency.

By putting aside the differentiative characteristics, the idea that emergency remote education appeared after the COVID-19 process is tremendous potential for further studies is quite common among researchers. Ferri et al. (2020) state that the worldwide pandemic has prompted the most extensive experimentation in online education to assess the issues that arise during emergencies and design a cohesive online education approach for future emergencies or natural disasters that may occur. Additionally, this transmission to emergency learning environments has been labeled as a ‘great online learning experiment’ by Zimmerman (2020) in which we will learn more about what works and what seems not to (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Many investigations placed ERE topic since the beginning of that crisis for that reason. Amongst them all, the most prominent subjects encountered in the literature were summarised in the compilation of Bond (2020); general struggles, digital abilities of instructors, internet connectivity, learning habits of students, and the connection between home and school.

A review of 89 K–12 studies on teaching and learning during the COVID–19 pandemic by Bond (2020) found that most of the research was conducted in Europe and Asia, with a focus on teachers and a predominance of application in high schools.

The focus of these studies was examined under seven sub-sections. The points predominantly mentioned as teacher influences on teaching and learning are ICT skills and knowledge of the teacher and the support given to the students while the issues originated from a family noted as access to technology or devices and parental involvement and engagement in educational activities. From the student aspect, the topics are mainly based on the health and well-being of learners. Motivation, self-regulation, ICT skill and knowledge, and self-efficacy are among the other top researched themes. In terms of school, it was reported that generally technology-based subjects like infrastructure and managing issues as well as staff support and partnerships were investigated. Effects of curriculum and learning environment on teaching and learning focused mainly on similar points about producing or using alternative learning activities and thinking about the usability and accessibility of these supplementary learning efforts. Finally, researchers looked into peer influences with interest in relation to other factors from the perspectives of students' social development, which was severely constrained during the school closures.

Similar goals motivated Akbana et al. (2021) to conduct a document analysis of the publications made between October 1 and January 28, 2020. The points of publications were examined in three groupings; capabilities and restrictions of teachers, student-related considerations, and classroom-related components. Among these, teacher accountability and digital literacy have received the most attention among teacher-related affordances. Learners' study habits and poor study locations were the most frequently discussed issues in terms of learner-related variants. The final category of studies concerned tests related to the classroom and included research on the effects of ERE modality on online lesson instruction.

Alongside the aforementioned points, some other areas encountered in the literature were investigated by researchers in the context of emergency remote education. In the study of Hodges and Barbour (2021), assessing learning in that crisis process was examined and it is revealed that the most frequent forms of assessment used in online learning are also feasible and even suitable during ERE, maybe with some modifications. But it is noted that all of the same difficulties and privileges that come with these assessment methods are still present. Achievement in ERE is another featured topic among the investigations, and in the examination of Yakar (2021), the achievement level of associate and undergraduate students was increased throughout

the ERE process, whereas this was the exact opposite in graduate degree programs. But even so, it is remarked that both students and teachers concluded that ERE achievement results did not accurately reflect students' learning capacity.

As also mentioned by Ferri et al. (2020), this pandemic can serve as a chance and an exercise for emergency remote teaching to assess emerging issues during crises and design a cohesive online education approach for any future emergencies or natural disasters. Although emergency remote education has been explored from a variety of perspectives, the majority of studies have focused on the benefits and drawbacks of this period. In the upcoming section, much of the focus, thus, will be given to the benefits and challenges of emergency remote education because it covers a wider area in the literature.

2.2.2. Opportunities and Challenges of Emergency Remote Education

Aside from certain advantages such as student engagement, flexibility to changing situations, sharing of content, and increasing interaction between teacher and learner, several studies in the literature shows the drawbacks of online learning. And using emergency remote education after the proliferation of COVID-19 still poses the same limitations (Toquero, 2020). One of the most remarkable issues of ERE, as well as what sets it apart from online learning, is that it is not properly planned before implementation, as described in the former sections. The argument that there is no clear and readily accessible standard regarding what to teach, how to inform, or how much effort instructors and students should require was constructed and supported by Zhang, (2020). Furthermore, it is asserted that this dramatic shift to a wholly different learning environment may be detrimental to the quality of teaching and learning. As a consequence of this situation, in literature conducted following the COVID-19 outbreak, the emphasis was given to the challenges and benefits of ERE to guarantee the quality of education or to minimize its impact that may be observed in possible future emergencies.

In the summative study of Lepp and Luik (2021), the benefits and challenges of emergency remote education are discussed from the perspectives of teachers, students, principals, and parents. ERE is said to have benefits for teachers in the form of improved digital tool proficiency, increased creativity caused by better time

management, increased support from coworkers and social media, less time spent on classroom management, and reduced travel time to work. The disadvantages include inexperience, gaps in preparation sessions, an increment in workload and parent interaction, increased screen time, restrictions on teaching strategies, and a lack of student engagement. For students, improving digital skills, being motivated, having more creative learning tasks, and a chance to try different types of studying with the help of adjustable time allocations were the pros of ERE but feeling isolated, stressed, high anxiety, and bored, lower external motivation to work, an absence of technological materials, limited digital skills were the cons of that process. From another perspective, parents were positive about getting more information about their kids' learning, skills, and characteristics but they worried about their learners' lack of learning discipline and not having sufficient skills to help their children, technology-based inadequacies, and balancing daily life and following education of students. For the school managers, effective use of time as well as ensuring the well-being of their employees, and offering possibilities for collegiality were mentioned as positives whereas issues with counseling, directing, and encouraging each participant in the process, as well as the necessity of making decisions in some cases even when they were not fully informed, as negatives.

Ferri et al. (2020) conducted a thematic analysis with experts as an Italian case study and analyzed the data including opinion leaders' remarks from supplementary web sources for the sake of investigating the advantages and disadvantages of ERE. The findings show several technological, educational, and societal issues. The most significant technological issues are the unpredictable nature of internet connections and the widespread lack of access to basic electronic devices among students. There are several pedagogical issues, including the lack of organized content compared to the variety of online resources, the lack of learners' engagement and motivation, and the absence of teachers' social and cognitive presence. Additionally, social disadvantages are linked to diminished relationships between teachers and students or between students, insufficient physical spaces at home for attending lessons, and a lack of parental support who typically work remotely in the same locations.

Another study categorizes challenges of emergency remote education as technological, pedagogical, and social was negotiated by Seabra et al. (2021). In that study, the challenges were investigated from the eyes of preschool, primary, and

secondary school Portuguese teachers. Technological challenges are about the reliability and accessibility of internet connection as well as students' access to essential equipment. Pedagogical ones are restricted digital abilities of teachers and learners, teachers' lack of addressing online sources and arranging digital learning environments, deficiency in interaction and motivation, and the difficulties instructors have in establishing social and cognitive awareness. Lastly, social challenges related to the amount of communication between teacher-student or student-student, physical conditions maintained at home, and parents' assistance. Additionally, workload, circumstances of working, and time management were noted as the most frequent issues while developing digital competencies. A chance to change the way we teach and learn was specified as gains for teachers synthesized from literature. For the struggles faced by learners, autonomy, participation, parents' role, and loss of connection were pointed to by Portuguese teachers.

In an empirical study based on the experiences of Filipino instructors in Xi'an, China et al. (2021) explored the advantages, drawbacks, and implementation strategies of emergency online education in the Philippine context. The advantages of ERE for teachers and students are primarily discussed in terms of convenience and collaboration. Teachers who took part in the study refer to convenience as having flexibility in terms of time, location, and administration. The collaboration represents the enhancement of ties between parents, teachers, and students. Five areas were mentioned in relation to difficulties: issues with technology, class size, educational materials, student participation, and the learning environment.

To explore that specific online learning environment in South Africa, Jili et al. (2021) conducted their research in higher education for spotting the opportunities and drawbacks from the eyes of educational staff and students. For that purpose, secondary sources were examined and synthesized. The outcomes of that striking study claim that the main positive aspects of ERE in that tertiary are social co-existence and cohesion. With no outside distractions, it was claimed that students in that region felt more at ease studying at home. Additionally, it was thought that by using this method, social injustice among students in higher education would be reduced. The opportunity for learners to study at their own pace and assume responsibility for their learning, which allows for greater learner autonomy, was also cited as a significant positive. Surprisingly, the absence of physical contact was also cited in that paper as a benefit,

with the argument that it reduced gender-based violence, blackmail, and other forms of abuse like torture. As was to be expected, the drawback of ERE was implied as a resource and exposure limitation.

Kaya and Uylas (2022) worked on teachers' views on remote education under Turkey considerations, and in addition, they discussed the advantages and disadvantages. Saving time, increased technology knowledge, and geographical flexibility are the most often cited pros of ERE by Turkish teachers whereas the most frequent cons are the imbalance of opportunity, social-emotional problems, and increasing distraction. Teachers' articulations about the advantages of that process also summarised as; a chance to attend lessons from everywhere, sparing more time for their families, facilitation of using web 2.0 tools and technology, achieving learning materials easily, and an opportunity to study as an individual independently from space and time constraints. Teachers' comments about the advantages of ERE for students focused on how students' research and self-learning skills had improved, as well as how introverted students had become more outgoing as a result of participating in class remotely.

Overall, it is clear that the expansion of technology use by educators and students, as well as flexibility in terms of time and place, are all positive aspects of the emergency distance learning process. The most frequent drawbacks, on the other hand, are the absence of digital literacy, learner autonomy, motivation, and parental support. At that point, the topics of learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy were designated as the cornerstones of that research, based on the findings of the abovementioned studies available in the literature after the first and largest experimentation of ERE, and an exhaustive examination of these topics will be presented in the following chapters.

2.3. Learner Autonomy

The concept of learner autonomy has been discussed in a body of related literature using a variety of terms over the course of its development. In her study, Ivanovska (2015) summarized the terms used to describe learner autonomy, including "learner autonomy," "learner independence," "self-direction," "autonomous learning," "independent learning," and "learning independence." Additionally, "self-learning"

was noted as a frequent indicator of learner autonomy by Indah, Rachmawati, and Evenddy (2021). It is regarded as a 'complicated' (Little, 2003) or 'multifaceted' (Smith and Ushioda, 2009) construct at the conceptual level and throughout its development, the concept of this architecture has been altered and even been transformed (Dang, 2012). Additionally, according to Feng (2015), the popularity of learner autonomy increased between the late 1980s and the early 2000s, resulting in the emergence of new concepts such as intrinsic inducement, learner-oriented, and self-led learning. No matter how it is defined terminologically, autonomy has been viewed as a highly desired educational goal throughout its history (Ma & Gao, 2010) since the paradigm of ELT has radically changed with the shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach (Boyadzhieva, 2016).

The definition of learner autonomy has evolved as described in the study by Dang (2012). Starting with Holec's (1981, p. 3) definition of the "ability to take charge of one's learning," in later years, the words "ability" and "take charge of" were changed to "capability" and "take responsibility for." Four steps were provided by the same study outlining how different researchers interpreted and used this definition. First, according to Wenden (1991), learner autonomy is the ability to comprehend how to acquire, it is the ability to manage one's own learning activities (Cotterall, 1995a), a sense of "detachment" (Dickinson, 1987, p. 11), and finally, the "capacity to make and carry out decisions" (Littlewood, 1996 p.428). Any description of this construct, regardless of how the terminology has changed over time, always keeps in mind the ability to comprehend and efficiently manage learning processes, which is the primary element of it.

It is also possible to come across more up-to-date definitions focusing on the same basic tenets of learner autonomy in the ELT literature. For Cakici (2017), learner autonomy is the ability to take responsibility for one's actions or to act in a way that shows the learner is fully committed to all of his learning decisions and can able to carry these decisions out independently and consciously. It was described as a requirement for effective functioning in educational contexts by Doğan & Mirici (2017). Besides that, it was posited that it goes beyond habit and represents a fundamental sense of independence which leads to the assumption of responsibility in educational settings. A recent study by Little (2022), announced it as a component of teaching or learning referring to learners' scheduling, carrying out, tracking, and

assessing their learning. The prominent traits of learner autonomy gleaned from all of the descriptions provided above are learners' awareness of their learning, planning, observing, assessing, and claiming ownership of their entire learning process. Thereby, it is critical for students to gain control of their education in order to contribute to the improvement of their language skills (Tsai, 2021).

Alongside the previously cited definitions, to avoid misunderstandings of the concept, what autonomy does not imply is stated in Esch (1996 p.37);

- Autonomy is not self-instruction learning without a teacher;
- It does not mean that intervention or initiative on the part of a teacher is banned;
- It is not something teachers do to learners;
- It is not a single easily identifiable behavior;
- It is not a steady state achieved by learners once and for all.

With a similar objective, some striking points are touched upon in Schwienhorst (2011). At first, it is not a teaching strategy that lays out a clear course of action that controls what happens in the classroom and how students and teachers react. Second, it isn't always reliable or adaptable to different circumstances. Last but not least, it is a talent that every learner possesses but that needs to be developed. Parallel to that vein, Doğan and Mirici (2017), make the argument that people have aptitudes and mindsets toward autonomy that they can develop to varying degrees and that the never-ending struggle for autonomy is a procedure rather than an end product. Additionally, it is suggested in that study to look into the concepts that learners develop regarding autonomy and learning, as these ideas affect learning outcomes.

To delve deeper into the subject, the characteristics of autonomous learners have been positioned in some valuable research. Autonomous learners know what they need and should accomplish without any outside interference (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003). An autonomous person has the power to make and follow up decisions that regulate his or her tasks individually Joshi (2011) and memory methods, social strategies, cognitive strategies, and meta-cognitive strategies are all used by autonomous learners (Warni et al., 2018). In accordance with this, in order to be autonomous, a learner must be able to organize his or her experiments, set goals, create timetables, come up with creative ways to make changes, and examine the outcomes of their learning (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012).

As a result of the realization that being an autonomous learner is "not inborn but acquired" (Holec, 1981, p. 3), research on the topic has shifted to focus on environmental factors that may affect learners' autonomy. For Godwin-Jones (2019), learner autonomy is not an easy concept to grasp. It is influenced by a learner's beliefs, motivation, external guidance, sense of self (and likely future identity), metacognitive knowledge, and prior language learning experiences. Even so, he challenged the idea of being an "author of one's own world" (Oxford, 2003, p.89) and proposed the term "surfer" to describe learners who are becoming autonomous because it encompasses both the learner's initial circumstances and environmental factors in the process. When the research was surveyed, teacher roles and teacher-student associations were the external factors that the learner autonomy idea was most compatible with. In line with this perspective, long-term cooperation is required to increase learners' responsibility for and control over the learning process (Doğan & Mirici, 2017).

Regarding the highlighted cooperation between instructor and learners, it is claimed by Little (2022) that the teacher's role must alter in order to properly implement student autonomy. To further explain the teacher's role in this process, he asserts that teachers take on leadership roles in the classroom based on their pedagogical and linguistic expertise. Another duty is to initiate and maintain conversations in the target language, encourage reflective practices in their students, and promote peer and self-evaluation abilities. Additionally, they must monitor the development of every student as well as the progress of the entire class. Joshi (2011), clarified the teacher's roles in this type of learning; a teacher serves as a facilitator, an organizer, a resource person who supplies guidance and reinforcement to learners, and a producer of a learning atmosphere and place. In other words, rather than acting as an authoritative figure, a teacher acts as a guide, collaborator, and initiator.

2.3.1. Learner Autonomy in Distance Education

With the rise of technology, learner autonomy, which grew in priority with the introduction of lifelong learning and student-centered educational beliefs, became even more prominent in the language teaching and learning field. According to widespread opinion, the advancement of technology has created a new opportunity for promoting autonomy by making facilitative resources, instruments, and environments

easily accessible to learners and removing barriers to autonomous language acquisition (Hafner & Miller, 2011). It is undeniable fact that the use of CALL had a substantial impact on the increase in student autonomy (Farivar & Rahimi, 2015) by providing both inside and outside practices. Or in other words, the introduction of sophisticated technology in education opens up new chances for learners to engage in novel learning experiences (Lan, 2018). As a side effect of CALL and distance learning, there is now a much greater understanding of the importance of learning outside the classroom, not only in terms of the time learners spend learning, practicing, and, of course, using the language in non-formal learning environments, but also in terms of how educators can prepare and guide learners in such cases. Therefore, we're seeing a change in our notion of autonomy from a broad collection of skills or attitudes to more specialized navigational abilities in various learning contexts within the facilitative function of technology (Reinders & White, 2011).

Later research by Reinders and White (2016), as a result, argued that the link between autonomy and computer-assisted language learning research and practice has grown increasingly complicated and intriguing. Not only does using technology for learning typically need some autonomy, but our understanding of how technology affects learner autonomy and, more broadly, the roles of learners and instructors is evolving as well. In the same vein, Goulão and Menedez (2015) argued that this lack of spatial and temporal constraints and the need for life - long learning serve as the cornerstones of new educational scenarios and modifications to the relationships that are formed between the numerous participants in the teaching-learning process. In light of these concerns, the improvements made to the learner autonomy concept, some advantageous and disadvantageous points of learner autonomy in distance contexts, and associated instructor responsibilities will be discussed in the following paragraphs, along with the findings of representative case studies.

Joshi (2011) characterized the classroom as a location for at least ‘learning to learn’ which is vital for both lifelong learning and learner autonomy. On the contrary, Farivar & Rahimi, (2015) contend that pupils in the classroom have little influence over their learning. As a result, it's critical to assist students in seeing the importance of autonomous learning outside of the classroom to develop the habit of continuing to study even after their formal education is over. In that regard, the rise of the internet and technology has heightened the relevance of providing chances for engagement,

situational learning, and learning assistance outside of formal contexts (Reinders & White, 2011). Chik (2017), in that way, focused on the affordances for and restrictions on learner autonomy through digital behaviors that students engage in outside of class. And it is argued that, when it comes to digital behaviors outside of the classroom, comprehension of the link between digital practices and autonomous language learning necessitates the learner's ability to regulate their learning through digital literacy and a reflective understanding of their learning requirements. According to that study, selecting relevant resources, understanding their learning requirements and purpose, and management are the salient qualities of autonomous learners in a digital setting.

Similar to this, Reinders and Hubbard (2013) examined the benefits and drawbacks of CALL for learner autonomy in terms of organizational and pedagogical factors. Regarding those, four steps are recommended for teachers and students to take in order to increase learner autonomy by overcoming the drawbacks of technology in language learning. It is suggested that in order to be autonomous in technologically enhanced learning environments, students must first become accustomed to technological environments by learning how to use language resources or participate in digital language activities. In order for autonomous learners to make wise decisions, additional information must be made available to them in a way that they can remember. Thirdly, it is encouraged that teachers and students collaborate to build online communities where students, at least initially, assist and encourage student one another. Lastly, learners should eventually be assisted in reaching a stage of technological autonomy where they are free to adopt and use fresh tools and software for language learning.

In the consideration of new learning environments, learners' ability to take ownership of the learning is at the heart of autonomy, but the state of the input, the syllabus, the facilitation, and the resources tendered by the instructor all play a role in its growth (Reinders & White, 2011). It is argued in another study by Reinders (2018) that, teachers will need to develop new approaches to assist learning in an increasingly diverse range of circumstances as learners take control of the learning process. Simultaneously to the increase of learner and teacher roles in facilitating learner autonomy in remote learning contexts, new forms of distance learning settings and learner autonomy investigations in those scenarios are gaining traction. Lee (2016) analyzed task-based instructions in a completely online learning environment using

Web 2.0 capabilities and the opportunities to be autonomous in that situation. Both synchronous and asynchronous technologies were used in this context, together with the construction of an online language learning community, as well as supervision and feedback from instructors, to provide an appropriate learning environment for developing student autonomy. Findings showed that different sorts of activities and digital tools impacted learners' autonomy in different ways. Open-ended assignments gave students considerable freedom to explore their grasp of a topic through social engagement, however, structured tasks allowed them to work alone to develop material. And besides, facilitating via modeling and response from the teacher influenced the learners' self-regulation levels.

On the same basis, Akbari et al. (2015) mediated their research on a social networking site Facebook to investigate SDT (Self-Determination Theory) variables; autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Facebook usage was anticipated to assist students in fixing problems on their own time, learning via a choice-providing technique, and learning individually. The study's findings demonstrated that Facebook may help students learn languages; students in the Facebook group were more independent, competent, and connected, and all three qualities were linked to learning outcomes. Although the poorest one, autonomy was still initiated as a predictor of differences between the two participant groups.

Another study of learner autonomy was carried out in a newer learning environment; MOOLCs (Massive Open Online Language Courses). Mısır et al. (2018) worked with learners from three different MOOLCs for examining their perceptions of learner autonomy, roles of stakeholders, and autonomous learning practices driven in the learning process. The outcomes show that the attendants of MOOLCs have an intention to be autonomous which is proved also by their high levels of autonomy. Learners' choices on MOOLCs were also pledged to support the theory. Given that learner autonomy extends outside the classroom to such intercultural platforms, students are strongly encouraged to build global autonomy abilities in that study.

In recent years, technology has become pervasive, and with it, advancements have prompted us to rethink language acquisition and instruction, as well as the idea of learner autonomy. As mentioned above, besides the shifts encountered in the roles of teachers and learners, it is possible to see the reflections of technological developments also in the learning settings and pedagogical implications. The

emergency remote learning environment, which arose as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, is most certainly the most up-to-date and extraordinary one among these new learning environments. As a result, the studies conducted in this process will be reviewed under a separate heading in the next part, as the research also includes the specific process that it attempted to explore.

2.3.2. Learner Autonomy in Emergency Remote Education

Because it is new and a similar learning environment has never been encountered before, studies on the emergency distance learning process generally examined the endeavors utilized, the students' and teachers' adaptation, the positive and negative aspects of the procedure, and the methods used to eliminate these negative aspects in the consideration of learner autonomy.

The experimentations of Melvina et al. (2020) and Jili et al. (2021) on that unique online education unveiled its contributions to the autonomy of learners. Another exploration of that process was driven by first-year university students by Eberle & Hobrecht (2021). A significant result of that study from the learner autonomy angle is the perception of teachers' being adequate in providing digital opportunities but it did not properly resolve the huge increase in students' autonomy and reduction in social relatedness. Having university-level participants who already behave autonomously, Biwer, et al. (2021) investigated how students responded to emergency remote learning notably concentrating on students' resource-management techniques which are closely bonded to learner autonomy. As a result of their investigation, five adaptation profiles were presented. The learners who have better self-regulation skills and have an increase in learner autonomy were named 'the adapters'. Chen (2021), also looked at the experiences of that level of the student, and the impact of scaffolding materials on global learners' autonomy was established.

Difficulties and possibilities of fostering autonomy during the pandemic discussed by Ghazali (2020) regarding self-access and virtual learning with substantial implications for further emergency online educative settings. In accordance with that study, self-access learning should be seen as a learning ideology that encourages people to be more independent and autonomous. It is also crucial to provide students with the education they need to build the required digital skills, as well as to elevate

their awareness of the fact that language learning can be accomplished in a number of ways, including through self-access.

