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**INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN
DISTANCE EDUCATION AT A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT**

THESIS BY

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MASTER OF ARTS

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DEDICATION



To My Beloved Son

Demir Kalyoncu

ETHICS DECLARATION

Name & Surname: Gamze Kalyoncu

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Department: English Language Education

Program: Master Thesis (X) Ph. D. Thesis ()

Thesis Title: Investigating Students' Perceptions of Learner Autonomy in Distance Education at a University Context

I hereby declare that;

I prepared this master thesis in accordance with Çağ University Institute of Social Sciences Thesis Writing Directive, I prepared this thesis within the framework of academic and ethics rules, I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with scientific ethical and moral principles, I cited all sources to which I made reference in my thesis, The work of art in this thesis is original.

I hereby acknowledge all possible loss of rights in case of a contrary circumstance (in case of any circumstance contradicting with my declaration).

05/01/2022

Gamze KALYONCU

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Finally, I can be the luckiest person in the whole world to have my son, Demir. There are no words to express my love to you. Thank you for being the meaning of my life.

ABSTRACT**INVESTIGATING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNER AUTONOMY IN
DISTANCE EDUCATION AT A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT****Gamze KALYONCU****Master's Thesis, Department of English Language Education****Supervisor: Dr. Senem ZAIMOĞLU****January 2022, 91 pages**

This study was conducted to explore university students' perceptions of learner autonomy in distance education. The study also investigates the effects of students' demographic features on their perceptions and the students' suggestions for fostering learner autonomy in distance education. In this regard, the study was conducted with 120 preparatory school students of a private university in Mersin, Turkey. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used in the study. In this mixed research design, the data was collected through Learner Autonomy in Distance Education (LADE) Questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The collected quantitative data were analysed using SPSS software and supported by qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interviews through pattern coding.

Key words: learner autonomy, independent learning, self-directed learning, student-centred education, out-of-class learning, distance education.

ÖZ**UZAKTAN EĞİTİMDE ÜNİVERSİTE BAĞLAMINDA ÖĞRENCİLERİN ÖĞRENCİ
ÖZERKLİĞİ ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ****Gamze KALYONCU****Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı****Tez Danışman: Dr. Senem ZAIMOĞLU****Ocak 2022, 91 Sayfa**

Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin uzaktan eğitimde öğrenci özerkliğine ilişkin algılarını araştırmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Bu çalışma ayrıca öğrencilerin demografik özelliklerinin algıları üzerindeki etkisini ve öğrencilerin uzaktan eğitimde öğrenci özerkliğini geliştirmeye yönelik önerilerini araştırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda araştırma Mersin ilinde bulunan bir vakıf üniversitesinin 120 hazırlık okulu öğrencisi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışmada hem nitel hem de nicel araştırma metodolojileri kullanılmıştır. Bu karma araştırma yönteminde veriler Uzaktan Eğitimde Öğrenci Özerkliği (LADE) Anketi ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. Toplanan nicel veriler SPSS yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiş ve örüntü kodlaması yoluyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerin nitel analizi ile desteklenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: öğrenci özerkliği, bağımsız öğrenme, kendi kendine öğrenme, öğrenci merkezli eğitim, sınıf dışı öğrenme, uzaktan eğitim.

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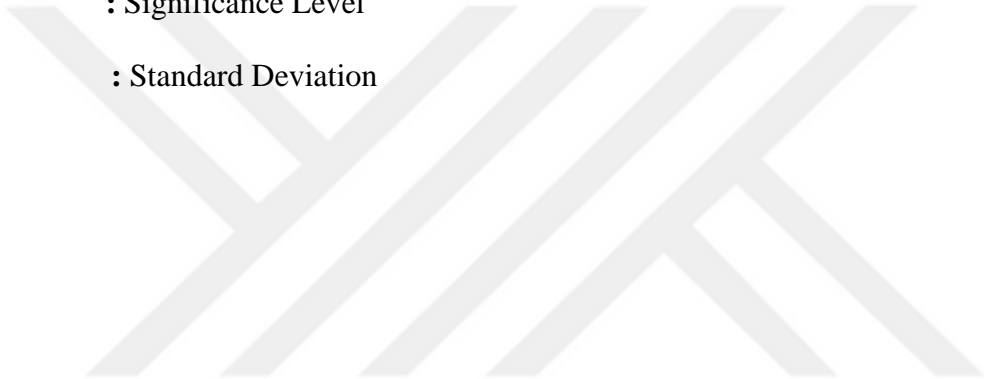
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ABBREVIATIONS