2.4. Learner Motivation

Many academics emphasize the importance of motivation in the language since it influences the purpose, timing, and method of our learning, many academics stress the significance of motivation in language learning (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Numerous researchers have been interested in motivational studies for many years because of the value that it has for the field of language learning. As a result of having two antecedents—social psychology and applied linguistics—investigations into motivation have produced wealth and allure (Gardner, 2010). However, that motivational trait is thought to make it more difficult to map the factors from cognitive, psychological, and social perspectives that affect learners' motivation. According to Dörnyei (2001), the complexity of the concept of motivation is due to its attempts to elaborate on people's actions in ways that are difficult to define (Alizadeh, 2016). Because of this complexity, motivational studies have undergone numerous conceptual revisions throughout their history in order to reflect changing viewpoints.

At the very beginning of the investigations, learner motivation was defined from the eyes of one of the pioneers of motivation-based studies Gardner (1985) as; “the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the language plus favourable attitudes toward learning the language” (p.10). To put it another way, motivation to learn a second language relates to the amount to which individual works or attempts to learn the language out of a desire to do so, as well as the satisfaction, felt while doing this (Alizadeh, 2016). In further inquisitions, with the approval of motivation is not a stable entity, it is defined as a person's rapidly adjusted cumulative alertness that triggers, directs, coordinates intensifies, ends, and assesses the cognitive and motor operations that choose, prioritizes, operationalizes, and (successfully or unsuccessfully) perform original intentions and ambitions (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2010).

According to Dörnyei and Ushioda (2010), the history of motivational studies can be divided into four phases: the social-psychological period, the cognitive-

situated period, the process-oriented period, and the socio-dynamic period. The pioneers of both argumentation and the study of motivation, Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972), took into account individual differences in language learning within a cultural context. In that study, learners' motivation was found to be closely related to students' attitudes toward the language they wished to learn as well as the culture by viewing language learning as a socially based construct. Two types of motivational orientations have been established as a part of this experiment: integrative and instrumental. Integrative orientation alludes to a learner's intention to associate with the target language culture, whereas instrumental orientation points to a learner's desire to acquire a foreign language for intensive reasons. In several studies, integrativeness which refers to learners' desire to learn a language for the sake of putting themselves about a target language group is accepted as the most intricate feature of Gardners' work (Pavičić Takač & Berka, 2014; Liu, 2015; Tatar, 2017) and it provides a basis for other motivational studies. With the words of Gardner, (2001) integrativeness; "reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language to come closer to the other language community" (p.12) and motivation is one of the three elements of integrativeness consisted of effort, desire, and attitudes regarding learning another language.

Tatar (2017), on the other hand, claims that as the number of contexts in which English is used grows, as well as the variety of reasons for which it is employed, integrativeness has become invalid in our globalized society. In addition, criticisms about the weakness of integrativeness are summarised as follows: inadequacy about the requirements for language acquisition which have altered English's status as a global language, deficiencies in reflecting the motivation of various communities who have different intentions to study English (formal purposes or pragmatic usage) and lastly, the necessity to reconsider integrative approach in consideration to technology which eliminates the boundaries among cultural groups and cause bicultural personalities.

Motivational studies shifted the emphasis to the actual learning situation, and the studies were dubbed a cognitive-situated period in response to the advancements of language studies and the situation of English itself. The focus shifted to the examination of particular cognitive and environmental factors, such as classroom settings and their potential impact on students' motivation (Pavičić Takač & Berka,

2014) or a variety of additional orientations, such as travel, friendship, knowledge, and instrumental orientations which can be common among all learner groups Noels et al. (2000).

In the cognitive-situational period, the integrative and instructional types of motivations were replaced by a new dichotomy ‘intrinsic and extrinsic’ under the framework of Self Determination Theory put forward by Deci & Ryan (1985). Intrinsic motivation specifies the inherent drive of a learner to perform a certain task because it is intriguing and fulfilling in and of itself (Salehi & Vaez-Dalili, 2017) while extrinsic motivation signalizes having a practical value (Pavičić Takač & Berka, 2014) which can only be activated by external cues like as winning and retaining praise from others, avoiding their criticism, and receiving or losing particular prizes (Salehi & Vaez-Dalili, 2017).

Alongside SDT, Goal-orientation Theory and Attribution Theory are the other cognitive-based motivation studies proposed in that period. Goal orientation theory focuses on the factors that impact students' motivation to succeed while Attribution theory connects people's prior experiences with their future accomplishment effort by adding causal attributions as the mediating connection (Ma & Ma, 2012).

By seeing motivation not as if it's a stable structure, but rather as if it's in motion Ushioda (1996;1998) developed a process-oriented paradigm, stating that change through time lies at the heart of both the experience and perception of motivation in language acquisition for learners.

The process model of L2 motivation has two measures; action sequence and motivational influences. The action sequence is about the process of behaviors and occurred in 3 phases; preactional, actional, and postactional. The motivating or energetic forces that feed the entire process are included in the second dimension. For Pavičić Takač & Berka, (2014) this model's value stems from its capability to depict the whole learning process, both in terms of learning a given task and over longer periods.

According to Tatar (2017), process-oriented techniques have the propensity to evaluate variables separately and deduce linear cause-and-effect relationships, fail to treat learners as individuals, and a failure to portray the complexity of motivated behavior. Furthermore, distinctions between motivation, cognition, and affect

phenomena as dynamic subsystems must be made to get insight into their impacts on individual differences (Bower, 2019). The abovementioned reasons gave the way to a socio-dynamic period in which individual differences and the context of learning were taken into consideration according to the ways of interacting with each other and their impacts both on the learner itself and the learning environment.

The study of Ushioda (2009) represents studies from that time period, which is still in progress. In that study, it was concluded that context should be viewed as a concept that the learner is a part of rather than as a predetermined idea over which the student has no control.

2.4.1. Learner Motivation in Distance Education

As mentioned in Ushioda (2011), studies on motivation have moved away from providing generalizations about theories and toward the investigations of particular dynamic processes. This is relevant to the characterization of motivation with individuality and as an evolving notion suitable to subject positions. The identities of learners created in these online-based contexts expand along with technological advancements and the spread of their use among learners, in addition to the dynamic processes of motivation. Today's students, in the words of Mercer (2013), are "active members of multiple collectives real, virtual, and imagined" (p.381). Students can therefore be found synchronously in a variety of systems that can be combined and interact with each other in various ways as they continue on their path to learning. In addition to this, in an online environment where working alone is required due to the lack of teacher support and social interaction, motivation plays a crucial role (Keller & Suzuki, 2004). For the reasons mentioned above, investigations into motivation have shifted their focus to look at these alternative learning environments and how they relate to learner motivation.

With a converse perspective, Harandi (2015) managed a study about the effects of e-learning on students' motivation. In his research, a strong association between the factors was shown, and e-learning was identified as a factor that influences student motivation. In a different research, the e-learning arrangement was examined to disclose the connections between e-learning readiness and academic achievement with the efforts of Torun (2020). To gather the data about e-learning

readiness, 6 sub-notions were addressed. Among the other 5 sub-notions which are basically; computer self-efficacy, internet self-efficacy, online self-efficacy, self-directed learning, and learner control, motivation toward e-learning was found to be a predictor of academic achievement although the greatest determinant was conceived as self-directed learning.

Considering e-readiness as a triggering factor in student satisfaction and motivation in flipped learning environments, Yilmaz (2017) worked with students from Turkish universities whose answers substantiate the predictory status of e-readiness on contentment and motivation of learners in described instructional design.

More slightly, certain motivational studies have a propensity to focus on learner motivation in e-learning circumstances in light of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which offers two motivational dichotomies: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In their study about figuring out how much intrinsic motivation open and remote education students have, Fırat et al. (2018) reached conclusions that confirm the weightiness of intrinsic motivation in distance education. Their attempts to calculate the amount of intrinsic motivation of Turkish university students resulted in the conclusion that the students mentioned had a greater level of intrinsic motivation in distant learning situations. Aside from that, the study is notable for highlighting the lack of correlation between intrinsic motivation and gender, program structure, teaching method, and academic fields.

Aside from the inquisitions in which motivation has been recognized as a vital aspect in building and maintaining a feeling of community, as well as learning and accomplishment in online situations some studies have a desire to uncover the difficulties encountered in distance learning may lead to inhibit or decrease motivations of learners. As a response to the difficulties, according to Fryer & Bovee (2016), teachers have the potential to address a wide range of motivational deficiencies simply by clearly explaining their students to the relevance of their e-learning tasks. Additionally, in remote format, the importance of the first weeks of implementation highly supported by teachers was admitted as a way of accelerating motivation. Moreover, online collaborative English learning was recommended to enrich learner motivation as well as classroom management in online learning by Jeong (2019). Collaborative learning, according to learners who participated in

highly interactive and integrative tasks throughout that inquiry, provides positive and motivating learning experiences on motivation and classroom management together with metacognitive and affective benefits such as improving self-directed learning, reducing learner anxiety, and raising students' confidence in their learning process.

2.4.2. Learner Motivation in Emergency Remote Education

Because of the massive changes in instructional configurations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, learners found it difficult to acclimate to the new forms which rushed learner motivation and ingenuity mechanisms to work (Muslimin & Harintama, 2020). In the light of research that values the predictory function of learner motivation in distance learning settings, despite its differences from remote education arrangements in normal situations, learner motivation became the topic of some precious academic studies. However, there is a need to indicate that, with a similar fate with studies on learner autonomy in that specified learning context, the number of the studies focusing on the motives of learners are in minority because both are quite a new issues and difficult to examine in short periods.

Examinations on learner motivation in ERE spread over a wide map which is ever-expanding with contributions of case studies from all across the world. Kosycheva & Tikhonova, (2021) gathered information about what motivates Russian learners during the education provided by their universities in times of pandemic. The level of learner motivation possessed by participant learners in that investigation showed not a variant level from the times they were educated in a face-to-face format. Therefore, the findings of the study emphasized the account of learner motivation to enrich the performances of learners in ERE conditions. And for that students, the most triggering thing that facilitates them to learn was indeed a passion for their field of study or a willingness to solve complex challenges.

In the Indonesian case, Muslimin and Harintama (2020) tried to figure out the difficulties, motivations, and alternative ways applied by learners to compensate for deficiencies that happened with the rapid shift to an online format. Despite the challenges including connection problems, synchronic schedules, restricted Whatsapp features, and anxiety, the motivation level of learners in that Whatsapp-based learning context was found to increase. Additionally, maintaining a sense of

motivation was noted among the alternatives to overcome the difficulties faced. In the framework of this specific learning situation in which distance learning is sustained with meetings and chatting through Whatsapp, it is stated that instrumental motivation played the biggest role besides integrative motivation while learners were searching for alternative solutions to emerging issues. This was the way of the relation among the three variables of that study; challenges, motivation, and alternatives.

Despite not using a communication application like Whatsapp in the previous study, the results of the study highlighted the importance of interaction in the crisis learning procedure administered by Manca and Delfino (2021) with Italian primary and secondary school learners. It aimed to display the ways of restructuring the educative methods for huge numbers in that pre-specified condition as well as analyzing the responses of students to that quite new system. As a result of gathering the thoughts of learners, teachers, and parents together, the most effective factors for successful remote education were spotted as the levels of digital abilities developed before and the association between the stakeholders of learning.

By seeing interaction as an effective determinant of learner motivation in learning cases that occurred after COVID-19, Almaleki et al. (2021) put an effort to evaluate students' interaction and its impacts on learner motivation as well as exploring gender-based differentiation both on the levels of interactions and motivation in e-learning. According to the results of that study, in which the interaction of learners is measured high without gender-based differences, the degree of interaction has a positive correlation with learner motivation. It is assumed that this may result from the characteristic of e-learning which puts the learner at the core of learning. Similar to the case, there is no relation between motivation neither gender differences, or the degree of learners.

Among the studies that resulted in positive relations of motivation with learner satisfaction and success in that concrete remote education, some notable papers claim that learner motivation is decreased (Lorenza & Carter, 2021) or learners faced with motivational problems (Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020). Attendees commented in the previous search that e-learning was more lengthy and demanded more effort while in the latter disquisition, parents of elementary school learners touched upon being not eager of their pupils, having concentration problems, and

getting bored by feeling isolated from the teacher. This may be related to the age and developmental stages of students in that research. However, with a similar participant group, consisting of parents of both elementary and secondary school Turkish learners Demir and Demir (2021) outlined the motivational situation of children as relatively motivated and desirous to join e-learning activities. But also in that research, the factors negatively affect motivation are noted; troubles with connectivity and being stranded at home during the pandemic.

2.5. Digital Literacy

The rapid progress of technology empowers humans with a plethora of new skills while also reshaping the daily life of people, their jobs, communication, and education (Angelianawati, 2018). In that technologically surrounded age, for being operative in the community, being digitally competent is a necessity and at the same time, a right of the people (Ferrari, 2012). In other words, in the twenty-first century, being able to manage digital media is a critical component of being able to function in public and in professional life, which is why school-based studies have given considerable attention to that matter in the latest years (Ayllón, et al., 2020). Also, as stated in Santos et al. (2019), digital abilities were designated among eight kinds of chief competencies of lifelong learning, often called 21st-century skills, by European Commission in 2007.

Within the scope of education, the need of narrowing the gaps between what learners acquire from school and what they need to survive in daily and work life (Lau & Yuen, 2014) made digital technologies a fundamental element of today's modern learning (Hassan & Mirza, 2020). And what learners of that digitalized world need to do is mentioned by Akayoglu et al. (2020) as utilizing their digital talents to communicate effectively, which pointed to digital literacy.

According to Eryansyah et al. (2019), although the learners of new age are named digital natives (Prensky, 2001) who have intuitions to use technological devices as a consequence of being born into the digital world, or with other words ‘digital residents’ (White & Le Cornu, 2011), they don't have a thorough understanding of digital literacy and have a little comprehension of the way technology affects their education.

According to Yustika and Iswati (2020), the first descriptions of digital literacy were founded in the book of Gilster (1997). In his works, digital literacy is portrayed as the capacity of using software and hardware technology successfully and effectively, as well as comprehending information from digital devices in a variety of circumstances like supporting academic attainment, advancement in a job, and everyday life. However, by considering the society which is getting digitalized every day, Ferrari (2012) counterclaims that expertise in hardware and software technologies is no longer sufficient for being digital-literate. And as a consequence, the term digital literacy correlated with some other types of literacies mainly; information literacy (IL), internet literacy, ICT literacy, and media literacy (ML). In their summative work, Audrin and Audrin (2022) recorded the terms reconciled with digital literacy in the corpus as follows; digital competence or skills, information literacy, information and technology literacy, twenty-first-century skills, and social media. As distinct from these, 'multi-literacy' is also associated with digital literacy in the study of Santos, Ramos, and Reis (2019).

The Chu, Reynolds, Tavares, Notari, and Lee, (2017) defined the aforenamed literacies as follows;

> IL is the ability to effectively and ethically select, evaluate and use the information to gain, apply and share their knowledge…, ICT skills … refer to the ability to use digital technology, communication tools, and/or networks to access, manage, integrate, evaluate and create bodies of information, [and] ML … is associated with the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms. (p. 22)

From the eyes of Ferrari (2012), internet literacy alludes to the effective usage of the internet and it functions as a subclass of ICT literacy. In the study of Lee and Chae (2012), the ease of accessing, analyzing, evaluating, and generating online content is referred to as internet literacy. According to Deursen and Van Dijk (2010), internet skills are divided into two categories: medium-related skills, which include operational and formal skills, and content-related skills, which include information internet skills and strategic information skills. The former ones are more about using the internet technologies like being able to search in internet browsers and navigating in. The latter ones are more about selecting, analyzing, and applying strategic abilities in goal-oriented activities to process information gathered from the internet.

The most ancient form of literacy, computer literacy, is described in a variety of ways. According to prior definitions of that literacy, it refers to the ability to employ software and hardware to meet daily demands (Gilster, 1997). Additional variations of that term incorporate attitudes as well as computer-based program knowledge and skills, such as in Tsai (2002). It is primarily concerned with learning how to use computer programs for everyday tasks.

The extensive usage of computers in the 1990s, as well as the ease and speed with which information could be accessed, can be credited with the birth of internet literacy. As determined by The American Library Association (1989), it is the ability to recognize when information is needed and the ability to locate, evaluate, and use the needed information effectively. As pointed out in Koltay (2011), this type of literacy has value in societal improvements like democracy and cultural and civic involvement. It emphasizes the importance of healing and careful selection of information in all aspects of personal choice, including education and career settings, but especially in the realms of citizenship and health.

The other literacy that has a strong effect on socialization and the growth of civilization is media literacy. The prevalent case of younger people being overloaded with a large number of media messages for the sake of pleasure in today's popular culture, as well as the media's power on society's views, values, and behaviors, must be admitted (Koltay, 2011). Given this, the importance of deciphering media messages has come to the fore. Media literacy is identified as a process aimed at assisting people in comprehending, generating, and interpreting meanings in a world of visuals, words, and sounds (Aufderheide, 1993). On the other hand, the definition cited in Kamerer (2013) asserts that media literacy has a broader perspective by containing a form of 'critical' literacy that involves not only the content and structural components of specific media documents, but also the social, financial, political, and historic circumstances in which messages are made, distributed, and used by consumers (Hobbs, 2005). Ferrari (2012), is another researcher who holds the view that critical thinking, as well as communication, are two skills that are covered in media literacy. But it is argued that there was no agreement in the existing literature on any of the definitions of media literacy (Potter, 2013).

2.5.1. Digital Literacy in Distance Education

It can be said that the growth of open education and distance learning programs was what first advanced digital literacy in the educational community. Although open and distance learning environments encourage the use of communication and information technologies in the classroom, students there must exhibit a high level of digital literacy to benefit from the facilities that are easily accessible (Maphosa & Bhebhe, 2019). In line, it is suggested in the currently available literature that digital literacy has a positive impact on students' ability to achieve learning objectives successfully in distance education (Vrana, 2014; Yustika & Iswati, 2020). Nawaz and Kundi (2010) contended that in today's technologically advanced educational environment, neither teachers nor students have a choice but to be proficient computer users in order to keep up with the expanding mobile societies; only those who possess this skill are deemed to be ‘‘educated’’. However, Turkish online learners’ digital abilities were found insufficient by Ozdamar-Keskin et al. (2015). Likewise, Ceylan & Elitok-Kesici (2017) argued that Turkish teenagers misinterpreted the idea of DL and that they needed to develop new DL-related skills.

In addition, both studies by Kayaduman and Battal (2020) and Karagozoglu and Gezer (2022) reported a positive relationship between digital literacy and distance learning. It was claimed that attitudes or perceptions toward distance learning are influenced by the degree and perceptions of digital literacy.

The connection between digital literacy and learner autonomy is another issue raised in the relevant literature. Studies in which DL and self-efficacy correlated with one another may also be encountered. Digital literacy, according to Prior et al. (2016b), nourishes the self-efficacy of learners, in a broader sense, it promotes their autonomy. Yustika and Iswati (2020) assert that independent students typically perform better in distance learning and that they require a sufficient level of digital literacy to engage in autonomous behavior.

2.5.2. Digital Literacy in Emergency Remote Education

Since it is a relevantly recent topic to study, there isn't much research on this subject in ELT literature. But two of the subject points construct the biggest proportions. First, because it is a valuable experiment, there is a trend in the literature

to examine ERE conditions with the aim of exploring its positives and negatives. In the experimental study of Mudra (2020), getting accustomed to authentic materials, increasing resonance of digital technology use, and improving online collaboration between teacher-learners and learners-learners were all mentioned as advantages of digital literacy. On the other hand, the drawbacks of digital literacy included inconsistent internet signals, complicated online content, expensive prices of hardware and software, young learners' varying levels of comprehension, and EFL teachers' lack of expertise in digital literacy.

Finding the DL levels of the teachers and students involved in this process is the second most studied area. In the Turkish context, Inan Karagul et al. (2021) made an effort to ascertain Turkish learners' levels of digital literacy and how they related to their gender, age, and degree of school. The findings of this study showed that Turkish learners had a sufficient level of literacy while demonstrating the influence of gender and school degrees. It's interesting that the results showed no connection between DL and age. This study also uncovered some problems with the ERE context in Turkey, including a lack of the required technological devices and struggles of adjusting to a new method of instruction.

For a different perspective on the subject, Oteles (2020) calculated the DL levels and lifelong learning tendencies of teacher candidates and found that their levels of DL were moderate and did not differ based on gender or class level. In research from Akayoglu et al. (2020), asserted that Turkish pre-service EFL teachers found themselves capable of utilizing digital tools for a variety of tasks. It's intriguing to note that Karagozoglu and Gezer (2022) claimed that preservice teachers who earn a high salary and have favorable attitudes toward distance learning have a higher level of DL.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Presentation

In order to provide a comprehensive overview of how the subject was investigated and how it was applied, the details of the study's methodology are presented in this chapter. It is meant to give readers information about the research's design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis.

3.2. Research Design

The aim of the study is three-fold; a) describe the secondary school students' level and perceptions of LA in emergency remote education; b) explore the relation of learner motivation and digital literacy with LA; c) investigate the variations in learners' autonomy across different demographic factors. In order to provide a comprehensive answer to those questions, the mixed-method research design was utilized in consideration of this study. According to Burns (2009), a comprehensive combination of both quantitative and qualitative data can add size and scope that a singular method might not be able to do. Because the study sought to investigate both a qualitative (perceptions) and a quantitative (level) variable, it was decided to combine both of these descriptive research techniques. Consequently, this study can be split into three sections. The first section contains quantitative findings that attempt to quantify the LA level of secondary school students as determined by statistical analyses. The second section will present findings regarding whether learner motivation, digital

literacy, and demographic factors (grade level, gender, and age) affected students' degrees of LA. The final set of findings, which is qualitative in nature, demonstrates how secondary school students' perceptions of LA are influenced by student motivation, digital literacy, and predetermined demographic factors through content analyses.

3.3. Participants and Setting

3.3.1. Participants of the Quantitative Research

Considering the pandemic situation, convenience sampling which entails making the choice of participants who are frequently and readily accessible (Taherdoost, 2016) was utilized in this research. Each participant was kindly asked to participate in the study after being made aware of the purpose and how it will be implemented. After obtaining permission to use their personal data within the scope of the study, the scales of the study were delivered to the participants via online platforms. The participants of this study include 180 secondary school learners all of whom attended the same school (Mustafa Necati Secondary School) and have similar socio-economic backgrounds. Table 3.1 below provides a thorough breakdown of learner frequencies by grade level.

Table 3.1. *Grade level distributions of participants*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5th Grade	33	18,3	18,3	18,3
	6th Grade	51	28,3	28,3	46,7
	7th Grade	51	28,3	28,3	75,0
	8th Grade	45	25,0	25,0	100,0
	Total	180	100,0	100,0	

The largest groups, which both make up 28.3% of the total population, are students in sixth and seventh grades, as shown in the table. It is followed by 25.0% of eighth-grade students. With 18.3% of the total, fifth graders make up the group with

the fewest participants. Despite having similar ratios, there may be a small difference between the groups due to the pandemic making it difficult to reach students.

Despite the common assumption that the students' ages and grade levels are comparable, this study also includes students who, for socioeconomic or other reasons, were unable to begin school at the proper age and refugee students who were compelled to continue their education in Turkey on the basis of their learning level rather than their age. The study was therefore expanded to include the participants' ages. The following Table 3.2 illustrates the age variation within this study.

Table 3.2. *Age distributions of participants*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10,00	3	1,7	1,7	1,7
	11,00	31	17,2	17,2	18,9
	12,00	55	30,6	30,6	49,4
	13,00	45	25,0	25,0	74,4
	14,00	37	20,6	20,6	95,0
	15,00	6	3,3	3,3	98,3
	16,00	3	1,7	1,7	100,0
	Total	180	100,0	100,0	

Among the groups, the biggest population was formed by 12-year-olds (30.6%). The two other age groups with significant percentages are those who are 13 and 14, (respectively 20.0% and 25.0%). Despite being significant for the study, other learners are a minority in the overall population (1.7% 10-year-olds; 17.2% 11-year-olds; 3.3% 15-year-olds; 1.7% 16-year-olds).

Based on reflection on related research, it is presumable that gender has a potential impact on the students' level of LA and how it is perceived. As a result, the gender distributions of the participants are valued in this study and are displayed in the table below.

Table 3.3. *Gender distributions of participants*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	109	60,6	60,6	60,6
	Male	71	39,4	39,4	100,0
	Total	180	100,0	100,0	

A closer look at the table reveals that there are significantly more female participants (60.6%) than male participants (39.4%), indicating that the participant ratio is skewed based on gender. This finding could have been affected either by the overall gender disparity in student enrollment at the school where the research participants were chosen or by the accessibility issues brought on by the pandemic.

3.3.2. Participants of the Semi-structured Interviews

The convenience sampling method was used also to select interview subjects while taking into account the pandemic conditions. Despite the fact that more students were invited, 10 different secondary school students from Mustafa Necati Secondary School who represented various grade levels, genders, and ages took part in the interviews. But, the ratios are not fixed because of convenience sampling. The demographic profiles of interview participants have been illustrated in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. *Demographic profiles of interview participants*

Participant	Grade Level	Gender	Age
1	8	Female	14
2	8	Female	14
3	8	Male	14
4	7	Male	14
5	7	Male	13
6	6	Female	12
7	6	Female	12
8	5	Female	11
9	5	Male	11
10	5	Female	11

3.4. Data Collection Tools

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were utilized in accordance with the mixed methodology on which it is based. To gather quantitative data, three different scales, each pointing to a different study variable (learner autonomy (LAS), learner motivation (MS), and digital literacy (DL Scale), were utilized. A scale is a specific kind of survey tool that enables researchers to obtain information from subjects about their own characteristics or social communities they have identified, such as relatives or schools (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005). According to Roopa and Rani (2012), if they are carefully designed and implemented, scales can be a valuable tool for making generalizations about large populations, precise groups, or individuals. Additionally, they give researchers the ability to access information that is simple to enumerate or rank, provide sensitivity because the responses are anonymous (Patten, 2014), and reach larger numbers in the quickest and least expensive manner (Simmons, 2001; Marshall, 2005). Considering its appropriateness to the research questions and aforementioned benefits, it was decided to use scales for gathering data about learners' levels of LA, motivation, and digital literacy as well as to show how those affect one another. After reviewing the pertinent literature, these research tools were selected through discussions with subject-matter specialists and the thesis advisor. The language of the scales was translated, back-translated, and modified in accordance with the developmental stages and language proficiency of the participants with the help of colleagues, two additional MA students, and a Turkish language teacher. They were evaluated in terms of validity and reliability issues prior to administration. And the following section provides detailed information about these scales.

However, scales can not yield the same amount and wealth of information and range of perspectives that can be obtained in an exclusive interview (Patten, 2014). At that point, interviews can be used by researchers to acquire more precise information and to have a better knowledge of a particular context than can be obtained with scales. In light of these, it was decided to supplement the scale results with in-person interviews in order to gain insight into how secondary school students perceived learner autonomy throughout the emergency distance education they engaged in. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that as an interview becomes more structured, the interviewer's comfort and willingness to bring up pertinent and

significant issues tend to decrease (Adams & Anne, 2008). Semi-structured interviews, however, are a specific kind of interview where a list of topics is intended to be covered with each interviewee but there is no set order or suggested wording for the questions (Phellas et al., 2004). Additionally, it allows the interviewer to spot intriguing standpoints, adjust the core of the interview when necessary, and observe the facial messages of interviewees (Patten, 2014). Considering the higher affective filters secondary schoolers may have because of their young ages and not participated in an interview before, semi-structured interviews were preferred in the context of this study as the method of gathering qualitative data and the specifics of how they were planned and carried out are reported in a different section below.

3.4.1. Learner Autonomy Scale (LAS)

Learner Autonomy Scale (Appendix A) comprised 13 items all of which were in the 5-point Likert Scale format ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". With the aid of the usage of this scale, it was intended to ascertain the LA levels of secondary school students as well as gain an insight into their perceptions toward LA while taking English classes remotely in the emergency learning environment.

By modifying the items from the scale of Cotteral (1995d) and Little (2003), LAS was constructed by Bitlis (2011). Bucak (2021) modified the scale for her study, and after getting the required permissions, that customized version was used in that study. The items on the scale were translated into Turkish and only a few minor changes were made while taking into account the learners' age and language proficiency by taking opinions of a Turkish expert. Prior to implementation, the approval of the thesis advisor for any changes was requested.

The reliability of the survey can be evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Various values for reliability were found in those studies. It was estimated to be .850 (Bitlis, 2011), whereas Bucak (2021) found that it was .800. On the other hand, it was measured in this study at .738, which is within acceptable bounds. A scale is considered to be moderately reliable if Cronbach’s Alpha value is between .70 and .90, according to Kilic (2016). Considering this, the LAS was determined to be

applicable and transformed into an electronic form for delivery while still adhering to social distance and pandemic conditions.

3.4.2. Motivation Scale (MS)

For the purposes of this study, the Motivation Scale was attached to LAS and was made available for students to complete as part of this study. This scale is in the format of a 5-point Likert Scale leading learners to reflect on how motivated they are and their ideas in terms of what motivated or demotivated them during emergency distance education. The MS was developed by Gunes (2011) based on Gardner‘s Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) and adjusted by Bucak (2021) to look into the relationship between high school learners’ motivation and learner autonomy in distance education. Because of its appropriateness to the research aims of the study and seeking out a similar topic in a similar context, led the researcher to select this version of the scale to use. It was decided to use this scale after obtaining the necessary permissions. The scale's translation was checked before use by the thesis advisor and two other colleagues who instruct English in Turkish secondary schools.

As another preliminary implementation step, the reliability concern was put into consideration. For the sake of it, Cronbach’s Alpha values in each study were examined. The reliability of the study by Gunes (2011) was found to be .883, whereas this value was measured to be .850 in the study by Bucak (2021). These higher reliability coefficients confirmed that using this scale was applicable. This value was determined to be .675 within the parameters of this study, which is still regarded as reliable to apply but does not reflect high reliability.

In order to avoid any confusion that might arise among students with lower language proficiency and age, the Turkish-translated version of this scale was delivered to students in the format of a 5-point Likert scale allowing learners to rank the statements from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" as the same as in LAS. The scale's most recent iteration is located in Appendix B.

3.4.3. Digital Literacy Scale (DLS)

In response to the need to create a scale that maintains the reliability, feasibility, and validity measures to assess the digital literacy skills of teachers and pre-service teachers in Turkey led Ustundag et al. (2017) to adapt a digital literacy scale based on the original scale developed by Ng (2012). This scale includes 10 Turkish statements highlighting the ICT abilities of teachers and teacher candidates and it uses the same Likert-scale format as LAS and MS, with ratings ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". Since the validity and reliability confirmations were provided with the help of exploratory factor analysis (40%) and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients (.86), the usability of the scale was evidenced. Then the approval of researchers was requested.

Because of its feasibility to apply and comprehensible language to understand for Turkish learners, that scale was chosen to implement along with LAS and MS. It was anticipated that the statements of that scale will portray the digital abilities of secondary school learners and how it impacts their learner autonomy. Considering the fact that it was prepared for testing the DL of teachers, the language of the scale has been simplified to make it understandable to the students with the presence of a Turkish teacher working in a secondary school. The scale was examined to see if the items covered the intended points after making the necessary arrangements. For testing the reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated and found as .758 which is above the criteria to be accepted as reliable. Similar to previous scales, the scale of DL is also transferred in an online form and sent via digital applications. The last version of the scale is provided in Appendix C.

3.4.4. Semi-structured Interviews

One of the aims of this study includes the desire to offer a deeper understanding of how learners perceived their level of autonomy and how ERE's conditions have an impact on these perceptions. Interviewing would allow for the discovery of non-observable information about a person, such as perceptions, attitudes, personal stories, opinions, remarks, and responses (Karatas, 2015). In this regard, semi-structured interviews, a particular kind of interview, were condcuted with 10 participants to accomplish that goal. Semi-structured interviews consist of asking the same questions

to respondents, but they can also be expanded with newly created queries to capitalize on leads, gather more information, etc. (Patten, 2014).

To increase the validity of the interviewing procedure, the researcher prepared an interview guide before implementing the interviews, which included three subtopics that focused on the three main study variables of learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy. With the assistance of a Turkish language teacher, the interview questions were translated into Turkish. Additionally, two Gaziantep University MA students back-translated interview questions in order to ensure the feasibility and cover all the topics intended to be divulged. The interview guide was checked by the thesis advisor as a final step, and it is included in Appendix D.

The interview guide included 13 total questions divided into 3 major sections. Seven predetermined questions in the first section are intended to reflect learners' autonomous behaviours and the frequency of these. The interviewees were requested to reflect on their own English learning processes. They were asked to consider whether they could manage their own English education and, if so, how (questions 1-2), whether they received guidance from their teachers (question 3), the independent out-of-class learning methods they used (question 4), and whether they planned (question 5), followed (question 6), and evaluated (question 7) their own learning. In the second section, three questions aimed to elucidate the students' desire to study English in that particular distance learning setting. The first question focuses on how they feel about distance learning, the second question explores how they think changing circumstances have affected their motivation, and the third question reveals how willing they are to keep learning remotely. The final section contains questions about digital literacy that were created to probe participants' ICT usage experiences, self-sufficiency with them, and interpretations of how their ICT skills affected their English learning.

3.5. Data Collection

This study has a mixed study design which necessitates gathering both quantitative and qualitative data. In this way, besides having a bigger portrayal of secondary school learners' autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy during ERE, the points which are seen as advantageous or disadvantageous for those pre-stated

variables will be uncovered. Moreover, it is believed that using more than one type of data collection instrument which is named the triangulation technique of data collection will increase the reliability and validity of the results. According to Lauri (2011), the consistency between two different methods of data collection and analysis makes data analysis and interpretation valid, and such triangulation improves the reliability of the findings.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Collection

Three scales are included in this study to gather information about the secondary school students' levels of motivation, learner autonomy, and digital literacy during the ERE process as well as the effects of other factors on learner autonomy. Each scale focuses on a particular study variable and its sub-dimensions. Additionally, all requirements for data collection, such as consent from participants for voluntary participation and approval from institutions and scale designers, were fulfilled.

Each scale was converted into an electronic form and attached to the others. The participants were sent an active link to the scales via Whatsapp, email, and social media. Given that the majority of learners are still in the concrete-operational stage of development, a brief video explaining the concept of learner autonomy and autonomous learner behaviours was placed at the start of the first scale before asking participants to complete the scales.

The process of gathering data began in the second term of the academic year 2020–2021 and continued through the end of the fall term 2021–2022. The purpose of delaying data collection for a term is to give students time to return to school, orientate, and gain experiences of the face-to-face learning format so they can contrast it with the emergency distance setting and decide which is preferable for them.

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Collection

The researcher created a semi-structured interview guide after carefully reviewing the body of prior research and the findings of quantitative analysis. This manual is divided into three sections, each of which presents open-ended queries regarding learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy in a systematic manner.

The guide was then verified with the assistance of co-workers, MA students, and the thesis advisor.

10 students were invited to participate in the interviews in accordance with the convenience sampling method. They were first made aware of the general interview format as well as the methods used to record and analyze their responses. Confidentiality was also protected. In the spring of 2021–2022, which was the term following the collection of quantitative data, all of the interviews took place over a period of two weeks in person. All of the interviews took place in a meeting room at Mustafa Necati Secondary School, which is a familiar setting for students, in order to provide a relaxing setting that lowers their affective filters and anxiety. Interviews were conducted in Turkish to allow for the capturing of more rigorous and reliable responses and the researcher recorded each interview using a voice recording app on a personal smartphone. In order to present excerpts of students in the days that followed the interviews, the interview transcripts were extracted and translated into English.

3.6. Data Analysis

Two different approaches were taken to the analysis of the results in accordance with the methods used for data collection. Initially, the quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 25.0, and then the qualitative data were subjected to content analysis in order to confirm the quantitative findings and gain a thorough understanding of learner perceptions. The next two sections detail the precise steps in data analysis.

3.6.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

After 180 secondary school learners filled out the scales, all the data was transferred to the statistics program SPSS 25.0. At first, the reliability of the datasets was tested by calculating Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values for each of the scales. In scientific studies, reliability is the first prerequisite that must be satisfied; otherwise, a measurement no longer has any significance in scientific research (Karatas, 2015). Following the assurance of reliability, a descriptive analysis with mean values, frequency, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values was performed to explore the LA, motivation, and DL levels of secondary school students during the

ERE. Additionally, to check the data's normality before conducting further analyses, the values of Skewness and Kurtosis were computed and their acceptance was evaluated using the Tabachnick and Fidell-recommended suitable bounds (2013). The calculated Skewness and Kurtosis values demonstrated that each scale's data distribution was normal, enabling the researcher to use parametric tests.

To answer the first research question sought to investigate learner levels and perceptions of LA, the frequency of each item in LAS was examined and compared to provide feasible interpretations of the results. In the second phase of the analysis, to answer the second and third research questions both of which seek to identify relationships between motivation and DL and learners' autonomy in the predetermined context, Pearson Product Moment Correlations were computed. To answer the last question, One-way ANOVA, independent samples t-tests, and Pearson correlation test were implemented respectively to uncover the effects of grade level, gender, and age on learner autonomy of secondary school learners.

3.6.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

For collecting qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 learners and during the interviews, the answers of the interviewees were recorded by the researcher. In order to analyze, audio recordings of interviews were first transcribed and translated into English. The obtained raw data were then subjected to content analysis. First, the collected data were reviewed, and the words, phrases, and sentences that made up a meaningful whole were noted, categorized, and coded by the researcher. Then, a thematic analysis method was implemented. The thematic analysis concentrates on finding and defining both inherent and overt ideas within the actual data and necessitates more participation and interpretation of the researcher (Guest et al. 2011). As a result of thematic analysis, the codes possessing similarities or differences were combined to identify the main themes and categories in the qualitative data. Following the categorizing process, the themes were constructed to make interpretations about the results along with primary data findings. The themes serve as a link to build scientific findings in qualitative research and raise the objectivity and reliability of the study by bolstering the qualitative findings with quantitative terminology. As a further step, for ensuring inter-coder reliability, a 10% of the data

was coded also by the thesis advisor and the comparison between the two codings revealed that the analysis has inter-coder reliability.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

4.1. Presentation

In this chapter of the current study, the findings of the quantitative data gathered through scales (LAQ, MS, and DL Scale) and qualitative data drawn from semi-structured interviews is presented. The numerical data obtained through 3 different scales were analysed via SPSS 25.0. To make inferences regarding secondary school students' perceptions of learner autonomy and its relation to other research variables, thematic analysis, as a sub-step of content analysis, was utilized using verbal data collected through semi-structured interviews.

This study was designed to identify the levels and perceptions of learner autonomy held by secondary school students in emergency distance learning, as well as any potential influences of the three main variables: motivation, digital literacy, and demographic characteristics (defined as age, gender, and grade level). This part of the study will give the answers to the 4 research questions determined at the beginning of the study.

The findings of this study are three-fold. As a starting point, this research has been instrumental in determining secondary school learners' values for LA, motivation, and DL. The investigation of inter-variable correlations follows as the next step. Last but not least, it discusses the positive and negative effects of other factors on students' perceptions of LA.

To make it clearer, the results of each question are presented under the headings of the four research questions. For each research question, the descriptive data which

yielded analysis of surveys will be presented in the first section; afterwards, the interview results supporting the numerical data will be shown.

4.2. Findings

4.2.1. Research Question #1: What are secondary school EFL learners' perceptions of autonomy in emergency remote education?

The first research question of the study was designed to investigate the autonomy of secondary school learners in consideration of emergency remote learning. In order to reveal students' perceptions on autonomy, first of all, student autonomy levels and at which points their autonomy was high and which were low during the ERE process were determined. Therefore, to state their autonomy level, the Learner Autonomy Scale was applied to 180 secondary school students all of whom attended the ERE procedure. By examining the mean scores of each item which will uncover the points in which students could act autonomously or not under ERE conditions, it was intended to uncover the strengths and weaknesses of ERE conditions for fostering learner autonomy. For exploring learners' perceptions of learner autonomy in that specific emergency process, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 secondary school learners. In the first section of the interviews, interviewees were inquired about how they plan, observe and evaluate their English learning activities in the pre-established parameters. By assembling the common themes among the replies, it would be feasible to ascertain the learners' perceptions.

4.2.1.1. Findings of the Learner Autonomy Scale (LAS):

There are 13 items on the survey, each of which is graded on a five-point Likert scale from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. All of the inquiries aimed at unearthing learners' autonomous behaviour and their viewpoints towards learner autonomy formed when they were attending distance learning for the first time. To analyze that numerical data, SPSS 25.0 software was utilized and in Table 4.1, the comprehensive descriptive statistics are displayed.

Table 4.1. *Descriptive statistics of learner autonomy scale*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Autonomy Score	180	30,00	65,00	52,6444	6,77955	-0,422	0,181	-0,241	0,360

As the table illustrates, the students' scores on learner autonomy ranged from 30.00 to 65.00, with a mean score of 52,64 and a standard deviation of 6,77. The results of the Learner Autonomy Scale indicate that secondary school students' levels of learner autonomy were above the middle level throughout emergency remote education with a total mean of 4,09. Additionally, The Skewness and Kurtosis values were within acceptable bounds, allowing the researcher to conduct parametric tests in the following stages of the investigation.

In addition, a thorough examination of each item of the scale with the means and standard deviations is shown in Table 4.2. with the notion that it will be useful to determine the points in which learners perceived learner autonomy positively and acted autonomously as well as seeing the points in which they faced problems with managing their own English learning.

Table 4.2. *Descriptive statistics of students' answers for each item in LAS*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have regularly watched each week's lecture broadcast on EIN	180	4,3500	,80136
While watching the lectures, I took notes on the subject.	180	4,3167	,86828
I asked my lesson teacher about the parts of the lessons that I could not understand.	180	4,3056	,93413
I did extra exercises to reinforce what I learned in the lessons.	180	4,0889	,97619
While watching the lectures, I watched the re-videos of the subjects I did not understand well.	180	4,2944	,88877
I applied my own learning strategies while watching the lessons	180	3,9611	1,11046
I associated the subjects taught in the lessons with the exercises given/solved by our teacher.	180	4,2000	,91175
During the learning process, I compared the structure/rules of English with the structure/rules of the language I speak.	180	3,6833	1,19811
I kept a record of my work in order to be able to make an evaluation of my later learning process.	180	3,6111	1,19304
I tested myself with questions I chose.	180	3,7278	1,32374
I rewarded myself when I made progress.	180	3,6222	1,35842
During this period, I realized my strengths and weaknesses in my English learning.	180	4,2111	,98587
I tried to learn the meaning of the English word I saw anywhere later	180	4,2722	1,06141
Valid N (listwise)	180		

Each item of Table 4.2 demonstrates the critical points at which students perceived learner autonomy and performed autonomous behaviours during the ERE process, together with the points at which they had problematic issues about LA. The highest mean score was reported in the first item, 'I have regularly watched each week's lecture broadcast on EIN' (M=4,35). The other items which have higher means are; Item 2 'While watching the lectures, I took notes on the subject' (M=4,31), and

Item 3 ‘I asked my lesson teacher about the parts of the lessons that I could not understand’ (M=4,30) and Item 13 ‘I tried to learn the meaning of the English word I saw anywhere later’ (M=4,27). When the highest 3 items are considered, it can be concluded that secondary school learners possessed the responsibility of following the lecture schedules without external pressure or recommendations during the ERE procedure. The highest mean of Item 2 showed the learners’ used their own learning strategies. Furthermore, the scores of Items 3 and 13 displayed their awareness of their weaknesses and willingness to make up for them.

The lowest mean score was recorded in Item 9 ‘I kept a record of my work in order to be able to make an evaluation of my later learning process’ (M=3,61) and Item 11 ‘I rewarded myself when I made progress’ (M=3,62). Items with low averages indicate that secondary school students were insufficient to comprehend that assessment is also a stage and a requirement of learning. The results of Item 10 ‘I tested myself with questions I chose’, which had a mean of 3,72, likewise supported that assumption. This finding also suggests that secondary school students acted below average autonomous behaviours in assessing their learning under ERE conditions.

4.2.1.2. Findings of the Interviews

To support the numerical data about learners’ level and perceptions of learner autonomy in ERE, open-ended questions pointing out dimensions of learner autonomy which are stated basically as programming, observing, and evaluating their learning were asked in semi-structured interviews. It is anticipated that probing their conscious attempts to learn English during the ERE process will confirm the statistical findings concerning the extent of their learner autonomy as well as reveal their perspectives on it.

In the interviews, secondary school learners were queried about how they organize, monitor, and assess their learning while taking distant English lessons from EIN and TRT EIN TV. Their answers were varied. As a result of thematic analysis of these various statements of the participants, two themes representing learners’ perceptions of learner autonomy in ERE emerged: *positive effects of learner autonomy* and *barriers in front of learner autonomy*. Table 4.3 displays ideas submitted by

participants as codes under the titles of positive effects of learner autonomy in ERE and barriers in front of learner autonomy in ERE, along with their frequencies.