ELT	: English Language Teaching
LADE	: Learner Autonomy in Distance Education
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ANOVA	: Analysis of Variance
N	: Sample Size
F	: Frequency
M	: Mean
P	: Significance Level
SD	: Standard Deviation



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CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Learning a new language requires a long time. Learners should discover how to keep learning continuous also out of class as depending solely on in-class learning managed by teachers is not enough for improvement in second language learning. As Richards (2015) states, learning a new language depends on two crucial things: the things happening in the classroom and the things happening outside the classroom walls. When learners are autonomous, they find the most appropriate methods to improve themselves outside the classroom walls. Thus, an important area of emphasis in second language learning has been the issue of learner autonomy for the past many years. For this reason, in the period of globalization, numerous nations have defined up crucial academic objectives to advance student independence in language learning. One of these objectives is to create language learning environments which are highly different from the past. For example, in the past, teacher-centred classrooms were popular whereas teachers of today usually attempt to create student-centred classrooms because when the students are in the centre of the learning process, it becomes easier for them to learn a new language as they become “a partner in learning, not a passive recipient...” (DfES, 2004, p.4). This shift from old-fashioned classrooms to modern education style has led the students to be life-long learners as they have started to be in the centre of their learning process and they are not “passive” listeners anymore but active participants (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Therefore, learners need to become autonomous and be the director of their learning process so that they can improve themselves better in their own learning style.

1.2. Problem Statement

Even though the idea of autonomy in learning is a contemporary issue that attracts many researchers (e.g. Inözü, 2011; Morrison, 2011; Noguchi & McCarthy, 2010; Teng, 2019), there is

frequently an absence of agreement about precisely what autonomy implies and what affects it (Chi, 2009). Researchers have been trying to find the ways to foster learner autonomy by asking questions about self-study, individualism, independence in learning and self-directed learning. These questions have increased the understanding of the processes and the problems that have been faced. With the help of them, the issue of self-directed learning will continue to be improved throughout upcoming years. In addition, distance education has been gaining more importance these days due to the Covid-19 pandemic all around the world. This means that learners have to take more responsibilities of their language learning process, which increases the importance of learner autonomy in distance education. This pandemic has proved that like face-to-face education, distance education is also effective, so it is probable that distance education will be in our lives to some extent even when this disease leaves the world. However, the number of the students who lead their learning process on their own successfully is not satisfying according to the teachers especially in online education. This number should be increased and students should become more autonomous with the help of the teachers who guide them because as Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) highlight, learners who describe themselves autonomous engage more in their learning processes. When the learning process is under their control, they mostly feel more powerful to manage it.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of learners on being autonomous in distance education. Also, this study aims to explore whether their demographic information (age, gender, high school type, and academic department) makes difference on these perceptions. With these aims, this study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of students on being autonomous in distance education?
2. How are these perceptions affected by the demographic information of the students such as age, gender, high school type and academic department in the university?

3. What are the ways to foster learner autonomy in distance education according to the students?

1.4. Significance of the Study

As a matter of first importance, this study will give language instructors direct quantitative-qualitative information of learners' views on autonomy at universities in online education so that they can customize the materials, curriculum or activities accordingly. This study will also be beneficial for the field of ELT because with the help of this study, the perceptions of the learners on learner autonomy in distance education will be discovered thanks to the perceptions of the learners included in the research. Some researchers carried out studies to explore autonomy of university students in language learning (Tan & Zhang, 2015; Xu, 2014; Yao & Li, 2017), but the number of the research aiming to discover students' perceptions of autonomy in distance education is scarce. Thus, this study attempts to raise awareness on this issue by looking at autonomy from the learners' perspective this time as autonomy is mostly associated with teachers rather than learners in related research. This study explores some qualities of the learners as well: It examines whether the sample learners have study skills, research skills, critical thinking, clear goals, proficiency, self-discipline and motivation and whether their teachers have knowledge or sense of learner autonomy, experience, positive attitude, motivation, willingness, toleration, flexibility and creativity to foster learner autonomy in distance education. As Richards (2005) indicates, the education both inside and outside the classroom walls is of valuable importance.