Table 4.3. *Participants' views on the positive effects of learner autonomy in ERE and barriers in front of learner autonomy in ERE*

Category	Code	*f*
positive effects of learner autonomy in ERE	exploring new learning sources	8
	discovering new ways of learning	5
	learning new vocabulary	4
	improving in language skills	4
	developing time management skills	1
	increasing motivation	1
	enhancing ICT capabilities	1
	memorising	1
	TOTAL	***25***
barriers in front of learner autonomy in ERE	fixed programs	4
	teachers' not fostering learner autonomy	4
	exam pressure	2
	lack of opportunities	2
	lack of motivation	2
	lack of context for self-assessment	1
	inadequate ICT skills	1
	TOTAL	***16***

One of the most frequently stated positive effects of learner autonomy in the ERE process was *exploring new learning sources.* The participants who cited this point emphasized how effective learner autonomy is at directing them to find new learning sources. It was remarked that, before the emergency condition, learners mostly believed that the teacher is the only source of information and they need the teacher's directions to follow. However, the online learning environment that emerged after the coronavirus pandemic limited both their contact with their teachers and the number of learning supplies. That was what encouraged them to discover new sources of learning practices. These viewpoints of learners are demonstrated in the following excerpts:

> *'In Zoom lessons, our classroom was so crowded and so loud, sometimes I couldn't hear my teacher so I couldn't understand the topic. So, I began to search the topics on the internet and I encountered some websites like the websites of publications. I am still using them to revise the topics I've learned in the classroom'* (S4- 7th Grade)

'I like doing speaking activities in English lessons but on Zoom, we didn't have much time to speak because the lesson ends in 30 minutes. So, I thought I could find another way of doing speaking activities and some applications in which I can speak with foreign teachers.' (S9-6th Grade)

'In the English classes we attended at school, I was asking my teacher about the words that I did not know, but in the live lessons, I could not ask my teacher about all the words I did not know. So, I asked my older siblings where I could look up the meaning of words and thus discovered 2 different applications' (S8-5th Grade)

According to research, the learning resources employed in this process change depending on the individual learning requirements of each learner. The sources that students autonomously discovered and used during this process are listed in the following table in the expectation that it will assist in identifying the areas where live lessons and other educational activities provided during the ERE process were valuable or inadequate in fostering the autonomy of secondary school students.

Table 4.4. *The resources discovered and used autonomously in ERE*

Resources	*f*
Tonguç Academy	4
Duolingo	3
Sümeyye Oğultekin (website)	2
Cake	1
Testmaker	1
Liveworksheets	1
Wordwall	1
Doping Hafıza	1
Mutiş Teacher (Youtube channel)	***1***
TOTAL	***15***

Upon reviewing the chart, it is clear that students often detect websites for practicing language skills (Duolingo, Cake) and online learning resources which enable them to revise (Tonguç Academy, Mutiş Teacher) and practice (Sümeyye Oğultekin, Liveworksheets) what they have learned in live learning sessions. Looking at the applications and websites that students autonomously access, it can be said that secondary school students need resources during the ERE process where they can review and practice topics, as well as develop their linguistic competence. In addition,

the fact that only one student independently conducts research and makes discoveries to assess her own English learning extends additional credibility to the numerical statistics about attendees' deficiency in evaluating their learning.

In relation to exploring new learning sources, as the second advantageous point of learner autonomy in ERE, *discovering new ways of learning* was put forward by participants. It was indicated by some of the learners that, as they uncovered new learning resources, they had more opportunities to try out new methods to learn English. The statements that follow illustrate these ideas of learners:

> *'While searching for a vocabulary activity on the internet, I saw a Youtube video in which there are short stories written from new words. I liked it and I began to watch that channel. First, I wrote the stories there in my notebook, then I tried to write my own stories by changing the names, animals, etc.'* (S10-6th Grade)

> '*I had problems with memorization. I couldn't remember previous units' words after we passed to the new ones. While searching for a new vocabulary book to buy, I saw a book that provides the new words of each unit as word maps. From that day, I have drawn my word maps and it has worked.'* (S3-8th Grade)

> '*In the application I found (Duolingo), I spoke with foreign teachers. After seeing that I can speak, I decided to record videos to share on my Youtube channel. To take videos, I started writing sentences and improved my English.* (S8-5th Grade)

In addition, two of the learners stated that having too much free time and getting bored throughout online education, led them to find new ways of studying English:

> *'After EIN courses we had too much time and we couldn't go outside because of the coronavirus. I and my little sister got bored and both of us liked English. So, we began to prepare English games together and played them.'* (S9-6th Grade)

> *'When I was at home, I have nothing to do. To pass time, I started to watch videos including some scenes from a series sent by my teacher. In the videos, there were some words from the coursebook and it took my interest. After a*

while, I started to look at familiar words in every series and take notes of them.' (S4-7th Grade)

As also mentioned by S4, the other one of the most stated benefits of being an autonomous learner in this specific context was *learning new vocabulary*. It was indicated by learners that their vocabulary capacity enlarged either consciously or unconsciously during this process. Alongside the students' statements which indicate how they recognize new vocabulary items while they were looking for new learning resources and methods above, two of the interviewees claimed that they increased their vocabulary knowledge without being aware:

'*I didn't realize how many words I had learned while playing games until I came across these words in English lessons.*' (S2-8th Grade)

'*I have learned some words from the movies I watched during coronavirus restrictions.*' (S5-7th Grade)

Furthermore, one of the participants asserted that she learned vocabulary about how to use websites and applications while trying to practice English. She summarized the situation as follows:

'At the beginning of the ERE, attending an online lesson or doing homework from websites was problematic to me. Because all of the instructions were in English, I couldn't understand how to administer or progress on online tools. But later on, as I used it, I learned the words about it.' (S6-5th Grade)

In addition to expanding the vocabulary, it was stated by the participant students that learner autonomy in the ERE process is also effective in *improving the language skills* of the students. Online learning conditions, together with technological tools, allowed students to access various information resources and language applications without time constraints, contributing to students using their language skills on various platforms and thus improving their language skills. The language skills that were allegedly improved differed among students. Table 4.5. summarizes the language skills cited by participants of the study with their frequencies.

Table 4.5. *Language skills developed in ERE*

Language Skills	*f*
Listening	2
Speaking	1
Reading	1
TOTAL	***4***

The ideas of learners who perceived learner autonomy as beneficial to improving their language skills under the conditions of ERE reflected their thoughts as follows:

> *'To review the topics, I frequently watched videos both on EIN and on websites of some publications (Tonguç Academy, Doping Hafıza) throughout ERE. After I started face-to-face lessons, I noticed that I can understand listening texts better than before.'* (S1-8th Grade)

> *'I think, reading stories was very beneficial for me. Now, I can read long sentences and paragraphs easily in class.'* (S10-6th Grade)

Additionally, one of the participants claimed that she boosted her pronunciation alongside progressing in speaking English. She expressed her condition as follows:

> *'I like studying English and I want to speak with foreigners. So, I specifically paid attention to speaking activities in the application (Duolingo). While I was recording my voice to send to the foreign teachers, I tried to imitate their speaking. When I came back to school, my classmates appreciated my speaking.'* (S8-5th Grade)

Developing time management skills which highlight the programming and monitoring of the learning elements of learner autonomy, was another essential benefit that was covered. It was acknowledged that the decline in teacher referrals reinforced the dominance of students in setting their own learning schedules which resulted in the enhancement of time organizational skills. The excerpt below shows the idea of a learner:

> *'In my opinion, ERE was a little bit different. At first, I thought that I had too much time to do something but I saw that I did nothing but waste time. I had little connection with my teacher, so I didn't get any program to follow. Then, I decided to do my program and it was very difficult. Sometimes, because the house was crowded, I couldn't do the things I had planned. And sometimes our*

online lessons overlapped with my sibling. In time, I have learned how to plan or adapt my learning time. I still prepare and follow my learning schedules on my own.' (S4-7th Grade)

Besides the specified points above, several other positive effects of learner autonomy were noticed in the process of ERE by the participants of the study. It was suggested that likewise the growth in vocabulary capacity, learner autonomy had a similar favourable impact on *memorization* of words and knowledge of structures. One participant postulated that thanks to being home for longer hours and newly explored resources and tools, she repeatedly utilized the same terms and grammatical structures in different ways, which resulted in ease of memorization.

Moreover, according to the attendants of that research, being aware of learner autonomy and running the process autonomously brought about an *increase in* their *motivation* and *enhanced* their *ICT capabilities*. Although only one learner stated it clearly, there was a consensus that at the beginning of the training, the majority of students struggled to use even the EIN platform at all. But their autonomy and desire to learn promoted them to improve on digital skills because it was the only way of learning. It was alleged that learners expanded their ICT competency while they were trying to follow online courses conducted on different online platforms and seeking out new materials to self-study from the internet.

Based on the perceptions of learners, in the course of emergency remote education, learner autonomy, and motivation positively impacted each other. One student remarked that while taking the ERE, she sometimes became more autonomous and this increased her motivation to learn English, and occasionally her motivation was boosted by her autonomy.

In conclusion, the overall positive responses of secondary school students indicate that they encountered a range of advantageous implications of learner autonomy during emergency distance learning, and it was inferred that this situation positively affected their perceptions of LA. However, in addition to these beneficial outcomes, it was also noticed that students faced certain barriers to their learner autonomy throughout this procedure. The most cited barrier in front of students' autonomy was *fixed programs* to follow. When they were questioned about how they planned and followed their English learning, four of the participants reported that they

preferred to follow pre-established programs supplied by their teachers or school counsellors. Even though these preferences differed across the students, all of them agreed that adhering to the programs set forth by the teachers prevented them from constructing and implementing their own programs and, in a larger sense, from engaging in autonomous learning behaviours. Among those learners, three of the students depicted the issue by associating it with time constraints and *exam pressure* which was one of the other highly mentioned obstacles:

> *'I would like to act autonomously, but I did not have enough time to prepare and follow a program because I had to do exam preparation. And, there was already a ready-made program that I could use.'* (S1-8th Grade)

> *'In order to prepare for the exam, our teacher was sending a program every week to the whole class. I thought that if I didn't follow this plan, I would be unable to pass the exam.'* (S3-8th Grade)

One of the students, however, explained it in terms of her learning habits and inadequate programming skills:

> *'Because I don't think I could do it on my own. My teacher always gave me my study schedule. I have never planned a program before'* (S5-7th Grade)

The other thing that restricted learners to behave autonomously in ERE conditions was *teachers' not fostering their learner autonomy.* According to the participants of that investigation, their lecturers were ineffective at empowering students to take charge of their own learning. When they were asked about the instructions of their teachers that inspired them to act autonomously, nearly half of the students evaluated their teachers as not helpful. As a result of reviewing the opinions of participant students, their teachers' initiatives aimed at promoting learner autonomy were coded as "effective, ineffective, or no idea" and are shown in Table 4.6 including their frequency.

Table 4.6. *Learners' views about teachers' efficacy on fostering learner autonomy in ERE*

Codes	*f*
Ineffective	4
Effective	2
No idea	2
TOTAL	***8***

The accompanying sentences are the reflections that the students who believe their teachers were ineffective at fostering their autonomy under ERE circumstances:

> *'No, our teacher did not direct us to any study. He just wanted us to attend classes regularly, do homework and solve LGS tests.'* (S2-8th Grade)

> *'We didn't do anything other than the activities and homework she (teacher) sent from EIN'.* (S9-5th Grade)

> *'So, actually, my teacher followed the weekly schedules I sent and told me how many questions to solve, nothing more.'* (S5-7th Grade)

The learners' replies to the query on how they evaluated their learning in that particular setting disclosed another teacher-related hindrance to acting autonomously, namely *a lack of context for self-assessment*. One learner argued that she was neither notified nor stimulated to assess her English learning:

> '*I didn't take any tests or exams because I didn't know I needed to. My teacher informed us that there would be no exams and that completing the assignments and solving the tests she generated would be sufficient, so I simply completed them.*' (S5-7th Grade)

One of the other concerns perceived as a barrier in front of learner autonomy specified by secondary school students was the *lack of opportunities*. Two students claimed that their limited economic possibilities had a negative influence on their ability to learn on their own. From their point of view, the absence of technological devices and the lack of internet infrastructure hindered them from being autonomous students in this challenging period when all educational activities were delivered via the internet. The quotes below are indicatives of their viewpoints:

> *'Our house is a bit crowded. We are four siblings and the three of us are studying, one of my siblings is in fifth grade and the others are in primary school. There is only one tablet at home. That's why I couldn't study as I wanted most of the time, and sometimes I couldn't even attend my online classes because my lessons coincided with the lessons of my siblings.'* (S4-7th Grade)

> *'I tried to study on my own, but sometimes I couldn't because of technological shortcomings. At the beginning of online lessons, there was no internet at*

home, we could get it later. Sometimes there was internet but it was not working well.' (S8-5th Grade)

Surprisingly, in that particular setting, motivation and ICT skills, which some of the study's participants saw as advantages of learner autonomy were also perceived by certain participants as obstacles to learner autonomy. According to several students, learner autonomy enhanced their motivation to learn English; nevertheless, for two learners, lack of motivation hampered their autonomy in times of ERE. For a participant, increased time spent at home during the outbreak period was one of the factors that declined students' motivation and thus impeding the autonomy of learners. The following excerpt reflects her ideas:

'Throughout the restrictions, both my desire to learn English and be active to learn has decreased. Why do I attend classes when I can do other things at home in my free time?' (S10-6th Grade)

From the second student's point of view, the reason behind being not eager to manage her English learning was the limited interaction available on both of the learning platforms (EIN, TRT EIN TV) that were used as the only means of education throughout coronavirus restrictions. The sentences that follow convey her perspective:

'I enjoy English classes a lot since we talk and play games with my friends in class, but I got bored quickly when we couldn't do these things in live sessions, so I didn't want to do anything other than lessons.' (S4-7th Grade)

Besides limiting secondary school students' interaction, conducting courses on online platforms has brought another obstacle in front of secondary school students to learn English autonomously. According to the answer of a learner, the fact that all activities related to English learning required the use of computers and other technology limited her ability to learn individually.

'Even though I learned it later, I couldn't work on my own because I didn't know how to use a computer at first.' (S6-5th Grade)

To sum up, the interviewees' responses to the questions highlighting the dimensions of learner autonomy, such as organizing, monitoring, and assessing, confirmed the quantitative data concerning their level of learner autonomy in the course of emergency distance education that emerged after the coronavirus pandemic.

In accordance with the above-average autonomy levels calculated in the result of quantitative data, it was unearthed that although secondary school students encountered some barriers to their autonomy during the ERE operation, at the same time they saw various positive impacts on learner autonomy and they formed an overall positive perception towards it.

4.2.2. Research Question #2: Do secondary school EFL learners' motivation and autonomy have a relationship in emergency remote education environments?

In a learning environment that relies on distant learning and requires continuous improvement, learner autonomy must unquestionably remain a fundamental goal, and learner motivation may either restrict or facilitate learner autonomy in that setting (Spratt et al., 2002). In light of that assumption, the influence of secondary school EFL learners' motivation on learner autonomy under ERE conditions was investigated. In order to determine the response to that question, 180 secondary school students who attended the English learning lessons during ERE were subjected to the MS scale. At the beginning of the analysis, the mean score was used to estimate the motivation levels of the learners, and then the impacts of motivation on learner autonomy were studied using a Pearson correlation test. To gain further insight into learner motivation and its relation with LA, ten students were also questioned in semi-structured interviews. The qualitative and quantitative findings are shown below, followed by a discussion of the outcomes through comparison with prior studies.

4.2.2.1. Findings of the Motivation Scale (MS):

In the initial stage of the analysis, the descriptive statistics of the motivation scale were acquired through SPSS 25.0 program. The mean motivation scores of students in secondary schools were computed along with the min. and max. amounts in order to draw conclusions on the relationship between learner motivation and LA. Furthermore, measurements for skewness and kurtosis were gathered to validate the data's normality. Based on the students' responses to the 19 items reflecting on the motivation they generated throughout the ERE operation, the mean score and other descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7. *Descriptive statistics of the motivation scale*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Motivation Score	180	48,00	95,00	71,2889	8,56555	-,306	,181	,397	,360
Valid N (listwise)	180								

As indicated in Table 4.7 the motivation levels of secondary school students who were enrolled in English instruction via TRT EIN TV and EIN online spanned from 48,00 minimum to 95,00 maximum degrees. The mean score of motivation was determined to be 71,28 while the standard deviation was found 8,56. That result implies that while accomplishing educative tasks from distance, secondary schoolers generated a moderate amount of motivation to study English. Because values for skewness (-0,306) and kurtosis (0,397) fell within the bounds of -1.5 and +1.5, respectively, as postulated by Tabachnick & Fidell (2013), it can be said that this is a normally distributed sample. Regarding that result, it can be implied that this data set is suitable to run parametric tests.

After ensuring that the collected data were normally distributed, a Pearson product-moment correlation was used for ascertaining the relationship between learner motivation on the autonomy perceptions of secondary school students. Table 4.8 contains the results of the Pearson correlation test.

Table 4.8. *Correlations between LA perceptions and learner motivation*

Correlations

		Autonomy Score	Motivation Score
Autonomy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	,624**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	180	180
Motivation Score	Pearson Correlation	,624**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	180	180

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson product-moment correlation reveals that there is a considerable significant positive correlation between learners' motivation and autonomy (r=,624, p>.01) in the context of emergency distance education. In other words, it can be said that, throughout ERE implication, learners' autonomy may increase as their motivation does, or vice versa. This finding demonstrates the power of learner motivation in promoting autonomous behaviours and the way how learners perceive LA under ERE circumstances.

4.2.2.2. Findings of the Interviews:

In order to validate the numerical results and gain a better grasp of how motivation and LA perceptions are related, 10 students were requested to review the ERE technique in terms of the effects of their motivation on their autonomy. The main focus of the questions was on how they felt about distance learning, whether or not taking online courses increased or decreased their motivation and how their motivation affected their autonomy, and whether they would choose to take more courses this way in the future. As a result of thematic analysis, their answers were summarised under two major themes; Motivating factors and Demotivating factors. Hereunder Table 4.9., the key elements that encourage or discourage learners from studying English autonomously while taking the ERE are depicted as codes with the frequency of mention.

Table 4.9. *The factors that motivate or demotivate learners to be autonomous in ERE*

Category	Code	*f*
Motivating factors	engaging learning resources	7
	increase in self-confidence	2
	more exposure to English	2
	decrease in the length of lessons	2
	more practice	1
	reduced time and cost of going to school	1
	feeling comfortable at home	1
	TOTAL	**16**

Demotivating factors	lack of interaction	7
	technical issues	5
	not being used to teachers speaking entirely in English	4
	chaos in live lessons	4
	low attendance	2
	inadequate lesson duration	1
	lack of ICT skills	1
	TOTAL	***22***

Upon closer inspection of the table, it can be asserted that learners encountered both motivating and demotivating features in the ERE procedure, leading them to interpret motivation as both a stimulating and inhibiting force in front of their autonomy. In a way that reflects their moderate motivation, the ratio of the elements listed as motivating and demotivating are at comparable levels. The most remarkable motivating factor for learners was the *engaging learning resources* they reached while studying English at a distance. According to learners, the enjoyable learning environments enriched with vivid, engaging activities offered by online tools strengthen their desire of joining English learning activities. The ideas of learners are as follows;

> *'In live lessons, our teacher opens some games and activities I had never seen before. So, it is so exciting.'* (S8- 5th Grade)
>
> *'We do activities in lessons from the computer, for example, matching by clicking with the mouse, filling in the blanks, etc. I think doing activities on the computer is easier than normal lessons, and it is more enjoyable. We are visiting some websites and they are very entertaining too.'* (S3-8th Grade)
>
> *'I enjoy playing different games in the lessons and doing activities from the sites. We weren't doing that much activity in the class, we were usually writing, so I want to attend live classes more.'* (S7-5th Grade)

Retrieving interesting learning materials helped learners become more motivated while also *increasing* their *exposure* to and *opportunities* for the independent practice of English. Four of the respondents highlighted how useful the TRT EIN TV broadcasts, phone applications, and other sources they found in ERE were in increasing speaking and listening competencies as follows;

'In truth, the program was excellent; I enjoyed recording my voice speaking in English, and I became more motivated.' (S1-8th Grade)

'I couldn't always hear the listening activities in class, but I could hear them well on the apps and replay them as many times as I needed to complete the exercises.' (S9-6th Grade)

As a result of accessing interactive materials, being exposed to, and practicing more of the target language, learners *increased* not only their motivation but also their *self-confidence*, which resulted in greater learner autonomy. One of the learners pointed out that issue as follows;

'At first, I was a little confused, but when I completed exercises on my own and saw that I can solve questions on my own, I began to enjoy it. Then I started to prepare weekly learning programs for myself. My teacher congratulated me and after that, I continued to work in the same manner.' (S4-7th Grade)

Besides the opportunities for English practice content, some learners emphasized the inspiring aspects of the learning environment itself. *Shorter lessons*, *reduced time and cost of going to school*, and *home comfort* were elements of ERE that boosted the desire of secondary school students. Their thoughts were presented below;

'Because we don't go to school, we don't get up early. Furthermore, the lessons are shorter now, so I don't get bored. Therefore, I prefer online learning.' (S3-8th Grade)

'Being at home is very comfortable. No wearing a uniform, no walking to school… I wake up in the morning just before class. I think it's very nice.' (S6-5th Grade)

In summary, it can be stated that learners were exposed to many motivating points of ERE situations in terms of course content, language learning resources, and learning environment, which led to generating positive perceptions of LA. In other words, this leads them to perform autonomous learning actions. Nevertheless, as the table illustrates, in that specific learning setting, students are also confronted with factors that reduce their desire to act autonomously. When the participants were asked whether they chose to continue their English education in a face-to-face format or at

distance, all participants favoured the former without exception. Likewise, every student's explanation is the same: *lack of interaction* with peers and teachers. They expressed their longing for their classmates and teachers as the biggest reason for their lack of motivation like this;

> *'In distance education, I couldn't see neither my teachers nor my friends. I missed them too much and when we were apart, I didn't want to attend lessons because I couldn't understand without asking questions or doing exercises with them.'* (S4-7th Grade)

> *'I mean, the classes were good, yes, but I didn't have friends, so few people were attending the class, and even if they did, it wasn't like in school. I wouldn't prefer online classes because I was away from my friends.' (S10-6th Grade)*

> *'I did not like distance education very much because in live lessons we only listen to the teacher or answer the question he asks, but we could not ask many questions, for example. Even if we asked, I could not understand from afar. We couldn't do group activities, it was a bit boring to me.'* (S2-8th Grade)

Additionally, in consideration of TRT EIN TV courses, learners expressed that they could not understand some areas since they were unable to interact with lecturers or ask questions about the content. Their thoughts are reflected in the following excerpts;

> *'Actually, the teachers on TV were teaching the lesson very well, however, I became bored and sleepy when I was unable to respond. I didn't enjoy only sitting in front of the TV and listening to the teacher. That's why I didn't want to follow the lectures on TV much.'* (S5-7th Grade)

> *'To be honest, the lectures on the television did not feel good to me, as we could not speak to the teacher, and we could not connect.'* (S7-5th Grade)

Technical issues are the other highly mentioned factor that negatively affects the motivation of learners. The absence of technological gadgets, inadequate infrastructure, internet connection problems, inability to hear the teacher's voice, and not seeing the teacher's face are some of the aspects outlined by participants. Their thoughts are presented below;

'Sometimes there was noise during the live lessons, the teacher could not be heard, or Zoom was kicking the teacher out of the lesson. So, I prefer attending face-to-face lessons.' (S9-6th Grade)

'There were internet problems. For example, in English class, the teacher plays audio recordings to listen and answer questions, but sometimes the internet was disconnected or there was no sound. I didn't like them. (S5-7th Grade)

'Most of the time, the teachers' cameras were turned off. When we could just hear the teacher's voice, it was difficult to understand what she was saying. Internet connections frequently dropped out as well. The majority of the class period was used to re-enter the lecture.' (S3-8th Grade)

Aside from technological issues, students reported that they could not always hear the teacher due to the *chaos* that happened *during online sessions.* Some students claimed that crowded lectures caused confusion since too many people were simultaneously speaking and using chat boxes more than needed.