1.5. Review of Literature

1.5.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with different definitions of learner autonomy according to some scholars. Then it mentions several important aspects of learner autonomy and its importance in distance education. After that, the influence of teachers on autonomy and ways to foster it are identified before the summary of whole chapter.

1.5.2. Definition of Autonomy in Language Learning

Although learner autonomy in language learning is a substantial topic in the field of ELT, different researchers have identified it in diverse words. Gardner and Miller (1999) express that there is not a unity in the identification of learner autonomy on the grounds that “First, different writers have defined the concepts in different ways. Second, there are areas of ongoing debate... Third, these concepts have developed independently in different geographical areas and therefore they have been defined using different (but often similar) terminology” (p.5).

Learner autonomy is firstly introduced by Henri Holec (1981, p.3) as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”. Since then, many researchers have attempted to identify it and find ways to foster it. According to a more detailed explanation provided by Dam et al. (1990), autonomy is, “... a readiness to take charge of one’s own learning in the service of one’s needs and purposes... a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others ...” (Dam et al., 1990, p. 102). Also, Little (1991) have some worthy words on the definition of learner autonomy. He identifies autonomy as “essentially a matter of the learner’s psychological relation to the process and content of learning---a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action” (p.4). In addition, Morrison (2011) highlights the importance of teacher support and expresses that learner autonomy should “not be a solitary experience but rather one in which the learner, in conjunction with relevant others, can make the decision necessary to meet the learner’s needs” (p. 31). Thus, while Holec (1981) and Dam (1990) paid attention on the necessity of learners’ will and ability, Little (1991) highlights the psychological perspective and Morrison (2011) gives importance to teacher support.

Notwithstanding there are many different definitions of autonomy, a few of which explained above, they include many common features. For instance, they all support that learners’ will is of great importance. In addition, mostly they are aware of the fact that without teachers’ counsel, autonomy in language learning cannot be successful in full capacity.

1.5.3. Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

There are some distinct aspects of autonomous learners which differentiate them from dependent learners. First of all, autonomous learners mostly know how to benefit from a bunch of materials, manage their time, enjoy learning and have self-evaluation ability (Noguchi & McCarthy, 2010). They might know about the upcoming stage in the learning process when they settle on a choice and be eagerly occupied with an activity since they are actually dynamic and they make their own decisions. Also, they might participate in self-clarification to choose what data to get to as they do not merely depend on the information given by the teachers in the classroom. Autonomous learners might also accumulate information that explicitly tests a theory they have as a primary concern, prompting an exclusively useful learning experience. In addition, autonomous learners are able to plan and manage their learning process and they are responsible for their academic success. (Cotterall, 2000; Sanprasert, 2009). They decide the flow of their learning process in all ways. And with the help of these characteristics, they may succeed better at language learning. To put it in Noguchi and McCarthy's words, learners who are capable of managing their learning process may eventually become better language learners, more independent learners and write effective learning plans for self-study. (Noguchi & McCarthy, 2010)

1.5.4. Learner in the Centre

Autonomous learners are in need of fostering their capacity to engage with, communicate with, and get advantage from learning conditions which are not straightforwardly directed by an educator because autonomy puts learner in the centre of the learning process rather than the teacher. Inözü (2011) points out that, "... language learning is a process of learning how to communicate and learner, rather than the teacher, is at the centre of teaching and learning process" (p.523).

Autonomous learners are the main components of the learning cycle. For this reason, they should be self-sufficient and they ought to have insights into their learning strategies and adopt a functioning strategy, take risks whenever needed, complete homework on time and place

significance on accuracy (Thanasoulas, 2000). They ought to set their own targets and follow appropriate techniques without help from anyone else to accomplish them. They should find the methods and tactics that suit them best to maximize the efficiency of studying (Nunan, 1997; Sheerin, 1997). They also have to actively participate in learning, take charge of self-planning, self-management, self-reflection and self-evaluation (Teng, 2019). Learner autonomy requests student inclusion and such inclusion might prompt a more profound and better learning. This active inclusion of the learners in arranging, checking and assessment processes that can be created through socially intervened learning measures is the approach which should be internalized for fostering learner autonomy (Little, cited in Benson, 2007). When the learners are involved in these processes, they may turn out to be more cognizant about their own interior development of the learning objectives and through that, they additionally foster an expanded ability to screen, assess and deal with their learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). In addition, Moreover, they generally be more willing to learn when they take part in learning processes such as defining learning goals, deciding on a learning sequence, choosing a workable pacing of learning activities, and selecting learning resources, (Hrimech & Bouchard, 1998). The responsibility regarding the own learning goes connected at the hip with the ability to consider the interaction of learning with the end goal of bringing them quite far under cognizant control (Lee & Choi, 2010). At the point when learners become aware of how they take part in learning, they are more likely to address the techniques and strategies for information obtaining (Abrami et al., 2011). They can turn out to be more sure about the execution of different errands and functions (Taylor, 2001). Thus, the more learners become autonomous, the more they may become proficient and successful in language learning.

1.5.5. Ways to Improve Autonomy

There are many things that affect the process of fostering learner autonomy. We can imagine autonomous learning as a continuum, permitting us to see students' improvement towards self-sufficiency in terms of degree (Everhard, 2018). One of the things having influence on fostering

autonomy is demographic information of the learners. Their gender, nationality, school types as private or state and so on may have some impact on their autonomy. Teachers often consider the background of the learners as a setback in advancing of self-directed learning according to Palfreyman (2003). Moreover, setting goals is one of the most important aspects of being autonomous. Learners who can set reachable goals and try their bests to achieve them are the ones who are successful at autonomy. Locke (1996) claims that setting reachable goals is efficient when it is done with the will of the learners. When the goals are set with will and logic at the same time, the possibility of achieving them naturally increases (Macaro, 2008). In addition, the advancement of autonomy in language learning could be acknowledged through different teaching and learning strategies in which learners have more freedom to participate in the dynamic cycle. Yet as a conclusion, even though the conditions are ideal for fostering autonomy in learners, it is the learners who should want to grab it as forcing the students is not the best solution. Harmer (2011) says some words on this issue:

“The fact is that in the words of an old English proverb, you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make it drink. And if it does not want or need to drink, you should not make it do so anyway. Some students, like horses at water’s edge, just don’t get it; for them the teacher is the one who is responsible for their learning, and they expect the teacher to do their job. Faced with the reluctance of at least some of the students in a group to assume agency, we have to consider what we can do both for those students and for others in the group who are keener on the idea of taking learner responsibility” (Harmer, 2011, p. 23).

1.5.6. The Significance of Teacher Support

Autonomy puts learners in the very centre of language learning process; however, it does not mean that learners do not need teachers in the learning process at all. Instead, a cooperation between learners and teachers is essential to help learners gain autonomy (Little, 1995). Railton and Watson (2005) highlight the importance of teacher supervision while fostering learner autonomy.

Likewise, on this issue Yan (2010) claims that without teachers' counsel and guides, the whole process will result in low proficiency or even fall into disorder. Tutors should help learners become autonomous as it does not happen easily on its own. Autonomy is not an intrinsic ability but learners could acquire it with the guidance of teachers. Thus, autonomy does not require learning in isolation, rather it is in need of teacher's support (Esch, 1997). Also, learner autonomy does not mean that they do not need any support from the teachers (Moore, 1997, 2007). It should not be neglected that teachers' support is one of the most important aspects of the ways to become autonomous as highlighted by many other researchers (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Fanariti & Spanaka, 2010; Murphy, 2007; Santos & Camara, 2010; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). On this issue, Cárdenas Ramos (2016) states that the collaboration and support of the teachers are needed to gain autonomy. Therefore, teachers ought to be aware of the fact that learners should be encouraged and supported by them to become autonomous (Po-ying, 2007).