'Our teacher's lecture at EIN was a little different than face-to-face. For example, you ask a question, the others jump, and such complicated things happen. But when you ask in class, nobody interferes or the teacher does not allow anybody to interfere.' (S8-5th Grade)

'Sometimes in live lessons students from more than one class were attending a lesson and it was very noisy. I couldn't follow these lessons because it is chaotic.' (S2-8th Grade)

In contrast, several of the learners complained that the *shorter lessons* and *low attendance* discouraged them from participating in live lessons. From their perspective, when fewer students attend lessons, the same students always provide the answers, and due to the short session time, they were unable to practice enough to internalize language structures. Here are their ideas;

'I think online lessons were quite short. I wanted to complete additional exercises many times, but the lesson quickly ended.' (S6-5th Grade)

'There were only a few students in the lessons. Because of it the same people always answered the questions repetitively. After a while, it became so dull' (S3-8th Grade)

In addition to the problems that diminish motivation in online courses, interviewees noticed a dissatisfactory element of the TRT EIN TV classes that stems from *not being used to teachers speaking entirely in English*. According to learners, following the teachers who speak English throughout the lessons was challenging. It caused students to miss some parts of the lesson and over time they lost all their interest and desire for the lesson. The following sentences reflect their opinions;

> *'I couldn't comprehend anything because the teacher usually spoke in English during the TV classes. I would have preferred it if they did not constantly speak English.'* (S9-6th Grade)

> *'I couldn't understand TRT EIN TV broadcasts because they were entirely in English. I didn't like them very much because of this.'* (S2-8th Grade)

Overall, the codes formed by the scrutiny of verbal answers of interviewees disclosed that secondary school learners encountered imperfections in terms of the operation of the courses, technical infrastructure, and learning conditions, which declined their motivation to keep track of their own English learning.

In conclusion, according to the students' responses to questions examining the generated level of motivation throughout the ERE procedure and whether it affected their perceptions of LA, secondary school students had an average level of motivation, and consistently, their perceptions of LA varied both in a positive and negative sense in a comparable manner. However, it is evident that their motivation had an impact on their learner autonomy, whether it was in a positive or negative sense. It indicates that when they encountered ERE's benefits, they produced more motivation and it helped them strengthen their autonomy, whereas when they encountered ERE's drawbacks, they experienced a drop in both motivation and learner autonomy.

4.2.3. Research Question #3: Do secondary school EFL learners' digital literacy and learner autonomy have a relationship in emergency remote education environments?

This part of the study is spared to scrutinize the third variable of the research which concentrates on the digital literacy of secondary school learners. Presuming that being a learner in a distance learning context necessitates demonstrating a high degree

of digital literacy to utilize ICT tools (Maphosa & Bhebhe, Digital literacy: A must for open distance and e-learning (ODEL) students, 2019), and being a self-learner (Firat, 2016) this study sought to explore the correlation between the two key factors of distance education, namely digital literacy and learner autonomy. In other words, the study aims to understand how learners' autonomous English learning processes and perceptions of LA in the particular ERE environment were impacted by digital literacy.

To accomplish that aim, the level of digital literacy of the participants was assessed using the DL Scale, a set of ten items that reflect the qualities of a digitally literate person, one who is a critical and prudent user of technological tools and has the expertise, talent, and comprehension to employ and pick the optimal instruments, media, and structures for portraying meaning (McLoughlin, 2011). For uncovering its effectiveness on LA, the correlation test was exploited via SPSS software. Additionally, three major, as well as several supplementary questions, were given a place in interviews to get a complete picture of student opinions. In the following sections, their results will be presented in the aforementioned order, with a discussion afterward.

4.2.3.1. Findings of the Digital Literacy Scale (DLS):

Before applying correlational tests, in the first step, the mean score along with minimum and maximum scores, standard deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis values were computed in order to ascertain the learners' competence in digital literacy. These statistics are displayed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10. *Descriptive statistics of the digital literacy scale*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Digital Literacy Score	180	23,00	50,00	39,9278	6,014178	-,460	,181	-,410	,360
Valid N (listwise)	180								

With a minimum score of 23,00 and a maximum score of 50,00, secondary school students' mean digital literacy level is calculated to be 39,92. The figure for the standard deviation is 6,01. Additionally, the Skewness and Kurtosis are given as -,460, and -,410, respectively, demonstrating the distribution's acceptability. To sum up, descriptive statistics of the DL Scale illustrate that learners in secondary school had somewhat above the average of digital literacy when participating in ERE proceedings. These findings demonstrated that learners, albeit to a limited extent, possess some level of digital literacy.

As a next step, for comprehending whether or not their perceptions of LA is related with their digital literacy and if so, to what extent their DL related with their LA, the Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated via the statistical program. The findings are reported below in Table 4.11;

Table 4.11. *Correlation between LA and DL*

Correlations

		Autonomy Score	Digital Literacy Score
Autonomy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	,498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	180	180
Digital Literacy Score	Pearson Correlation	,498**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	180	180

**.Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 4.11, the relationship between digital literacy and learner autonomy is moderately significant (r=,498, p>.01), which means that during the application of the ERE, if a learner's DL is high, then his LA is also high and indeed, his perception of LA is positive, or vice versa. This result proves the moderate relationship of DL and the perception of LA of learners in secondary level in times of ERE.

4.2.3.2. Findings of the Interviews:

In the final section of the interviews, the respondents were invited to evaluate their level of digital literacy and its implications on the autonomous English learning practices reflecting their own experiences. Supporting the numerical results, when asked whether they consider themselves competent in digital literacy, their answers showed a close distribution; sufficient %60, needed to improve %30, and not sure %10. This finding indicates that, despite having a reasonable degree of DL, they still require improvement in their ability to use and interact with digital tools to learn English at a distance.

In a similar vein, more than half of the learners (%60) claimed that their skill of utilizing digital tools assisted them in engaging in autonomous learning behaviours when asked how their opinions on how their autonomy was influenced by their digital skills. Therefore, that outcome also supports the quantitative finding that DL and LA are positively correlated in emergency distance learning conditions.

For the purpose of presenting a comprehensive picture, the learners' remarks on the DL-related points they felt proficient and the points were lacking were converted into codes and presented in the following table.

Table 4.12. *Learners' views on the effects of digital literacy on learner autonomy*

Category	Code	*f*
The areas where students' digital literacy was favorable	availability of extensive resources	5
	following online lessons from different platforms	4
	vocabulary expansion	
	increased time devoted to learning	3
	additional after-class activities	1
	TOTAL	1
		14
The areas where students felt their digital literacy was lacking	utilizing CMC (Computer-Mediated Communication) software	5
	preparing digital content	3
	discovering new resource uses	3
	the complex language used in digital tools	2
	technical problems	1
	TOTAL	**11**

When the table is reviewed, it is readily apparent that the positive aspects of DL outweigh the negative aspects in terms of quantity. This outcome is consistent with

the DL Scale results, which showed that secondary school students produced more than reasonable levels of DL in the ERE. Additionally, it becomes clear from a close examination of the codes that the advantages listed as favourable are nearly identical to those listed as benefits of LA. This is yet another indication that DL and LA had positive interactions during the ERE. Another way to look at it is to say that DL encouraged students to form favourable opinions of LA. Additionally, all of the points discussed by the students below are proffered along with the excerpts from the interviews in order to thoroughly portray their standpoints.

The *availability of extensive resources* is cited as the most definite advantage of digital literacy. According to the participants, in times of emergency, they reached various learning resources by using their ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) skills in online databases which increased the amount of exposure and practice for developing in English. That, in turn, enhanced their desire to learn autonomously. Here are their thoughts;

> *'For example, when I learned new sites, even if the teacher did not give homework, I did exercises from those sites. I also learned new words from games and videos I discovered.'* (S4-7th Grade)

> *'I repeated the topics from various websites, which helped me learn more in distance education. Additionally, I picked up knowledge outside of the classroom, such as new words not covered in the units. I specifically paid attention to the speeches in the videos and I tried to imitate their speech. Now my teacher says that I read some words well, I think it was thanks to the videos.'* (S5-7th Grade)

The second favourable point of having digital literacy is cited as being able to *follow online lessons from various learning platforms*. For the learners who faced up online lessons for the first time, being able to acquire the knowledge of how to use online resources is even a big deal and it can be understood from their speeches that one of the greatest benefits of being digitally literate is being able to enrol, set up an account, follow instructions, and take an active part in live lessons on an online platform. The following excerpts reflect their opinions;

'*Some of my friends could not access the EIN and other websites, they could not even create an account, I made them quickly. Well, those websites also assisted in my learning*.' (S3-8th Grade)

Notably, while explaining this notion, one of the interviewees pointed out the positive correlation between DL and learning English in an autonomous way with these utterances;

'*I mean, thanks to being literate, I was able to read the online texts, and, for example, by entering EIN, I was able to do better in my English classes. Before distance learning, I had no idea how to use EIN; I only learned it during the COVID-19 outbreak.*'

In conclusion to accessing new learning sources and learning the skills needed to use online learning environments, participants mentioned about how they *enhanced their vocabulary knowledge* and encountered *additional after-class activities*. These turned out to be yet other benefits of DL. The following quotations describe their opinions;

'*The language of some sources was English. Even to register on these sites, I had to learn new words. In this way, I both learned new words and was able to easily register and practice on different sites.*' (S4-7th Grade)

'*After the lessons, I discovered many games that dealt with the subjects. I picked up a lot of new vocabulary from the games, and I can use it in my daily life*.' (S10-6th Grade)

In a nutshell, it can be contended that secondary school students developed their DL, enabling them to follow online courses, access more resources and complementary activities, and widen their vocabulary during the ERE process, which in turn stimulates them to yield favourable attitudes toward LA. On the other side, when the table is discerned, it can be expired that there are some areas also where students' digital literacy is insufficient and this precludes them from displaying autonomous actions. Among these obstacles, the most typical one is distinguished as *operating CMC* (Computer-Mediated Communication) *software*. It is a striking observation that for half of the learners, DL aided learners follow education whereas the other half sees the inability to use CMC tools as an inhibitor in front of learning in online learning. When asked which ICT skills they felt they lacked, the majority of

participants remarked on utilizing CMC tools, and Table 4.13 below lists the cited software with their frequency.

Table 4.13. *CMC tools learners' inability to use in the ERE*

Software	*f*
Zoom	4
Microsoft Teams	3
Google Meet	1
TOTAL	***8***

In relation to software operation, learners described other hindrances which are basically *discovering new resource uses* and the *complex language used in digital tools*. For a better reflection, some of the learners' impressions are represented in the following excerpts;

> *'I had never used Zoom before distance education, so I did not know how to enter the classes, how to turn my voice on and off, how to raise my hand, and I had problems in many lessons until I learned these.'* (S2-8th Grade)

> *'I have trouble and don't know where to click when I visit a website for the first time. Some websites are only in English, so I can't understand what I need to do on them.' (S4-7th Grade)*

> *'Before using Zoom, each teacher started to post a different application link. I couldn't use most of these apps. For example, in Microsoft Teams, the teacher was dividing us into groups, because I could not return to the main lesson, and I missed the lessons most of the time.'* (S5-7th Grade)

> *'It was hard to use applications like Zoom, Google Meet, etc. because everyone has different features and all of the instructions are in English. I couldn't understand even how to install or attend lessons.'* (S9-6th Grade)

Furthermore, it is also mentioned that their inability to use digital tools severely limited their ability to create digital content, such as assignments or projects. Table 4.14 gives examples of the different kinds of digital content that students frequently struggle to produce.

Table 4.14. *Digital contents learners struggle to create*

Digital Contents	*f*
Editing videos	3
Preparing slides	3
Creating e-forms or surveys	2
Writing blogs	1
TOTAL	**9**

Below, some participants' viewpoints on the lack of generating digital content are addressed in their own words;

> '*I can do research, attend a live class and do homework, but for example, I can't use applications other than zoom or EIN and, I can't prepare slides or videos.*' (S1-8th Grade)

> '*I do not consider myself sufficient in this regard. I can work from research or sites I've visited before. I can make slides, but I can't make videos. I mean, I'll shoot a video, but I can't add text, songs, or anything like that. Maybe if I get help from my brother or something, I will.*' (S4-7th Grade)

The verbal data makes it abundantly clear that students' struggles with digital literacy extend beyond simply using new software. In this specific process, although the students were able to use the software and comprehend the instructions, one student also acknowledged that they encountered some technical issues and lacked the necessary ICT skills to resolve them independently and carry on with their education.

> '*Sometimes there is a problem in the application or in the connection, I can solve some of them myself, but sometimes I need help from my mother or my older brother. So, I'm not competent enough to do everything myself*.' (S7-5th Grade)

In summary, it can be argued that even though students had above-average digital literacy to conduct English studies digitally, they also encountered a number of ICT skills limitations, such as using CMC software like constructing digital content, finding new resources, adhering to English instructions, and handling technical issues. As also declared by some of the interviewees, it can also be asserted that insufficient DL in the predetermined points inhibited secondary school learners to perform autonomous learning actions.

4.2.4. Research Question #4: Is there a significant difference among learners with varying demographic characteristics (grade level, gender, and age) in terms of their learner autonomy in emergency remote education environments?

With an intention to provide specific learner needs to take into account for getting prepared for upcoming ERE conditions, learners' autonomy in terms of demographic variables including age, gender, and grade level were examined and presented in that part one by one under specific headings. To analyze the data for each factor, one-way ANOVA, an independent samples t-test, and a Pearson product-moment correlation were used and will be provided in the first sections. Following, the conclusions drawn from the qualitative data will be presented. Eventually, the implications of the outcomes will be talked over in the discussion part.

4.2.4.1. Research Question #4a: Is there a significant difference among learners in different grade levels in terms of learner autonomy levels and perceptions in emergency distance education?

4.2.4.1.1. Quantitative Findings:

This question was addressed using one-way ANOVA, a variance analysis that facilitates researchers to compare the equality of means across multiple populations (Hesamian, 2016). Allowing for the comparison of the data from multiple groups, this method was chosen because of having participants from four different grade levels. Before using ANOVA, some considerations must be met, according to Fein, (2022). To determine whether one-way ANOVA was appropriate for the analysis, the dataset's compliance with the ANOVA assumptions was examined at the beginning of the process. In this study, the first and second suppositions have been met because the dependent variable is ratio measurement data, and the independent variable is made up of more than two independent groups. The third assumption was also met because the independent nature of the observations was further confirmed by the absence of the same participants in two groups. Skewness values were calculated to satisfy the fourth assumption and a result close to 0 (-.422) indicated the data set's normal distribution, and no erroneous outliers were detected, which means also the fifth assumption was

achieved. As suggested in the chapter, a Levene's test was utilized to test the homogeneity of variances. Table 4.15 illustrates the summary of the Levene's test for LA.

Table 4.15. *Test of homogeneity of variances autonomy score*

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1,067	3	176	,365

Because the significance value is greater than .05, the necessity of homogeneity of variances was also accomplished (sig.= .365>.05). Following the confirmation of all hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to uncover whether the grade level factor is effective on the generation of LA, and the descriptives resulting from the analysis are shown in Table 4.16 below.

Table 4.16. *Descriptive statistics of participants' autonomy scores*

						95% Confidence Interval for Mean				Between-Component Variance
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum	
5th Grade		33	54,3636	7,85342	1,36710	51,5789	57,1483	30,00	65,00	
6th Grade		51	53,0000	5,62139	,78715	51,4190	54,5810	41,00	64,00	
7th Grade		51	53,4706	6,86252	,96094	51,5405	55,4007	39,00	65,00	
8th Grade		45	50,0444	6,52950	,97336	48,0828	52,0061	36,00	62,00	
Total		180	52,6444	6,77955	,50532	51,6473	53,6416	30,00	65,00	
Model	Fixed Effects			6,65047	,49570	51,6662	53,6227			
	Random Effects				,91704	49,7260	55,5629			2,31917

As can be seen from the table, the 8th graders had the lowest autonomy score, the 5th graders had the highest level, and the third and fourth groups of learners from the 6th and 7th grades maintained moderate levels of autonomy. Yet, these results are

not enough to convey a meaning that as the grades are higher, LA is getting decreased. So, for portraying the differences among the groups in detail, the results of one-way ANOVA are provided in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17. *One-way ANOVA results for grade level and learner autonomy*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	442,991	3	147,664	3,339	,021
Within Groups	7784,253	176	44,229		
Total	8227,244	179			

An analysis of variance revealed that there was a statistically significant difference among the three grade levels of secondary school learners (F(3,176) =3.339, p=.021). To determine which groups differed, the LSD post hoc test was used and the findings of the test indicate that 8th Grade learners (N=45, M=50,04, Sd= 6,52) significantly differed from the other 3 groups with a large size effect (5th Grade, N=33, M=54,36, Sd= 7,85), 6th Grade (N=51, M=53,00, Sd=5,62), 7th Grade (N=51, M=53,47, Sd=6,86). Therefore, it can be argued that grade level plays a significant role in how LA is perceived and performed. Additionally, students who are nearing the end of their secondary education are more likely to produce less LA.

4.2.4.1.2. Qualitative Findings:

In order to reveal the implications of students' grade levels on the perceptions of autonomy in ERE, a thematic analysis was supervised on the replies of students to the LA questions in the interviews. The table below provides an overview of the codes that emerged from the analysis and the grade levels that these codes reflect.

Table 4.18. *Grade level distributions of LA perceptions*

Category	Code	Grade level				*f*
		5	**6**	**7**	**8**	
positive effects of learner autonomy in ERE	exploring new learning sources	3	2	1	2	**8**
	discovering new ways of learning	2	1	1	1	**5**
	learning new vocabulary	2	2			**4**
	improvement in language skills	2	1	1		**4**
	developing time management skills			1		**1**
	increase in motivation	1				**1**

	enhancing ICT capabilities		1			**1**
	memorization			1		**1**
	TOTAL	**10**	**7**	**5**	**3**	**25**
barriers in front of learner autonomy in ERE	fixed programs			1	3	**4**
	teachers' not fostering learner autonomy	1	2	1		**4**
	exam pressure				2	**2**
	lack of opportunities	1		1		**2**
	lack of motivation		1		1	**2**
	lack of context for self-assessment			1		**1**
	inadequate ICT skills		1			**1**
	TOTAL	**2**	**3**	**4**	**6**	**16**

As can be seen from the table, as the grade level rises, there is a decline in the overall number of points reflecting the learners' positive perceptions (5^{th} Grade (10) >6^{th} Grade (7) >7^{th} Grade (5) >8^{th} Grade (3)). Similar to this, the negative perceptions of LA grew from the first to the last years of secondary school (5^{th} Grade (2)<6^{th} Grade (3) <7^{th} Grade (4) >8^{th} Grade (6)). As a result, it is possible to infer that grade level significantly affects how LA is perceived under ERE circumstances.

Additionally, when the codes were thoroughly examined, it became clear that only two of the codes "fixed programs" and "exam pressure" were dominated by 8th Graders and no other dominance was found. In light of this, it can be inferred from the table that, in addition to generating a different number of codes than the other groups, 8th graders also encountered different difficulties when interacting with their LA. Therefore, it can be claimed that when students enter the eighth grade, their struggles in LA change.

4.2.4.2. Research Question #4b: Is there a significant difference among learners in different genders in terms of learner autonomy levels and perceptions in emergency distance education?

4.2.4.2.1.Quantitative Findings;

An independent samples t-test was used to provide an answer to that question due to the presence of two groups of variables. The prerequisites of a t-test are having values obtained in ratio or interval scale, simple random extraction, normality, an appropriate sampling size, and equal variation among groups (Kim & Park, 2019). The previous section disclosed and satisfied the t-test's presumptions. For this reason, there

is no need to replicate itself because the descriptives are identical. The results of the t-test are presented in the following Table 4.19.

Table 4.19. *Results of independent samples t-test for gender and learner autonomy*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Autonomy Score	Equal variances assumed	,067	,795	2,958	178	,004	2,99470	1,01225	,99715	4,99226
	Equal variances not assumed			2,958	149,600	,004	2,99470	1,01249	,99407	4,99533

When the table is examined, the first thing to notice is that Levene's test value (.795) is higher than .05, which implies that the variances between the two groups are equal. Secondly, the table illustrates that there is a significant difference between the two genders, (t(178)=2.958, p=.004, p<.05). It is obvious that gender has an impact on student autonomy in favor of females. In other words, females (N=109, M=53.82, Sd= 6,63) had a greater level of LA during ERE than males (N=71, M=50.83, Sd=.78).

4.2.4.2.2.Qualitative Findings

To support the statistical conclusions drawn from statistical analysis, the gender distributions of the codes that appeared in interviewees' responses reflecting their opinions of LA were summarized and presented in Table 4.20.

Table 4.20. *Gender distributions of LA perceptions*

Category	Code	Male	Female	*f*
positive effects of learner autonomy in ERE	exploring new learning sources	2	6	8
	discovering new ways of learning	2	3	5
	learning new vocabulary		4	4
	improvement in language skills		4	4
	developing time management skills		1	1
	increase in motivation		1	1
	enhancing ICT capabilities	1		1
	memorization	1		1
	TOTAL	**6**	**19**	***25***

barriers in front of learner autonomy in ERE	fixed programs	2	2	4
	teachers' not fostering learner autonomy	2	2	4
	exam pressure	1	1	2
	lack of opportunities	1	1	2
	lack of motivation	1	1	2
	lack of context for self-assessment		1	1
	inadequate ICT skills		1	1
	TOTAL	**7**	**9**	***16***

A closer look at the total frequencies reveals that when reviewing their ERE experience, females emphasized more aspects of LA that were positive (Female=19>Male=6). At the same time, female students outnumber male students in the frequencies of codes that suggest negative attitudes. However, it is important to keep in mind that this study has a female predominance sampling. This may indeed have an implication on the reason why females yield both of the codes more frequently than males. Another finding from the table is that, when comparing the total numbers of helpful and hindering points of LA, male participants listed more disadvantages than advantages, while female participants did the exact opposite. The implications of these findings are two-fold. First, female students were more aware of their autonomous behaviors than male students were, and they produced more optimistic insights about LA in times of pandemic distance education.

Furthermore, examining the codes which were only outlined by women reveals that female learners managed to improve in a variety of areas including vocabulary gain, skill development, time organization, and desire of learning. Men, on the other hand, only identified two codes, which primarily focus on improving language structure memorization and ICT skills. From there, it can be concluded that female students took a more active role which resulted in practicing more areas of language and benefiting from LA in various areas of emergency remote education.