There are countless things that teachers could do to create an environment which supports autonomy. First of all, teachers should not neglect the fact that autonomy is portrayed by enhancing or broadening student decision, focusing on the necessities and decisions of individual students, not the interests of an educator or an organization. Thus, they need to understand the students' needs notwithstanding they are in online education setups and environments (White, 2005). They ought to know about how to settle on reasonable decisions of online tools in order to be towards their points and their learners' specific needs (O'Dowd, 2007). They should also arrange their own objectives according to the students' objectives and step by step prepare and lead students to become autonomous in their own investigations. In planning the learning environment that may foster autonomy, teachers might utilize the advantages of technology as one of education expertise that is crucial in 21st century. For example, in order to help the learners become autonomous, teachers should create an autonomy-friendly environment (Vygotsky, 1991). Moreover, teachers should observe closely what is occurring and make suitable changes (Benson, 2001). Kassandrinou, Angelaki, and Mavroidis (2014) additionally focuses on the teachers' fundamental job as

correspondence and connection facilitators, since they should ceaselessly cultivate, energize and work with association and correspondence among learners to foster learner autonomy. Finally, leading the learners to deal with their learning techniques and customize their metacognitive procedures to make progress in the assignment is of incredible importance. Therefore, teachers ought to advance ‘the goodwill and cooperation of their students’ in order to decrease the burden on their shoulders and increase the autonomy of their learners (Silver, 2010).

1.5.7. Autonomy in Distance Education

In distance education which identifies students as their very own information constructor, autonomy acquires specific importance. The optional instructive mediation offered in distance education energizes students towards autonomy in language learning (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Furnborough, 2012; Lionarakis, 2005; Race, 1999). Especially in online education rather than face-to-face one, learners are more responsible of their own learning process because it provides the learners with flexibility related to time and place, permitting a superior administration that suits their requirements in studying. Hagel and Shaw (2006) argue that “[s]tudents studying off-campus need to take more responsibility for their own learning” (p.285). Likewise, Goulão (2014) highlights that in distance education, learners need to have a more active role in their own learning process. Borges (2007) also states that good digital students “have a proactive attitude and are autonomous insofar as is possible, they display initiative in their learning and in their performance during the course” (p.5). Moreover, autonomous learning in distance education can allude to a unique situation or setting for language mastering whereby students foster abilities in the target language mostly on their own. In order to accomplish their academic objectives, learners in distance education need to have a more noteworthy self-discipline and self-guideline (Bol & Garner, 2011). Therefore, distance education improves students' openness to new logical inquiry approach to control their learning till arriving at the designated accomplishment. To put it in Mercer's (2009) words: “Effective learners are aware of themselves as active agents capable of exercising agency

through various strategies to actively shape their learning experiences as well as their motivational responses” (Bown 2009 as cited in Mercer).

All in all, autonomy assists the learners with profound deduction and assumes responsibility for the learning cycle (Dam, 2018). If the learners are thought as plants and the learning environment as soil, it can be observed that not all of them grow in the same speed. Rather than moving them to another place, a teacher can enrich the soil by some techniques to foster autonomy according to Allwright (1988). Becoming autonomous takes time but when it happens, it will be a life-long helper.



CHAPTER II

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Introduction

In this part of the study, the methodological approach of this research in general terms is elaborately described with the subheadings named the research design, the participants and the context, the instruments, data collection, data analysis and reliability.

2.2. Research Design

This study aims to find out the perceptions of university preparatory school students on learner autonomy in distance education. Moreover, it also has the purpose of investigating the effects of their demographic information on these perceptions and the students' ideas on how to foster autonomy in an online learning environment. In accordance with these purposes, the present study conducted both a qualitative and quantitative research. Each research method has its own advantages and this study intends to benefit from both of them.

2.3. Participants and Context

This study was conducted in Mersin, Turkey in the spring term of 2020-2021 academic year. It included the students who study in the School of Foreign Languages at a private university. The School of Foreign Languages in this private university provides education which lasts for a year for some programs such as translation and interpreting, electrical and electronics engineering, industrial engineering, civil engineering, software engineering, business administration, psychology, international finance and banking, and international trade and logistics. Even if their departments were different, they had to take the proficiency exam at the end of the academic year in order to start having lessons in their own departments.

In this research, convenience sampling method was used and the participants were chosen according to their availability and willingness. In accordance with the sampling method, 120

students who were studying in the preparatory school took part in the research. Every participant who took part in the questionnaire was provided with a consent form for the questionnaire (Appendix A) to declare their willingness to participate in the study. In addition, the participants who took part in the interview were given both a consent form (Appendix C) and a study information sheet (Appendix D) to be informed about the process and the study in general. The participants took part in the research voluntarily. They were guaranteed that their names and personal information would be kept confidential and their answers would only be used for research purposes.

Table 1.

Demographic Features of the Participants

		N	%
High School Type	Private	76	63.3
	State	44	36.7
Age	18-19	59	49.1
	20-21	43	35.8
	22-23	18	15.1
Gender	Male	45	37.5
	Female	75	62.5
Academic Department	Translation and Interpreting	14	11.6
	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	12	10
	Industrial Engineering	14	11.6
	Civil Engineering	11	9.1
	Software Engineering	16	13.3
	Business Administration	15	12.5
	Psychology	16	13.3
	International Finance and Banking	12	10
	International Trade and Logistics	10	8.3

2.4. Instruments

In this research both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to gather information about the topic being analysed. Each method has its own advantages and this study aims to combine them and get the best possible results. Quantitative research method has structured but limited results showing us that beliefs are dynamic and subject to change (Ritzau, 2014). On the other hand, qualitative research method may have deeper insight and wider information circle using the motto of “human-as-instrument”. Duff (2002) states that qualitative research method highlights the search for relevant, lifelike, integrated comprehension and translations of phenomena that are displayed in specific settings. Also, Kumar (2011) indicates that quantitative research method is preferred to investigate the approaches and interactions of a settled set of distinctive variables. Thus, in this study, it is expected to benefit from each research method and for this reason, they are used being combined.

2.4.1. Learner Autonomy in Distance Education (LADE) Questionnaire

The quantitative data was gathered via a 32-item Likert-scale type instrument with the expectation of finding answers to the first and second research questions of this study. The questionnaire questions were prepared as a Google Form. The questionnaire was sent online to 120 preparatory school students of a private university. This questionnaire designed by Xu, Wu, and Peng (2004) was adapted by the researcher to measure these students’ perceptions on learner autonomy in distance education (Appendix B). It consists of 5 parts asking 5 to 10 questions. While the first part deals with teacher’s aims and requirements, the second part concentrates on establishing goals and plans. The third part seeks answers for the implementation of learning strategies and the fourth part deals with the ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies. The final part includes questions on general evaluation of English learning process. The participants were expected to rate every item from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

2.4.2. Semi-Structured Interview

In addition to the quantitative data gathered via the questionnaire, a tool was needed to gather qualitative information about present topic. For this reason, the qualitative data was gathered from 10 preparatory school students of the same private university. The interviews were conducted online via Zoom. The interviews were in English as it was nearly the end of the preparatory school year, so they were able to answer the questions in English. The aim of conducting these interviews was to find answers to the third research question of this study. All of the students (n=10) attended the interviews voluntarily. Before the interviews took place, the interviewees were provided with a consent form (Appendix C) and a study information sheet (Appendix D). Structured interview method was used in this study and an interview guide was followed so as to order the questions which were prepared beforehand (Appendix E). The interviews took place in an online environment because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Each of the interview took approximately 15 minutes. With the students' permission, the interviews were audio recorded. Also, throughout the interviews, some notes of the gestures and mimics of the interviewees were noted down as they could reveal more information about the feelings and thoughts of the interviewees. On the same day that the interviews took place, they were transcribed immediately so that any detail would not be forgotten. While transcribing the data, codes and categories were created in order that anyone can easily have a general insight about the study. The codes and categories were written down in a table when the results were ready to be analysed.