4.2.4.3. Research Question #4c: Is there a significant difference among learners in different ages in terms of their learner autonomy levels and perceptions in emergency distance education?

4.2.4.3.1. Quantitative Findings;

To discover the effects of ages on LA, a Pearson product-moment correlation was applied by the researcher and Table 4.21 reflects the results;

Table 4.21. *Pearson correlation test results between age and learner autonomy*

		Autonomy Score	Age
Autonomy Score	Pearson Correlation	1	-,158*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,034
	N	180	180
Age	Pearson Correlation	-,158*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,034	
	N	180	180

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

According to the table, age and LA have a statistically significant weak negative correlation ($r=-.158$, $p<.05$). From this finding, it can be inferred that as students get older, their autonomy decreases. This outcome is also consistent with the findings provided in Table 4.17 above, which display that LA tends to decrease as grade level rises.

4.2.4.3.2. Qualitative Findings;

In this study, the interviewees ranged in age from 11 to 14. All fifth graders are 11, sixth graders are 12, and eighth graders are thirteen. The 7th grade is the only grade where there is an age difference. One of the seventh graders is 14 years old. Despite this change, it was discovered that there was no appreciable difference in the cumulative frequency totals between the ages. As a result, the findings shown in Table 4.18 can be extrapolated to determine the answer to this query. The number of positive codes that emerged for LA decreased or increased depending on the grade level and age, as shown in that table. This result illustrates how learners in ERE view LA and how age affects engaging in autonomous behaviours.

As a further conclusion, it was found that a learner in 7th Grade, who is 14 years old, produced the same issue as students in 8th Grade, which is related to "fixed

programs". This learner is the only one who pointed out this obstacle except for 8th graders. The conclusion that follows from this finding is that as age increased, points perceived by learners became more similar even though they were not at the same grade level.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

5.1. Presentation

The purpose of this chapter is to go over the findings of the data analysis and discuss the findings extensively. In this chapter, the conclusions of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses are correlated, interpreted, and translated into educational implications for each research question by comparing the results with the body of published literature.

5.2. Discussion of the first research question

To discuss the findings of the first research question, both the numerical results obtained from the descriptive analysis and codes that emerged after the thematic analysis of verbal information are considered. In the first part of the research question which focuses on the determination of learner autonomy levels of secondary school learners in the process of emergency remote education, the mean scores of learners were taken into account. According to the results of the study, throughout taking English education from EIN and TRT EIN TV, secondary schoolers had more than moderate level of learner autonomy to manage their own learning processes.

These results are consistent with those of Bucak's (2021) study, which adapted the scale in the first place. That study revealed that high school students displayed higher than moderate level of autonomy in the same learning environment. These overlapping findings indicate that Turkish students participating in the ERE process were capable of acting autonomously in both of the aforementioned levels. In other

words, it can be suggested that the ERE process conducted mainly via EIN and TRT EIN TV in Turkey offered a learning environment that allows secondary and high school learners to perform autonomous behaviours. However, Arık's research (2021) shows that university students hold a different perspective. According to this paper, Turkish university learners had skeptical views on learning settings' efficacy on learner autonomy after the COVID-19 pandemic. This result may due to the variation among the provided learning environments. In that urgent situation, it was compulsory for all educational institutions to conduct educational activities from distance, however, it was not required to employ MoNE's methods or resources. In that regard, each university had maintained its own set of resources and teaching methods, which may limit the interpretation of results to the institution where the research was conducted.

Learner autonomy is a multidimensional concept and it involves defining instructional aims, identifying the subject matter, order, and methods of learning, keeping track of one's own progression, and carrying out self-evaluations (Holec, 1981). With this presumption, to increase the validity of the results about learner autonomy levels of secondary school learners possess in ERE, the entire English learning processes of students were examined in terms of different dimensions of learner autonomy including self-awareness, setting goals, and willingness to reach these goals, active participation, monitoring, and assessing the learning. Through a comparison of the findings with relevant literature, the salient points were highlighted. Besides, the codes that reflect secondary students' perceptions about learner autonomy in ERE were offered in association with the interpretation of numeric values.

According to Ghazali (2020), the autonomy of learners is reflected in the awareness, reliance, and control of learners over their own learning to accomplish learning objectives. In that study, the students' above-average performances on items 1, 7, and 12 illustrated their control over their progress in English learning, as well as their self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses. This is another finding that agrees with the results of Bucak (2021). Participants in both trials assumed responsibility for their English-language education in the event of an emergency. Erümit (2020) also arrived at a conclusion regarding how Turkish students attending K-12 schools generated responsibility for watching educational broadcasts and completing learning activities. This is not a surprising result that matches the outcomes of Akay et al. (2019), Dincer (2020), and Melvina et al. (2020) all of which assert that

technologically enabled learning environments allow students to become more accountable for their own education.

This conclusion was also corroborated by some of the codes that were disclosed with the qualitative data. The three most frequently cited advantages of learner autonomy were discovering new resources and methods of learning to address their weaknesses and defects and expanding their vocabulary knowledge. In times of crisis, all of the efforts made by students to identify their weaknesses and look for fresh approaches and instruments to conquer their lag serve as evidence of secondary school students' awareness and mastery of their English studies. Contrary to Hensley et al. (2022), which argue that learning environments and social commitment are essential for students to be motivated and capable of using self-regulated learning behaviors and solutions, the fundamental cause of this result appears to be the students' decreased social interaction with their teachers and classmates. Lien (2022) supports the idea by asserting that having less connection with classmates and instructors during pandemic crises could have a detrimental impact on students' participation in educational activities, actually boosting their autonomy. Considering the ERE procedure implemented in Turkey, it can be claimed that the fact that learners must quickly learn to use a new learning context and are isolated from the guidance of their peers and teachers has caused the students to feel pushed to take ownership of their own learning. It is also possible to come across studies that lend credence to this conclusion in the recent literature (Yiğit & Yıldırım 2018; Hebebci et al. 2020; Jili et al., 2021).

As well as self-awareness and control over learning, active participation is also essential for both the autonomy and accountability of a learner (Scharle & Szabó, 2000). When the means of items 3,5, and 13 were taken into consideration, the endeavors of learners to compensate for their deficiencies and efforts to enhance learning capacities may be inferred also as indicators of learners' active participation in the process. The three codes that emerged from the interview data also add legitimacy to that assumption: learning new vocabulary, improvement in language skills, and enhancing ICT capabilities. As argued by Goulão and Menedez (2015), by offering a variety of formats for students to choose from based on their learning preferences, online learning settings facilitate a more active role for students in the formulation of their learning. During times of pandemic, secondary school learners in Turkey faced online education for the first time and they had chances of achieving new learning sources suitable to their own learning needs. Additionally, it may be claimed

that due to the rise in time spent at home and the usage of technology students had the chance to be more engaged in their own learning. The findings of Karataş and Tuncer's (2020) investigation further substantiate this assertion. In their study, emergency remote learning conducted in Turkey was deemed to be effective for the language skills development of prospective EFL teachers by offering a setting free from time and stress, minimizing the cost, and enabling access to internet-based data and tools. In a similar vein, Eberle and Hobrecht (2021) remarked that as the house evolved into a learning environment, students had more time and comfort to participate in more in-depth learning activities, which in turn strengthened their autonomy.

On one hand, secondary school students' better self-awareness, control over their English learning trajectory, and active participation might signify their greater autonomy in monitoring abilities. Furthermore, the advantageous points referenced in the interviews mean that learners of that study generated a favorable perception of learner autonomy towards monitoring their own learning.

On the other hand, their slightly above performances in items 4, 6, and 8 disclose that students still have a reliance on their teachers in terms of planning and organizing learning activities including setting learning goals, organizing learning programs, and generating learning strategies suitable to their own needs. As faced in the literature, the underlying reason for this result may be the habits brought by the students from prior face-to-face learning experiences in which they tended to follow the provided programs and directions from their teachers rather than producing theirs (Mulyati, 2022), as well as the absence of the required knowledge and abilities (Melvina et al., 2020). According to Biwer et al. (2021) the capacity to coordinate one's schedule, work, and focus is vital for adjusting to new situations, but it is only possessed by upper-level students, and it is not a simple talent to acquire for the rest of the learners. Furthermore, LA might be difficult to grasp for students who are unfamiliar with independent learning techniques (Khan et al., 2020). Therefore, it appears to suggest that, the autonomy level of secondary learners' planning abilities was negatively impacted by the inclination to follow teacher-directed learning schedules and guidance, having a lower level of adjustability skills, and having insufficient experience in how to organize a learning process.

Two of the codes nurtured by interviewees also confirmed the allegation. According to respondents, receiving learning schedules offered by school counselors or instructors was safer and more familiar and they opted to administer those programs

instead of constructing their own. Secondly, under ERE settings, teachers did not support students in structuring their learning processes, which contributed to their poor self-confidence and prevented secondary schoolers from working independently. Based on the research, it is possible to conclude that lecturers had a detrimental influence on the autonomous behaviors of learners at the secondary level during the ERE. Correspondingly, in their studies, Muliyah et al. (2020) noted that one of the barriers preventing students from growing autonomy was teachers' incapacity to think of novel ways to promote LA. In the context of Turkey, Kaya and Uylas (2022) asserted that English teachers found themselves only moderately effective given unfavorable views in the emergency distance learning scenario. These consistent results prove the relevance of instructors to learner autonomy in consideration of distance education. And it is suggested by Irgatoğlu et al. (2022) that, teachers are in charge of elevating the modest level of learner autonomy of their students.

In a nutshell, data from the research shows that secondary school students scored somewhat better than average in terms of autonomy when it came to arranging and planning their learning. However, when the quantitative findings are taken into account, it is necessary to emphasize that their LA still needs to be stimulated in terms of organizational abilities. Additionally, two difficulties that students encountered demonstrate their unfavorable opinions of LA concerning organization skills, revealing the need to reevaluate the impact of teachers on LA in emergency learning conditions.

Autonomous learners are those who examine their learning in depth to discern their accomplishments and failures while also consciously choosing and implementing effective learning practices (Dickinson L. , 1993). However, in this study, items 9, 10, and 11, all of which are concerned with students' abilities to evaluate their own performance, yielded the lowest autonomy results. These unsatisfactory performances reflect that secondary school learners had reduced autonomy in assessing their learning during the ERE procedure applied after the COVID-19 pandemic. Examining the relevant literature reveals agreement with Bucak (2021) and Mulyati (2022) whose participants similarly were unable to engage in independent activities while evaluating their learning in that crisis learning environment. This outcome was unexpected given that Turkey's English language curriculum has been adhering to the CEFR's guiding principles since 2013 (Acar, 2018), which emphasizes the value of self-assessment along with learner autonomy. As discussed in the interviews, this might be related to

the lack of a self-assessment environment that includes learners in the evaluation procedures and gives immediate feedback. In a pertinent study by Kassem (2022), the efficacy of an integrated assessment system that offers instant feedback is proven in elevating college students' self-evaluation and autonomy. Alternatively, another explanation of this finding would be the utilization of pre-pandemic methods rather than the construction or adaptation of novel assessment techniques to be used during the pandemic. There are studies in current literature proving the need for modifying assessment procedures used for distant education systems (Rapanta et al., 2020; Giray, 2021; Koç, 2021; Balaman & Hanbay Tiryaki, 2021).

The fact that students' mean scores are the lowest and they struggle to find a learning environment where they may conduct self-assessments points to how little LA they have in the ERE procedure when it comes to evaluating their learning. This finding implies that the learning environment is one of the key elements in fostering learner autonomy in emergency situations. Specifically, this outcome suggests that to assess their learning in emergency conditions, learners need online learning settings where they can receive instant feedback from instructors or online resources and undertake self-evaluative assignments.

In essence, the numerical values corroborated by verbal data provide clear evidence that secondary school students had overall above-average learner autonomy throughout distance education in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak in Turkey. Nevertheless, it is also significant to note that, during that process, learners' autonomy performances have altered across dimensions of LA; moderately in planning, greater in monitoring, and insufficiently in assessment. This variation demonstrates that even if secondary schoolers appear to have a substantial degree of autonomy overall, both their autonomy and the environment for learning English in Turkey necessitate being enhanced to be ready for any potential emergency learning scenarios in the future.

For the second focus of the first research question, it can be stated that learners in secondary grades generated an overall positive perception of LA by being exposed to numerous benefits in their English progress during ERE. The most notable advantages that students experienced were heavily centered on the discovery of new techniques and online resources, therefore leading to an improvement in their language proficiency and vocabulary knowledge. Consistently, in the paper of Peñarrubia-Lozano et al. (2021) secondary school students regarded autonomy to be valuable in accessing various resources and arranging educational activities that specific times.

These findings confirmed the relationship between learner autonomy perception and online learning environments which were claimed that aid learners by providing various in- and extra-curricular educational activities (Tsai Y. R., 2019).

Albeit at a lower rate, enhancement in learner motivation (Dalilan, 2021), time organizational abilities (Peñarrubia-Lozano et al., 2021), and ICT skills (Dincer, 2020) are among the merits of learner autonomy faced by learners during the times of pandemic and that is aligned with the literature. Intriguingly, in the study of Karataş and Tuncer (2020), Turkish pre-service EFL teachers rated themselves as less-driven, negligent, inactive, and incompetent in technology. The reason behind this opposition could be the age and level differences among the participants of the studies. For novice learners, the ERE procedure is a chance to meet new learning facilities for the first time and because of being separated from teacher directions, they had to learn how to manage their time and learning activities, which in turn enhanced their desire and sense of responsibility. On the contrary, having access to a variety of facilities and having flexibility in the time and location of learning may have diverted upper-grade students' attention, and their lack of opportunities for social interaction with classmates and educators may have discouraged them from working autonomously. Confirming this, Hensley et al. (2022) ranked the same difficulties faced by undergraduates, and college students who dealt with comparable difficulties during pandemics were referred to as *"the overwhelmed"* and *"the surrenderers"* in the research of Biwer et al. (2021).

Results that are in line with other studies imply that learners involved in emergency distance learning experienced a multitude of advantages of learner autonomy, which led to the formation of favorable perceptions of LA. Consequently, in the global context, it is thought that ERE implementations aided the paradigm shift in teaching and learning (Seabra, et al., 2021) by stimulating learners to become more involved in learning through the use of digital resources and by diversifying the instructional strategies of teachers (Khan et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, it may also be deduced that the secondary school learners' perception of LA is not entirely positive based on the obstacles they highlighted. The two most prevalent barriers are instructors' inability to promote LA and the rigid learning programs offered by teachers or counselors. Following these, other concerns specified by respondents stress the inequality in opportunities and in relation to this, being technologically illiterate. It is not a surprising result in consideration of that study all of whose participants study at a state school and have below-average socio-

economical status. As mentioned in Kocar (2020), learners' autonomy can be affected by learners' socioeconomic variables including reaching advanced technology tools, genuine resources, and interactions with native speakers. Even though the Turkish ministry started providing technology aids sometime after ERE began, the majority of the respondents spoke of their difficulties with internet connectivity and digital equipment such as PCs, tablets, etc. Moreover, students bring complicated personal experiences to the classroom, some of which may entail inequities and availability problems lowering the optimal learning situations (Mollenkopf, et al., 2020). Accordingly, respondents reported that they had difficulty participating in all of the educational activities because of the lectures that conflicted with those of their siblings. Additionally, as homes transformed into the learning environment, learners encountered other distractors including background noise, lack of a study space, parental issues, etc (Kurt et al., 2022).

In addition to accessibility issues, learners' having poorer digital literacy is another barrier proposed by participants. According to interviewees, their limited digital literacy and ICT abilities prevented them from engaging in self-regulatory learning activities. This outcome corresponds with the body of related literature; due to a lack of understanding and expertise in online learning, both students (Xie & Yang, 2020) and teaching staff (Jili et al., 2021) experienced difficulties in acting autonomously.

In conclusion, despite experiencing a range of learner autonomy benefits when enrolled in online instruction in times of pandemic, secondary-grade students' perceptions weren't entirely favorable. In light of the themes brought up the most, it can be deduced that to maximize the gains and eliminate the hindrances towards learner autonomy, it is required to enhance learning environments, materials, technical base, and teacher approaches in an emergency online instructional setting.

5.3. Discussion of the second research question

Regarding a reasonable mean score and an equal number of codes in Table 4.9 illustrating inspiring and demotivating factors it might be argued that secondary school students experienced both motivating and demotivating forces during the ERE process, resulting in fair motivation. Based upon a roughly equivalent ratio, it can be inferred that learners' motivation improved in some instances while falling at other times. This outcome is rather comprehensible given that learners encountered a remote learning

condition for the first time, and that it is an emergency, which has influenced students' motivation and feelings in conjunction with broader societal shifts. In other words, increased levels of stress, worry, sadness, and intolerance for ambiguity may end up causing motivation and attendance levels to fall in distant learning settings (Göksu, et al. 2021). Furthermore, as substantiated in Pearson's correlational analysis, there is a prominent positive correlation between learners' motivation and learner autonomy. Given this, it might be maintained that learners' autonomy both grows and diminishes in tandem with their motivation. Therefore, it is quite clear that learner motivation has a strong impact on learner autonomy in ERE environments.

In the process of learning English as a foreign language, learner autonomy and motivation collaborate in a cycle (Spratt et al., 2002). The study's findings agree with those of the preceding papers when compared to the wide body of recent literature asserting that both autonomy and motivation influence each other in a cyclical manner. According to the recent study of Muliyah, et al. (2020), learner autonomy either has a direct impact on or might have an indirect impact on motivation for distance learners. In a different study looking at a fairly similar distance learning setting to the Turkish model, Simons et al. (2020) discovered the advantage of LA in boosting motivation while also proposing support and flexibility to foster learner autonomy and, in turn, improve motivation. Therefore, it may be extrapolated from the congruent research findings that learner autonomy and motivation are closely associated even in distance learning environments. There is additional research that can be come acrossed as well, all of which emphasize the connection between motivation and LA in predetermined learning conditions; (Güneş & Alagözlü, 2020; Khonamri et al., 2020; Pelikan, et al., 2021).

Despite not being the primary objective of the study, the factors that affected students' autonomy and motivation during the ERE process implemented immediately after the COVID-19 outbreak will be discussed below based on the results of interviews, in order to offer a strategy for prospective emergency learning circumstances.

Even though they appear to be very close in ratio, the proportion of drawbacks of ERE implementation is greater than the number of benefits. The absence of engagement with teachers and peers is the demotivating factor that is most frequently mentioned. It is understandable for students who previously attended classes with at least 20 or 25 individuals to lament the lack of interaction. Additionally, the desire for

instructor involvement and supervision is rather natural given that the study's participants were all learners between the ages of 11 and 14. Accordingly, a significant body of research in the literature emphasizes interaction issues as the largest challenge facing Turkish distant learning environments (Koç E. , 2020; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; Akçayoğlu & Dağgöl, 2021; Valizadeh & Soltanpour, 2021). In order to respond to that query, interaction variables that can improve motivation and enable the effective and successful operation of online courses for future remote learning instances must be taken into account (Göksu, et al., 2021).

The other frequently mentioned downside of remote education points to the technical issues which are determined basically as unstable internet connection, lack of technological devices, inadequate infrastructure, and in relation to these, lack of ICT skills of both teachers and students. It is possible to come across research confirming that technical problems lowered the motivation of learners during ERE following the COVID-19 pandemic (Beltekin & Kuyulu, 2020; Muslimin & Harintama, 2020; Demir & Demir, 2021; Manca & Delfino, 2021). In a learning environment where educational tasks are accomplished utilizing digital tools and an internet connection, learners losing motivation due to technological concerns is not an unexpected outcome. Therefore, it may be contended that, in addition to being interactive, ERE settings should also require upgraded technical infrastructure to boost student motivation. In respect to the two demotivating factors of the ERE setting stated above, Hebebci et al. (2020) present teachers' and students' thoughts of using live feed to alleviate interaction problems however it is observed that the technical glitches involving connectivity and infrastructure concerns combined with the enormous number of learners didn't allow to bring that notion to reality, which is quite similar to that study.

As parts of the ERE initiative, TRT EIN TV and EIN platforms were made available to students at all levels outside of the institution to execute all learning activities, including English. And depending on the codes that surfaced after analysis, it can be deduced that even at a lesser amount, they met specific issues with these learning environments itself, which drove demotivation and decreased autonomy. Shorter lecture periods, no demand for attendance, a lower attendance ratio, and troubles in classroom management are a few of these.

Due to the urgent situation, the government and institutions had to quickly develop learning platforms and broadcasts, which left several concerns unclear. One of them was the participation requirement. The program is insufficient, in the opinion

of the students, for keeping track of their absence. Because of this, most students exploited it as an excuse to skip class, which led to lessons being held with only a small group of students and in turn, demotivated learners. This theory is in agreement with the results of Göksu et al. (2021) who reported a favorable relationship between student motivation and enrollment frequency under ERE circumstances. Bertiz and Kocaman Karoğlu (2020) also lend credibility to the influence of the regularity of participation and how much time was devoted to virtual learning. In addition, the determinations of Güvercin et al. (2021) and Aytaç (2021) this dilemma as one of the flaws of the ERE environment offered in Turkey made the result applicable to the whole Turkish context.

The reduction in course length is another concern that has been identified as being similar to Aytaç (2021). According to comparable studies, secondary school students' interest may get diminished due to the limited opportunity they had to practice language structures during the class (Süğümlü, 2021) or because they were unable to ask all of their queries (Aydın, 2020). Confirmingly, in the study of Özüdoğru (2021), it is claimed that the time constraints presented by online courses posed a challenge for aspiring teachers to provide adequate feedback, engagement, and question-and-answer sessions. On the contrary, Türkan et al. (2020) noted that long lesson hours negatively affected pre-service teachers in presentation-based, non-interactive lessons. Therefore, it is very plausible to argue that course durations may be rearranged in response to interaction patterns and content of lessons.

Additionally, attendees separately described particular challenges pertaining to TRT EIN TV and EIN resources. Similar to Resnik and Dewaele (2021), students discussed the distractions they experienced during the live lessons. For learners, being at home meant that many factors, such as their siblings, family members, pets, or outside noise, frequently interfered with their education. The findings of Pregowska et al., (2021) as well outperform this result. That study found that a range of distractions, including digital ones like advertisements, more interesting websites or features, social networking platforms, and things in their immediate surroundings like home tasks, could divert distance learners from their studies. Regarding this, there are some studies in related literature that acknowledge the significance of parental support on the nurturing of learner motivation (Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; Demir & Demir, 2021).

From a different point of view, Erümit (2020) linked this issue to teachers' poor classroom management abilities in online classes. In relation, Sarıkaya (2021) cited

the case of how elementary school instructors' management problems are accompanied by their students' weaker motivation. Teachers' problems with management listed in Uysal (2021) from the eyes of elementary school teachers as the absence of eye contact, not having chances to provide instant and personal feedback, difficulties to differentiate lessons according to learner differences, lesser communication due to muting, distractors caused in the home environment and addressing learners' troubles. Many of the study's participants professed to have encountered the same types of in-class distractions, including chat boxes that were overused and students who wouldn't ever unmute themselves. In light of this, it can be asserted that managing virtual classes needed to be reconsidered by teachers for future ERE circumstances.

As for the lectures given by TRT EIN TV broadcasts on television, it was expressed that the TV lecturers' use of the target language as the only medium for instruction had a negative impact on learners' motivation. This default can be related to the background knowledge and habits of learners. Having to deal with such kind of teaching setting may be discouraging for students who don't participate completely in class in their target language or who lack the background knowledge essential to comprehend teachers' directions. Çalık and Altay (2021) also criticized the teaching methods utilized in live feeds in terms of not being appropriate to speech quality and variety along with the curiosity of learners, aims, format, and proportion of text and spacing. Furthermore, Erümit (2020) discovered that learners' motivation toward TRT EIN TV live streams dropped as a result of teachers' employment of unenhanced teaching strategies. According to the report, secondary and high school lectures on TV failed to live up to learners' demands of receiving engaging learning experiences aided by electronic content.

As a result, it might be recommended that in both of the education platforms teachers' and the features of learner settings' efficacy on learner motivation is very high. Consequently, for delivering better distance learning courses, it is crucial to think about the following; teachers' teaching methods, target language use, and administrative measures; technological capabilities of learning environments, interaction setting, and time allocation; parents' support for their children.

Based on the codes discovered in the analysis, it cannot be concluded that students only encountered demotivating forces during the ERE. In a similar vein, qualities that encourage them to pursue knowledge autonomously were also figured.

These themes are also covered in more detail below, incorporating research from the literature.

The most motivating factor of the learning setting provided in ERE is determined as the engaging resources utilized during synchronous lessons from the EIN platform. Güvercin et al. (2021) proposed that Turkey provided a multiplicity of massive media materials via TRT EIN TV and EIN online teaching organs in a very short period of time, confirming this as a resilience of the Turkish ERE setup. It is crucial for online learning environments to capture students' interest and inspire them, especially younger students. There are related researches that value the engaging feature of the EIN platform from their own participants' eyes (Aydın, 2020). In that study, it might also be maintained that the abundance of online resources gave students more occasions to be exposed to and practice English, which ultimately increased their motivation.

Aside from the learning expedients, as shown in the coding, students also met components of the remote learning environment that provide them flexibility, such as shorter courses, looser time constraints, and the comfort of learning at home. From the eyes of some learners, having a less rigid learning environment is more motivating to engage in learning activities. Ustabulut (2021) supported the idea by reporting that the flexibility offered to students is the most outstanding quality of Turkish distance learning.

In relation to reaching out to new possibilities and more comfortable learning situations, it is established from the motives learners identified that their self-confidence and indirectly, their autonomy increased in times ERE. Not being the only paper to draw this conclusion underlines the relationship between motivation and LA. In their studies, Tümen Akyıldız (2020), Evişen et al. (2020), and Süğümlü (2021) gave place to the merits of distance learning conditions on learners' generating more responsibility. Hence, it can be inferred that the learning environments in Turkey that were created with ERE in mind provided students with pleasant experiences that motivated them to learn, which in turn increased their self-confidence and in a broader sense, autonomy.

All things considered, it can be concluded that, during the ERE implementation in Turkey, students in secondary school encountered both positive (abundance of resources, boosted confidence, and comfortable learning) and detrimental characteristics (limited interaction, technical issues, classroom management) of the

new learning environment in terms of teacher behaviors and offered learning environments. As a result, they generated a middle amount of motivation. However, as calculated in numerical analysis, their motivation and learner autonomy positively correlated in a significant amount implying that in emergency distant learning circumstances, motivation has a major impact on LA.

5.4. Discussion of the third research question

The third question will also be discussed in a three-step format, beginning with a determination of the participants' level of DL, then a clarification of the relationship between DL and LA and how that affects the way LA is perceived, and finally a consultation of the factors that either increase or decrease DL and, consequently, LA.

According to the statistical results, participants in that study who were in secondary school scored slightly above average on the ERE for digital literacy. This result was corroborated by the verbal outcomes, which showed that the ratio between the positive and negative weighting of the codes on the points where students' DL is effective and ineffective is quite comparable. These findings indicate that Turkish students in that grade had sufficient digital literacy to carry out educational tasks remotely throughout times of emergency following the spread of COVID-19. This outcome may be attributed to the students' digital native status or the most recent technological advancements in the Turkish educational system. Consistently, the higher DL scores of Turkish learners in various degrees were calculated by Inan Karagul et al. (2021), and the reason is linked Turkish students' frequent daily use of ICT technologies. However, in the contrastive study of Hamutoglu et al. (2020), Turkish learners' DL values were computed to be lesser than those of other countries (Malta and the UK), specifically in terms of the cognitive requisite skills to be digitally literate. This discrepancy suggests that Turkish learners can exhibit moderate levels of digital literacy and thrive in a distance learning environment, but they still need to develop their ICT skills in order to keep up with the technologically advanced societies of today. At that point, it becomes clear that cultivating digitally literate individuals is advantageous for the process of digital transformation due to their productive, designer, solution-oriented, resilient, and versatile traits (Bal Cetinkaya et al. 2020).

Technology and autonomy are in an interactive, mutualistic process in which autonomy affects the way learners understand and locate technology in language acquisition, and technology affects how autonomy is implemented and progressed

(Lai, 2019). Considering this, for learners to execute and establish autonomy in a technology-based learning environment, possessing an adequate level of DL is significant. In light of this assumption, the correlation between DL and LA was studied, and both the qualitative and quantitative findings suggested that in an emergency online learning setting, DL and LA are moderately interrelated in a positive way. Furthermore, the reciprocal relationships among these variables uncover the effectiveness of DL both on the perception and application of LA. Consistently, while Demirbag and Bahcivan (2021) captures the relationship between DL and LA as well as the learners' epistemological beliefs, Istifci and Goksel (2022) unearthed a parallel emergence in self-regulation perceptions and the degree of DL. It is also possible to come across research in which LA promoted by increasing the DL of learners by utilizing self and peer-assessment techniques (Chekhratova et al., 2022) and online reading content (Pasaribu, 2020). These recurrent results emphasize the DL's unavoidable influence on how LA is perceived and practiced in online learning environments. Some studies sought to explicate this interplay by asserting that learners' LA rises parallel to their elevated DL while they are attempting to solve the issues they faced with technological tools (Ting, 2015; Alzieni, 2021) whereas Abida (2021) proclaims that students' LA is encouraged by the comfortable learning environments made possible by technology. Therefore, it can be suggested that optimizing learners' DL is necessary for any potential emergency distance learning conditions. To achieve this, it is necessary to offer an online learning atmosphere where students feel comfortable managing their learning and are encouraged to tackle problems they have confronted. Moreover, among 21st-century skills, problem-solving and critical thinking abilities must be developed after digital literacy (Karakoyun & Lindberg, 2020).

By comparing the findings with the available literature, the final proportion will discuss how learners thought that DL influenced their LA perceptions during the deployment of ERE. In interviews, secondary school students have posed both direct and indirect queries in order to grasp how the LA perceptions of secondary school learners were influenced by their DL. The proportion of students (%60) who express the benefits of DL on their understanding of LA matched the numerical data indicating an above-average level of DL. In that regard, it can be argued that, in parallel to their degree, DL positively impacted LA at an above-moderate level. That conclusion is further strengthened by the codes composed of the replies to implicit questions.

According to qualitative data, participants in that study were exposed to both the positive aspects and shortcomings of DL in times of ERE. With a close examination, the areas learners' found DL is beneficial can be summarised as; acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to attend and follow online courses, availability of extensive learning resources and supplementary materials, and having more time to spare learning. On the other hand, the points where students' felt lacking DL can be encapsulated; being inexperienced to utilize CMC software, complex structure and language use in online tools, and having inadequate skills to create digital content and solve technical issues. In a similar study, Mudra (2020) acknowledged the gains of DL as getting accustomed to authentic materials, enhancing four-language proficiency, and online affiliation between teachers-students and students-students. However, the barriers caused by DL were identified as the complicatedness of ICT tools and web platforms to recognize and produce autonomous products, the disparity between comprehension levels, and the unfamiliarity of both teachers and students. The commonalities between studies reflect that during ERE implementation learners had chances to interact with new technological education resources and improved their language abilities thanks o their mastery of ICT tools. However, according to Tejedor et al. (2020) teachers couldn't use digital materials because of limited experience and time to get prepared. Therefore, it could be argued that DL has tangible importance for performing autonomous actions at distance learning, but there is still a need to provide in-service training for teachers to improve their ICT skills and provide the necessary time for lesson planning.

Regarding the negatives of having a lesser amount of DL, also Inan Karagul et al. (2021) pointed to the hardships of responding to the changing learning strategies as well as the lack of necessary technologies. Being consistent with several more studies provides a reason to comment that joining and following lessons and fulfilling educational tasks are not easy to handle without the enhancement of ICT skills. For reaching the targeted DL levels and getting prepared for potential emergency learning occasions, it can be recommended that some precautions are demanded. These include providing sufficient governmental, parental, and peer support for both instructors and learners, allowing technology infrastructure to be easily accessible (Akbana et al., 2021), adopting a regular schedule including online activities and experiences of distance technology-enhanced learning (Shamir-Inbal & Blau, 2021).

5.5. Discussion of fourth research question

5.5.1. Discussion of research question #4a

In order to better understand the effects of grade level factors on the LA levels that were produced and the attitudes of secondary school students towards it, statistical and content-based analyses were carried out with this study in mind. The variance analysis revealed the differences in learners' LA levels between groups from the fifth to the eighth grade. Additionally, the number of points assigned to positive and negative aspects of LA was calculated to show how students perceived LA during the ERE. It was discovered that learners' positive opinions of LA reduced as the grade improved by comparing the number of the codes cited as favourable or undesirable by each grade. This consistency in both types of sources of evidence makes it abundantly clear that, during the ERE, secondary schoolers' levels and perspectives of LA varied depending on their grade level. This leads to the conclusion that learners in secondary schools' attitudes and behaviours regarding LA in ERE processes are influenced by their grade level. Delos Reyes and Torio (2021) also supports the idea that grade level has an impact on LA along with teacher-learner rapport. Similar in both research as grade levels rose, so did the level of LA.

However, there is a contradiction with the study of Yiğit & Yıldırım (2018) in which no variance couldn’t be found among 4 different levels of ELT students in terms of their ideas towards responsibility. This difference between the two studies may be the consequence of distinctions in both the participants' age distribution and the approach taken to the subject. All of the participants in this article are close to each other in terms of development levels and have similar perspectives on the subject as they are preparing to become teachers. Therefore, it makes sense that their opinions of LA were unaffected by their grade levels. In addition, students in that study discussed the LA in terms of who should be accountable for learning, and most of the students emphasized the shared responsibility with instructors.

Besides, it is also possible to find studies that address the topic from the standpoint of linguistic competence. Dafei (2007) assert that language proficiency and LA are positively related to each other and the level of proficiency can cause variations in the autonomy of learners. Given the relationship between grade level and proficiency, it can be postulated that these studies also support the impact of grade level on LA. On the other hand, Zarei and Zarei (2015) alleged that linguistic

knowledge has no bearing on learners' motivation or autonomy and the reason behind this may be the sociocultural differences in the educational systems of countries. Therefore, there is a need to consider educational settings to eliminate the reasons which cause the decline of learners' autonomy in higher grades. To reach that aim, creating teacher-supportive language learning environments is very essential. Support from teachers is a crucial component of learning (Yiğit & Yıldırım 2017) but despite Turkish prospective ELT teachers being aware of the significance of learners' taking responsibility for their learning, they do not feel ready to provide a learning environment in which learners are facilitated (Kartal & Balçıkanlı, 2019). In light of these, it can be inferred that in order to facilitate LA, future learning environments should be designed in a way that fosters autonomy, and teachers should receive on-the-job training in this regard. Additionally, it might be a good idea to inform teachers before they are hired about how they can support their students' autonomy even in higher grades, particularly in the context of emergency distance conditions.

One more finding from the content analysis was the relatively modest level of learner autonomy that eighth-graders had during ERE. Furthermore, it was also found that students in their final year of secondary school focused more on negative than on positive issues and brought up subjects that were not addressed by other groups. When these particular subjects (exam pressure and fixed programs) are taken into account, it is clear that the national high school entrance exams played a major role in how LA is perceived by 8th graders. Not having a background in independent learning and having a stronger inclination toward the instructors is quite reasonable in nations with product-oriented learning examinations (Basri, 2020). Nevertheless, by encouraging students to place more emphasis on the development process than the final product, educators can reduce the stress caused by exams (Doğan & Mirici, 2017).

In conclusion, it is undeniably true that grade level affects LA, which causes a gradual decline from early secondary school years to late secondary school years. This may be due to the pressure placed on eighth graders in the Turkish educational system to perform well on exams, as well as the teachers' dominance of this grade in terms of exam preparation. To change students' negative opinions of LA, autonomy-facilitator learning environments must be created, as well as teacher training that increases educators' readiness and encourages them to focus more on the process than the product. Given the ERE situation, it is especially crucial to prepare teachers in advance.

5.5.2. Discussion of research question #4b

Both quantitative and verbal results have been used to show the effects of gender on LA under ERE conditions. In the statistical analysis, the t-test results demonstrated that female students had higher levels of student autonomy than male students, and the table created as a result of the contextual analysis displayed that female student were more numerous than male learners in codes that reflect their favorable attitudes toward learner autonomy throughout the process. It is therefore possible to conclude that gender has an impact on secondary school students' LA perceptions and levels in ERE environments, with a favorable effect on female students.

Compared to related literature, it can be seen that this is not the only study uncovering that gender is a diversifying factor of learners' autonomy. However, when it comes to the direction of this difference, there is a disagreement in the literature on this issue. According to some studies, female students perform autonomous actions more than males (Alkan & Aslan, 2019; Istifci & Goksel, 2022), while the opposite is true for other studies (Cakici, 2017; Henri et al., 2018). In the context of this study, the reason behind this difference can be the imbalance in the proportion of participants of different genders. Due to the random sampling methodology used in the current study, there are more female participants than male participants. To eliminate this limitation, it is suggested to enlarge the number of participants as well as balance the gender variations for future studies.

From another perspective, this distinction may account for the Turkish culture's greater emphasis on holding female learners accountable for some daily tasks, such as household chores, from a young age and the preservation that women receive from their families (Alkan & Aslan, 2019). In contrast, Kırmızı and Kıraç (2018) reported that although there was no statistically significant gender difference in other subdimensions of LA, males appeared to place higher importance on self-direction preparedness than females. The first explanation is more appropriate for this study if we take into account the ages of the participant students. Further research on parent attitudes in this area may be useful for obtaining more accurate results.

Another factor might be the advancement of women's ICT skills. According to Erdem (2021), the most recent technological advancements have given women more access to technological devices and removed any barriers to their digital skill level.

Due to the fact that the study's participants are learners with few opportunities, this may be a discriminatory factor. Accordingly, it can be inferred that there is a need to investigate the differences between genders in terms of opportunities to access technological devices and infrastructure for distance learning settings.

In essence, consistency with the literature, regardless of which gender favors it, offers a foundation for the assertion that gender can discriminate in secondary school students' LA levels and perceptions. Some study limitations, such as an unbalanced sampling, a dearth of parental observations, and opportunity differences between learners, may have an impact on this finding. Future research is, therefore, necessary to remove these restrictions for evolving ERE conditions.

5.5.3. Discussion of research question #4c

In parallel to the findings of question 4a, this question also reached the same conclusion; when the age or grade level increases, the LA is getting decreased. The relationship between age and LA was stated by a Pearson-product moment correlation test. According to the results, there is a negative correlation between these two variables even in a tiny portion. Irrespective of the amount, this result confirmed the impact of age on secondary school students' LA proficiency.

Similar studies that asserted there was no statistically significant difference between the two variables and that student autonomy was unrelated to age were discovered when the literature for those studies was searched (Fotiadou et al. 2017; Alkan & Aslan, 2019). On the other hand, habit generation is emphasized in the studies of Doğan and Mirici (2017) and Kusumaningrum et al. (2020). These studies suggested that learner autonomy should be normalized and that early-life habits of this nature should be founded. If not, it becomes more difficult to change learners' ingrained behaviors. Therefore, it should be recommended that autonomy-facilitating activities be included in a variety of school levels to lessen the negative effects of age on LA (Alkan & Aslan, 2019).

In summary, in this study, it was concluded that age has a negative effect, albeit at a low level, on secondary school students' development of autonomous behaviors and their perceptions of LA. In accordance with the pertinent literature, to prevent this deteriorating effect brought on by aging, it was recommended to use activities that encourage learners' autonomy from the very beginning of language acquisition.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1.Presentation

This chapter's goal is to give a comprehensive overview of the study, including a reevaluation of the entire project, the research findings, and interpretations. In that specific part of the paper, supplementary topics related to implications resulting from the research's findings, limitations of the study, and in line with, suggestions for future studies are wrapped.

6.2. Summary of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore the learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy of students participating in emergency remote education, as well as the associations between these factors, demographic factors, and learner autonomy in that specific learning context. The data was collected and analyzed using a quantitative research methodology to describe these values. Additionally, it is intended to gain a thorough understanding of how learners perceive their own learner autonomy and how emergency situations, motivation, and digital literacy affect those perceptions. For the sake of portraying learner perceptions, this study also makes use of semi-structured interviews, as qualitative data collection and analysis techniques.

Participants of this study are students in Mustafa Necati secondary school across all grade levels. The reason behind choosing this school is three-fold. At first, it was acknowledged that there is a gap in the body of literature regarding studies examining learner autonomy in the context of ERE with learners at this level. Secondly, this school is found in the suburban part of Gaziantep province all of which learners have some financial constraints. The researcher conducted this study with that particular group of students based on the hypothesis that, in a distant learning context

where all educational activities take place via electronic devices and an internet connection, economic capabilities may have an impact on autonomous behaviors, being motivated, and higher digital capabilities. Regarding this, it is anticipated that the findings of this study will pave the way for the necessary arrangements to provide equality in terms of economic opportunities among students for potential emergency learning scenarios that may arise in the future. The third sensible reason for this sampling stems from the researcher's employment at the school, which facilitates interactions with students, the collection of survey data, and the observation of students in real-world learning situations. For selecting the learners to participate, the convenience sampling method was employed due to the compelling conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In line with the research aims, 3 scales (LAS, MS, and DLS) for each research variable (learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy) were transformed into an e-form and delivered to participants via Whatsapp and social media applications. 180 secondary school learners from various grades completed the scales in 3 weeks. Moreover, for gathering more detailed knowledge of learners' ideas regarding all of the variables, an interview guide was designed by the researcher and after the implementation of scales, 10 learners were requested to take part in face-to-face semistructured interviews. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interview, the researcher had the chance of modifying questions according to the course of the interview. Even though the length of each interview varies according to how the content is altered, the interviews were completed in a total of two weeks.

At the beginning of the analysis procedure, the descriptives for each scale, including mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values, were computed using statistical analysis via SPSS 25.0 software. The level of the learners for each variable was determined by looking at the mean scores, and the minimum and maximum degrees of learners. Based on these findings, it is concluded that secondary school students had above-average levels of learner autonomy and digital literacy, while their motivation was at a moderate level. Besides, the frequency statistics gleaned from LAS provided a chance to pinpoint the intervals at which learners excelled and failed at taking autonomous actions. According to the frequencies, the study's participants were good at identifying their strengths and weaknesses, coming up with their own learning strategies, and keeping track of their progress; however,

they struggled to work independently when it came to preparing for and evaluating their learning without assistance or guidance.

The themes and codes that surfaced during content analysis supported these numerical results. When the answers of interviewees were reviewed, two main themes emerged in roughly equal amounts; positive effects of learner autonomy and barriers in front of learner autonomy. Nevertheless, among the two, advantages were mentioned more frequently than disadvantages, which is in line with learners' slightly above-average autonomy performance. Another conclusion that can be drawn from this result is although learners faced some barriers in ERE that restrict them to learn English autonomously, they confronted beneficial aspects more than the negatives, which led them to generate an overall positive perception toward the learner autonomy concept. When the most frequent themes under the main categories were examined, it was uncovered that learners mostly benefited from LA in terms of discovering new ways of learning resources and learning strategies which in turn encouraged them to improve in language skills and vocabulary development. On the other hand, the points about teacher ineffectiveness and lack of technical opportunities were highlighted as the biggest obstacles in front of LA. Additionally, the codes formed from learners' suggestions were in parallel with the points they could manage to perform autonomously and they didn't. The codes 'exploring new learning sources', 'discovering new ways of learning', and 'learning new vocabulary' mirror the strategies they engendered for their own learning while the codes 'fixed programs to follow' and 'lack of context for self-assessment' are consistent with a lack of sufficient autonomy in planning and evaluating learning. When compared to related literature, it was assumed that learners' habits, such as a higher reliance on teacher instructions and problems with adaptation—it is particularly challenging for young learners to adapt to new situations—were to bear responsibility for their inconsistent performance on various LA dimensions.

To test the influences of motivation and digital literacy on learner autonomy, Pearson correlation tests were exploited and it was found that there is a significantly positive correlation between LA and motivation, whereas LA and digital literacy are only moderately correlated with one another. These results implied that, despite their modest effects, both motivation and digital literacy have an impact on students' autonomy. Given the review of the literature, this conclusion is not unusual. There is a substantial body of literature that features the interactive relationship of LA with both

motivation (Spratt et al., 2002; Güneş & Alagözlü, 2020; Khonamri et al., 2020; Pelikan, et al., 2021) and digital literacy (Lai, 2019; Demirbag & Bahcivan, 2021; Istifci & Goksel, 2022) in various learning environments.

With the help of qualitative findings, the way how motivation and digital literacy affected the learners' LA was determined. The recurring themes showed that both of these factors have both positive and negative influences on LA. A closer examination of the emerging codes, however, showed that secondary school students encountered more demotivating factors than motivating ones during ERE. On the other hand, the advantages of the DL on LA were cited as being greater than the disadvantages. As a result of this discovery, the researcher posited that DL positively affects LA in emergency learning situations while motivation has negative impacts on LA.

Qualitative results also uncovered the most motivating factors of ERE, which are mainly focused on the richness of learning resources, increase in self-confidence, and comfortable learning atmosphere. Another implication that can be drawn from qualitative findings is the points to reconsider before employing any other emergency distance education setting. These issues point to limitations on interaction patterns, technical infrastructure, and classroom management skills of instructors. While touching the same points as the literature increases the reliability of the study, it also revealed that distance education programs set up for emergencies should be reorganized in terms of teacher behaviors, learning environments, and technical tools. On this account, it is thought that this study contributed to the body of literature on the subject.