2.5. Data Collection

Before institutional permissions, an oral permission was obtained from the administrator of the School of Foreign Languages. Also, the students were informed about the questionnaire and the interview to give them some time to think whether to take part or not. The permission (Appendix F) and the approval (Appendix G) from university ethics committee of Cağ University for applying the questionnaire and the interview was obtained at the beginning of June. The data was collected in

June and July before the semester ends. The aim of the study was clear to all of the participants. After the permission of the committees and the participants, the questionnaire was sent to these participants online. For the interviews, meeting time appropriate both for the participant and the researcher was decided. The researcher applied the interview to the participants online via Zoom because of Covid-19 pandemic.

2.6. Data Analysis

For the quantitative research, the questionnaire results were added to Statistical Package for the Social Science programme. In order to discover the perceptions of the learners on autonomy in distance education and the effects of their demographic features on these perceptions, the researcher benefitted from the descriptive statistics. In addition, ANOVA and t-test were used so that the effects of the demographic features on the students' perceptions on autonomy in distance education could be discovered. The data was normally distributed.

For the qualitative research, each interview was transcribed on the same day it was applied. Codes and categories were created to uncover common answers. These answers were gathered under themes in order to analyse the perceptions of these students on learner autonomy in distance education.

2.7. Reliability

The Cronbach Alpha's coefficient was calculated for the questionnaire by other researchers. The values which range from 0.84 to 0.87 indicate that there is strong internal consistency reliability (Honggang, 2008). In order to enhance the analysis, questions asking demographic background were added to the questionnaire and different variables of the demographic features were analysed. After the questionnaire was conducted, Cronbach Alpha's value was calculated again and it was 0.74 in this study.

CHAPTER III

3. FINDINGS

3.1. Introduction

In relation to the research questions, this chapter has the objective of showing the analysis of the data gathered with the help of two instruments: LADE (Learner Autonomy in Distance Education) questionnaire and structured interview. Both of the instruments aimed gathering information of students' perceptions on learner autonomy in distance education. Besides, LADE attempted to get demographic features of the students so that the researcher could analyse their effects on the students' perceptions.

3.2. The Perceptions of Students on Being Autonomous in Distance Education

The first step of this research is to examine the perceptions of students on being autonomous in distance education with the help of related questionnaire items. The tables given below were designed in order to demonstrate the data gathered from 120 preparatory school students.

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics of the Learner Autonomy Subscales

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements	120	3,83	0,74
Evaluation of establishing studying goals and plans	120	3,74	0,77
Evaluation of the learning strategies implementation	120	3,76	0,74
Evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies	120	3,81	0,68
Evaluation of English learning process	120	3,75	0,70
Overall	120	3,77	0,62

The participants' level of learner autonomy is analysed within the framework of the first research question. In table 2, the learner autonomy subscale mean scores are given. According to Table 2, the results indicated that participants' evaluation of teacher's aims and requirements ($m=3.83$, $sd=0.74$) and the ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies ($m=3.81$ $sd=0.68$) are higher compared to other areas. Also, according to the results shown in Table 2, participants' evaluation of studying goals and plans ($m=3.74$, $sd=0.77$) and the English learning process ($m=3.75$, $sd=0.70$) are lower compared to other areas. Moreover, results showed that participants had a moderate/high level of learner autonomy.

Table 3.

Descriptive Results of Evaluation of English Teacher's Aims and Requirements

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
1. I clearly understand the teacher's aims.	<i>f</i>	9	13	21	50	27	3,6	1,16
	<i>%</i>	7,5	10,8	17,5	41,7	22,5	1	
2. It is easy for me to make the teacher's goals my own goals.	<i>f</i>	2	7	26	52	33	3,8	0,93
	<i>%</i>	1,7	5,8	21,7	43,3	27,5	9	
3. I clearly understand the importance of making the teacher's goals my own, as well as studying hard to achieve those goals.	<i>f</i>	4	7	22	47	40	3,9	1,02
	<i>%</i>	3,3	5,8	18,3	39,2	33,3	3	
4. I clearly understand the teacher's intention during in-class learning activities.	<i>f</i>	3	9	15	55	38	3,9	0,98
	<i>%</i>	2,5	7,5	12,5	45,8	31,7	7	
5. In class, it is easy for me to keep up with the teacher's pace.	<i>f</i>	7	9	24	51	29	3,7	1,09
	<i>%</i>	5,8	7,5	20,0	42,5	24,2	2	