The study also bears the same responsibility for reflecting on and prompting authorities to reconsider the constructive (acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to participate in and follow online courses, being able to access a wealth of additional learning resources, and having more time to devote to learning) and deleterious (lack of experience with CMC software, complex language and structure used in online tools, and insufficient ability to create digital content) points.

For reaching the last goal of the study which centers on the query of the effects of demographic variables (determined as grade level, gender, and age for this study) on learner autonomy, respectively, one-way ANOVA, sample t-tests, and Pearson Correlation tests were utilized on the SPSS 25.0 system and provided 3 significant outcomes for each demographic factor. One, there is a statistically significant

difference in learners' performance across grade levels. Additionally, the LSD post hoc test indicates that this difference is in the 5th graders' favor. To put it another way, students who are getting close to the end of their secondary education are more likely to produce fewer LA. Exam pressure and teacher dominance on eighth graders were found to be the main factors when the causes of this decrease were inspected using interview data. This result was also substantiated by previously published research.

Two, there is a significant variance in generated autonomy levels of learners in terms of gender. The numerical findings showed that female students had more LA than male students. The assertion that women are superior in LA is compatible with the relevant literature on this subject (Alkan & Aslan, 2019; Istifci & Goksel, 2022). Even so, it's also possible to run into research that suggests otherwise (Cakici, 2017; Henri et al., 2018). Regrettably, it is likely that the imbalance in the sampling, which included more female students than male, may have had an impact on this result.

Three, a statistically weak negative correlation exists between age and LA, indicating that as students get older, their autonomy tends to decline. In relation to this, it has been discovered that some studies have proposed habit generation (Doğan & Mirici, 2017; Kusumaningrum et al., 2020), recommending that autonomy should be encouraged from the early stages of learning for learners to yield autonomous learning habits, as it becomes more challenging to alter learners' deeply embedded behaviors.

All in all, the results of this study are valuable in terms of portraying the learner autonomy experiences of secondary school learners who are limited in terms of socio-economical opportunities during emergency remote education. With the assumption that learner autonomy is a requirement for both being a life-long learner and surviving in distance education contexts, this study provided significant insights into the perceptions of learners toward LA. Considering the factors that may have an influence on learners' LA, this study proved that motivation, digital literacy, grade level, gender, and age have a significant impact on learner autonomy under emergency distance learning conditions. For potential future emergency learning conditions, it provides implications about the learning atmosphere of distance education settings, technological opportunities, governmental supports, and teacher behaviors and approaches. It is believed that the reflections of this study are worth revising before planning potential future emergency learning conditions.

6.3.Conclusion

Due to the rise of technology, language learning has broadened the scope of language learning as a lifelong skill by enabling students to engage in extracurricular activities, have access to more language resources, and complete exercises outside of class. This method of teaching languages subsequently gave rise to a completely new kind of education known as distance learning, which lowers the barriers to learning a language from anywhere and at any time. However, as suggested by Tsai (2019), language learning requires consistent exertion, the majority of which takes place outside of the classroom setting, as is the case with learning any new skill. Because of this, while learning a language through distance education offers a more comfortable learning environment by eliminating time and space restrictions, it also places new learning roles and responsibilities on learners which made learner autonomy a prominent concept in educational sciences.

Since the very first studies, learner autonomy has been defined from a variety of perspectives and in a wide range of educational contexts. Recent trends, however, have emphasized the significance of developing autonomous learners who can use cutting-edge technological tools and resources in accordance with their own learning needs and have positioned LA as a prerequisite for being a distant learner (Benson, 2007; Reinders & White, 2016). As a result, many researchers have since examined learner autonomy in the context of online education.

However, ERE, a novel form of distance learning, was developed in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and this circumstance opened up a new gap in the body of knowledge regarding learner autonomy. Believing that emergency learning contexts where learners had to perform learning activities on their own with limited interaction and direction from instructors would be the most suitable setting to explore students' autonomous actions and perceptions of LA, this study was carried out in the emergency distance learning context. By examining the English learning actions of a specific group of learners, it was intended to explore how learners yield learner autonomy to manage their own education under emergency learning and how their perceptions of LA have been impacted by this crisis learning setting. It was recognized that the secondary school level has the largest gap in the literature on school levels and because the developmental stages of students at this level are crucial for the formation of long-term learning behaviors the participant group for this study was made up of secondary school students. Focusing on a specific group of students whose socioeconomic classes

are below the national average and who have few opportunities to pursue distance education, this study contributes to the existing literature by illuminating the effects of the process on that learners.

According to Boyadzhieva (2016), the primary factor influencing learner autonomy in an ideal teaching and learning environment is learner motivation. The intensity of other studies in the literature proving the relationship between motivation and learner autonomy in various learning contexts (Ushioda, 1996; Alkan & Aslan, 2019; Khonamri, et al. 2020; Pelikan, et al., 2021; Okumus, 2021), and the existing gaps in the literature about examining this topic in that new form of learning led the researcher to include the investigation of the association between the two. What's more, studies demonstrating the implications of ICT use on the degree and perceptions of learner autonomy have been found (Ting, 2015; Lai, 2019; Demirbag & Bahcivan, 2021), similar to those by Firat (2016), which prompted the researcher to broaden the scope of the study to include the impact of DL on learner autonomy. This study also responds to the question of whether student perceptions of LA levels can be influenced by demographic factors like age, gender, and grade level.

In light of both statistical and content-based analysis, this study came to notable congruent findings with the literature. It was initially discovered that secondary school students' level of learner autonomy during ERE was slightly above average, reflecting both their awareness of that concept and the fact that they still required additional encouragement to keep their levels up. Specifically, their need of acquiring planning and evaluating skills became apparent as a result of the qualitative analysis of this study. Having consistent results with some other studies carried out in the same learning context like Bucak (2021), confirmed the efficacy of the emergency remote education conditions offered in Turkey following the coronavirus pandemic. Another congruence with the study, though, showed Turkish students' incapacity to assess their learning, which can be pertained to the teachers’ and educational designs’ incapacity of fostering learners to evaluate themselves. And additional causes may include the learners' ingrained dependencies on teachers and their lower self-esteem, which inhibits them from designing and assessing their own progress.

In order to optimize emergency learning environments, it is assumed that information on how motivated and computer-literate secondary school students were during ERE administers a valuable implication. According to the findings of this recent research, during ERE, learners had an above-average level of digital literacy while

their motivation stayed at moderate levels. The background causes of these levels were clarified through qualitative analysis and it has been discovered that limited interaction is the biggest demotivator for secondary school students. For learners who used to attend crowded classes and directly communicate with teachers for any reason made this result was quite understandable. The interaction issue that emerged in Turkish ERE conditions was given a place in several studies (Koç E., 2020; Günbaş & Gözüküçük, 2020; Akçayoğlu & Dağgöl, 2021; Valizadeh & Soltanpour, 2021) highlighting the need for reconsidering the applications and websites used in online lessons in Turkey. Additionally, the inadequate technological foundations for conducting educational facilities on online platforms were spotlighted as the second most frequently resolute demotivating feature. It was discovered that this is a fairly typical issue for the majority of nations around the world, especially for developing nations, not just the Turkish ERE context. Some additional issues that were found to lower student motivation and were consistent with other studies carried out in Turkey are; insufficient lesson durations, lower attendance ratios, and classroom management problems that arose during live lessons like loud noise, learner dominance, and overuse of chatboxes. These findings, especially in light of the Turkish educational system, are anticipated to be crucial for prospective emergency education plans.

The findings for digital literacy divulged that while learners who had higher-than-average levels of proficiency prospered from a variety of learning assets, took online courses, and had more time to spare for study, they still had room for improvement in using CMC software and creating digital content. It is also suggested that learners' ability to engage in autonomous behaviors during distance learning was hampered by the complex structure and language usage of online tools. As a result, this study serves as a reference for educational authorities to assist students in improving their ICT skills as well as their language development, two of the most fundamental human skills for the next generation.

Another insightful outcome of this study is the significant positive correlations found to exist between LA and motivation and digital literacy. The data analysis indicates that learners' autonomy increases in tandem with an increment in motivation or DL under the circumstances of emergency remote learning. The exact alignment of this result with the literature signifies that, despite varying degrees, the influence of motivation and digital literacy variables on learner autonomy persists irrespective of the learning environment and academic level.

Likewise, the repercussions of certain demographic factors, such as age, gender, and grade level, on students' autonomy, were also exposed in that study. Similar to existing literature, it was unearthed that LA levels and perceptions derived toward autonomy are biased against women. In other words, female secondary school learners had greater autonomy and better control of their own English learning throughout emergency remote education. However, it must be remembered that the study's participant group is predominately female, which could have a consequence on the study results.

One intriguing finding of this study is that, contrary to expectations, learner autonomy of students who are supposed to become more aware of their responsibilities as they get older and move through the grades, actually reduces. Numerical values showed that fifth-grade learners, who are the youngest and in the lowest grade level among participants, yielded the highest autonomy scores whereas the eighth graders had the lowest means. As a result of semi-structured interviews with 8th graders, the reason was distinguished as the fixed curricula offered by school counselors or teachers, exam pressure, and teacher dominance in higher grades to prepare learners for national exams.

Overall, this research study provided valuable insights into the recent emergency distance education experiences of secondary school learners in terms of learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy. By determining both the positive and negative aspects of the ERE setting that learners perceived, the study went beyond calculating the levels and correlations between each variable and identifying the reasons behind these scores. Furthermore, this study provided crucial references for contemplating the variations brought on by demographic factors such as gender, grade level, and age of the students.

6.4. Implications

This study portrayed the experiences of secondary school students with learner autonomy and its associated variables, primarily motivation and digital literacy, during the emergency remote education that took place after the COVID-19 outbreak. Because this educational setting is brand-new for educational and social sciences, it is believed that this study is useful for reviewing the process and getting prepared for future learning events with regard to the aforementioned language learning notions, their relationships with learner autonomy, and the effects of demographic factors on

autonomous learning. In order to contribute to related literature, the pedagogical implications of this study are introduced in the subsequent paragraphs.

First of all, this study explored that during ERE, secondary school learners' autonomy was slightly above average. In accordance with studies conducted with participants from different school levels like primary and high-school implicated that the Turkish ERE setting provided an appropriate learning setting for learners to perform autonomous learning actions. On the other hand, variations among the sub-dimensions of learner autonomy indicated that despite they have an adequate level of learner autonomy, students still need to be improved in terms of planning and organizing, and assessing their learning. In that case, it might be argued that students ought to receive instruction in learning planning strategies, be made aware of assessment is a necessary component of learning, and be taught how to assess their own educational progress. Therefore, for fostering the autonomy of learners in other dimensions, there is a need to enhance instructor strategies and advance the learning environment where students may adopt planning techniques and conduct self-evaluations. Furthermore, endorsing the teachers' capacities to foster student autonomy in that particular environment while taking into account the new requirements of students, such as excessive stress and anxiety, might well be advantageous.

Secondly, to eliminate the autonomy differences between age and class levels and to prevent the decrease in autonomy as age and class levels increase, learners should be encouraged to generate autonomous learning habits from the very beginning of their education life. Early encouragement of the creation of autonomous learning routines helps learners become aware of their learning requirements and prepare for exams through independent planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Another requirement for teachers is to create comfortable spaces for learners to test their manageable abilities. It can be implied that even in the eighth grade, teachers should lessen their control over students in order to provide opportunities for their learners to oversight their learning. In addition, based on the theory that gender differences could be the result of social roles attained by different genders, it may be suggested that to reduce gender bias in learner autonomy and foster male learners' sense of responsibility, various educational tasks should be assigned to male learners both inside and outside of the classroom.

Given the strong positive correlations found by LA between motivation and digital literacy, fostering students' autonomy will also require that learners become

more motivated and digitally literate. As a result, it may be suggested to revisit the demotivating elements as well as the issues that prevented learners from acting independently due to their limited digital literacy. For boosting motivation and digital literacy, both the educational resources used for following lessons online and the management issues of teachers should be reviewed. To address the interaction issue, the websites (EIN) or applications (Zoom, Google Classroom, etc.) used for online lessons should be expanded in scope by including features that enable students to work with peers or in groups. To raise the interaction between teachers-students, there may be additional lessons for each learner to communicate and receive guidance from the teacher. For providing equity across learners from varying socio-economical backgrounds and better online courses without interruptions, in addition to the distribution of technological devices, technical insfranstruce, internet connection and speed should be improved all over the country. To increase digital literacy levels, learners should have the opportunity of experiencing CMC tools and software in adequate amounts for internalizing the common language structures used in online sources. Furthermore, the scope of ICT lessons should be enlarged to spare time for practicing online content construction.

6.5. Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to some limitations in terms of sampling and application. In order to provide a more consistent interpretation of the results and to direct future research, these factors are discussed here.

This study was conducted in the emergency learning condition which refers to a period when social restrictions and school closures were occurring nationwide. That situation limited the sampling of this study in two ways. First, the method for determining participants was affected by that crisis situation leading the researcher to utilize the convenience sampling method which emphasizes choosing participants who are the most convenient for the researcher without having any criteria. Second, the participant pool of the study was constrained because of that crisis situation. For accessing participants without breaking social distancing rules, scales for gathering data about the autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy of learners, were transformed into electronic format and sent via social media platforms. At that point, accessing students' contact information and convincing them to participate took too much time

and resulted in a lesser amount of participant number as well as an imbalance across demographic variables.

6.6. Suggestions for Further Research

For handling the problems with sampling techniques and larger sample sizes, purposive sampling methods can be used in further studies to improve the generalizability and representativeness of the findings. Additionally, it is advised to ensure normal participant distribution when examining the relationship between the gender variable and LA in order to avoid any potential for gender bias in the study results and to arrive at more precise and reliable findings.

As a research design, contrastive methodologies might produce more tenable outcomes for illustrating the effects of socioeconomic backgrounds.

Lastly, that study was designed to explore learner autonomy, motivation, and digital literacy of secondary school learners in emergency remote education settings provided in Turkey. Due to its uniqueness, it is unclear whether these results are context-specific or generalizable to other ERE conditions. We could learn more about these through further investigations conducted in various emergency remote education settings.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Learner Autonomy Scale (LAS)

1.This scale includes 2 sections. Please fill the first part according to your personal information.

Grade:

Gender:

Age:

2.This section consists of 13 items related to learner autonomy. After carefully reading each question, please tick the box next to the most appropriate option among the options given considering the EIN live lesson in distance education and the English lesson given through TRT EIN TV Secondary School.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I have regularly watched each week's lecture broadcast on EIN.					
2. While watching the lectures, I took notes on the subject.					
3. I asked my lesson teacher about the parts of the lessons that I could not understand.					
4. I applied my own learning strategies while watching the lessons.					
5. While watching the lectures, I watched the re-videos of the subjects I did not understand well.					
6. I applied my own learning strategies while watching the lessons.					
7. I associated the subjects taught in the lessons with the exercises given /solved by our teacher.					
8. During the learning process, I compared the structure / rules of English with the structure / rules of the language I speak.					
9. I kept a record of my work in order to be able to make an evaluation of my later learning process.					
10. I tested myself with questions I chose.					

11. I rewarded myself when I made progress.					
12. During this period, I realized my strengths and weaknesses in my English learning.					
13. I tried to learn the meaning of the English word I saw anywhere later					

Appendix B: Motivation Scale (MS)

This section consists of 19 items related to learner motivation. After carefully reading each question, please tick the box next to the most appropriate one among the options given considering the EIN live course and the English course given through TRT EIN TV Secondary School in distance education.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I enjoy learning the English course given over TRT EIN TV.					
2. I like to listen to English songs in English lessons given through EIN Live Lesson and TRT EIN TV.					
3. I like watching movies in English outside of Distance Education times.					
4. It makes me happy to be able to make sentences in English during the EIN Live Lesson during the distance education process.					
5. I try to speak English on any subject to improve my English speaking skills when alone, beyond during distance education times. (In front of a mirror or recording my voice, etc.)					
6. I am also interested in English beyond distance education times.					
7. I am interested in English-related things I see beyond Distance Education times.					
8. I wish we had more English lessons in the Distance Education program.					
9. I think I'm doing my best to learn English.					
10. I believe I have a talent for learning English.					
11. I want to improve my language skills in a country whose native language is English.					
12. I love learning the values and traditions					

of other countries where English is spoken as a mother tongue.					
13. I think that the information I gained in English lessons through EIN Live Lesson and TRT EIN TV will be useful for me in the future.					
14. I am ready to make enough effort to learn English in the distance education process.					
15. In the distance education process, I try to learn English only to pass the lesson.					
16. I find English boring during the Distance Education process.					
17. I feel nervous and confused when trying to speak English with my friends and teacher during the EIN Live Lesson.					
18. I do not do anything to ensure that the information I have learned in English lessons through EIN Live Lesson and TRT EIN TV is permanent.					
19. I prefer not to deal with English unless it is required as part of the Distance Education Process.					

Appendix C: Digital Literacy Scale (DLS)

This section consists of 10 items related to digital literacy. After reading each question carefully, please tick the box next to the most appropriate option among the options given considering the EIN Live Course and the English course given through TRT EIN TV Secondary School in distance education.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Idea	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I know how to solve technical problems I encounter with the technologies I use.					
2. I can learn new technologies easily.					
3. I follow new developments in technologies.					
4. I am familiar with many different technologies					
5. I have the technical skills needed to use information and communication technologies for learning purposes and to develop digital teaching materials (for example: presentations, digital stories, wikis, blogs) in which I can showcase what I have learned.					
6. I have sufficient in information and communication technologies skills.					
7. I am confident in my searches and evaluations to obtain information on the Internet.					
8. I'm familiar with issues concerning internet activities such as cyber security, web search, and internet forgery.					
9. Information and communication technologies allow me to better collaborate with my peers on working on a project and other learning activities.					
10. In my studies at school, I often cooperate with my friends over the Internet (for example: Zoom, Facebook, Blogs, etc.).					

Appendix D: Interview Guide

a) Learner autonomy

1- Were you able to follow the English lessons in the distance education process?

2- During the distance education process, have you done any work related to the English lesson, apart from the lessons given by your teacher and the TRT EIN TV English lessons?

3- Did your teacher direct you to extracurricular activities during the distance education process?

4- Are there any extracurricular activities, research, studies or practices that you do with your own desire, other than the guidance of your teacher? Which ones?

5- Did you prepare your English study program in distance education?

6- Were you able to follow your own program during this process? How?

7- Have you evaluated your own learning during the distance education process? How? Have you administered yourself a test or exam?

b) Motivation

1- Did you like the online and TRT EIN TV English lessons given in distance education?

2- How did online classes affect your motivation? Has your desire to attend classes increased or decreased?

3- Would you like the lessons to be done online again?

c) Digital Literacy

1- Were you able to use information and communication technologies in the distance education process? Do you consider yourself sufficient in this regard?

2- Have these skills contributed to your learning English in the distance education process? How?

Appendix E: Gaziantep University Social and Humanities Ethics Committee Meeting Report (Related Section)

Meeting No: 15

Meeting Date: 13.12.2021

Meeting Time: 11.00

Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsünün 21.10.2021 tarih, 103553 sayılı ve "Bilimsel ve Eğitim Amaçlı (Büşra KIRTIK)" konulu yazısı incelenmiş olup, Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi tezli yüksek lisans programı öğrencisi Büşra KIRTIK'ın, "Ortaokul İngilizce Öğrencilerinin Acil Uzaktan Eğitimde Öğrenci Özerkliğine İlişkin Algıları" konulu araştırma çalışmasının, Üniversitemiz Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurulunca değerlendirilmesi istenmektedir. Kurula yapılan başvuru; çalışmanın amacı, yöntemi, veri kaynakları ve veri toplama araçları açısından değerlendirilmiştir. Kurulumuza beyan edilen belgelere dayalı olarak yapılan incelemeler sonucunda başvuruya ilişkin etik aykırılık tespit edilmemiş olup, adı geçen öğrencinin söz konusu araştırma çalışmasını yapabilmesinin uygun görülmesine;

Appendix F: Ministry of National Education Research, Competition and Social Activity Board Committee Report

T.C.
GAZİANTEP VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : E-34659092-605.01-42657302 03/02/2022
Konu : Araştırma İzin Talebi
(Büşra KIRTIK)

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi: Gaziantep Üniversitesi Rektörlüğünün 04.01.2022 tarihli ve 132913 sayılı yazısı.

Gaziantep Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Ana Bilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı Öğrencilerinden Büşra KIRTIK'ın " Ortaokul İngilizce Öğrencilerinin Acil Uzaktan Eğitimde Öğrenci Özerkliğine İlişkin Algıları" konulu anket uygulama isteği kapsamında, İlimiz Şahinbey ilçesinde bulunan Mustafa Necati Ortaokulunda öğrenim gören öğrencilere yönelik araştırma çalışma isteği, ilgi yazıda belirtilmektedir.

Bu kapsamda bahsi geçen anket uygulama isteği, Bakanlığımız Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 21.01.2020 tarihli ve 2020/2 sayılı genelgesi kapsamında değerlendirilmiş olup; araştırmacının, araştırmasının bitiminden itibaren 15 gün içerisinde araştırma sonuçlarını 2 kopya halinde CD içerisinde Müdürlüğümüze bildirmesi şartıyla, İlimiz Şahinbey ilçesinde bulunan Mustafa Necati Ortaokulunda öğrenim gören öğrencilere yönelik anket uygulama isteğinin, eğitim öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde gönüllülük esasına göre uygulanması Müdürlüğümüz Ar-Ge bürosu bünyesinde oluşturulan komisyonun uygunluk raporu doğrultusunda uygun mütalaa edilmektedir.

Makamınızca da uygun görüldüğü takdirde; Olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Yasin TEPE
İl Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
Nihat KARABİBER
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

CURRICULUM VITAE

Having completed her primary, secondary, and high school education in Balıkesir, Büşra Kırtık graduated from Uludag University English Language Teaching Department in 2018 by receiving the highest degree in the ELT department and the third-highest degree in the faculty of education. During his university years, she participated in numerous scientific studies and workshops during her time in college. Since then, she has diligently followed industry advancements in an effort to enhance her teaching abilities. In this regard, she enrolled in the ELT MA program at Gaziantep University in 2019, and he received the ministry of education's designations of "project coordinator" and "teacher mentor" following a series of seminars and webinars in 2021.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Büşra Kırtık, ilk, orta, ve lise öğrenimini Balıkesirde tamamladıktan sonra 2018 yılında Uludağ Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünden İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünde en yüksek, eğitim fakültesinde üçüncülük derecesini alarak mezun oldu. Üniversite yıllarında, üniversitede geçirdiği süre boyunca çok sayıda bilimsel çalışmaya ve çalıştaylara katıldı. O zamandan beri, öğretme becerilerini geliştirmek için bilimsel gelişmeleri özenle takip ediyor. Bu bağlamda 2019 yılında Gaziantep Üniversitesi ELT Yüksek Lisans programına kaydoldu ve 2021 yılında bir dizi seminer ve webinar sonrasında Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından kendisine “proje koordinatörü” ve “mentor öğretmen” ünvanlarını verildi.