In Table 3, items related to the evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements and its results are given. For example, according to Table 3, Item 4, "I clearly understand the teacher's intention during in-class learning activities" ($m=3.97$, $sd=0.98$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. Besides, Item 1, "I clearly understand the teacher's aims" ($m=3.61$, $sd=1.16$), had the lowest mean score compared to others. Thus, results illustrated that every item in the evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements subscale had a 3.00 or higher mean score and indicated that participants had a moderate/high level of evaluating English teacher's aims and requirements.

Table 4.

Descriptive Results of Evaluation of Establishing Study Goals and Plans

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
1. Outside of assignments given by the teacher, I have a clear plan for studying on my own.	<i>f</i>	11	8	25	48	28	3,6	1,18
	<i>%</i>	9,2	6,7	20,8	40,0	23,3	2	
2. When studying English, I establish practical goals for myself based on my true English level.	<i>f</i>	8	9	23	49	31	3,7	1,13
	<i>%</i>	6,7	7,5	19,2	40,8	25,8	2	
3. I am good at adjusting my studying plans based on my progress.	<i>f</i>	2	6	38	49	25	3,7	0,90
	<i>%</i>	1,7	5,0	31,7	40,8	20,8	4	
4. I am good at creating a practical studying schedule for myself.	<i>f</i>	4	4	34	50	28	3,7	0,95
	<i>%</i>	3,3	3,3	28,3	41,7	23,3	8	
5. I am good at establishing study goals based on the requirements outlined by the class.	<i>f</i>	2	7	28	53	30	3,8	0,92
	<i>%</i>	1,7	5,8	23,3	44,2	25,0	5	

Table 4 shows items related to the evaluation of establishing study goals and plans and its results. For example, according to Table 4, Item 5, "I am good at establishing study goals based on the requirements outlined by the class" ($m=3.85$, $sd=0.92$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. Besides, Item 1, "Outside of assignments given by the teacher, I have a clear plan for studying on my own." ($m=3.62$, $sd=1.18$), had the lowest mean score compared to others. Thus, results illustrated that every item in the evaluation of establishing study goals and plans subscale had a 3.00 or higher mean score and indicated that participants had a moderate/high level of evaluating establishing study goals and plans.

Table 5.

Descriptive Results of Evaluation of Learning Strategies Implementation

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
1. I have a complete understanding of the learning strategy.	<i>f</i>	7	15	30	41	27	3,5	1,14
	<i>%</i>	5,8	15,5	25,0	34,2	22,5	5	
2. I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my listening comprehension.	<i>f</i>	3	6	29	49	33	3,8	0,93
	<i>%</i>	2,5	5,0	24,2	40,8	27,5	6	
3. I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my spoken English.	<i>f</i>	7	6	27	44	36	3,8	1,10
	<i>%</i>	5,8	5,0	22,5	36,7	30,0	0	
4. I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my reading comprehension.	<i>f</i>	4	8	25	58	25	3,7	0,96
	<i>%</i>	3,3	6,7	20,8	48,3	20,8	7	
5. I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my written English.	<i>f</i>	5	6	20	62	27	3,8	0,97
	<i>%</i>	4,2	5,0	16,7	51,7	22,5	3	

In Table 5, items related to evaluation of learning strategies implementation and its results are demonstrated. For example, according to Table 5, Item 5, "I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my written English" ($m=3.83$, $sd=0.97$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. Besides, Item 1, "I have a complete understanding of the learning strategy" ($m=3.55$, $sd=1.14$), had the lowest mean score compared to others. Thus, results illustrated that every item in the evaluation of learning strategies implementation subscale had a 3.00 or higher mean score and indicated that participants had a moderate/high level of evaluating learning strategies implementation.

Table 6.

Descriptive Results of Evaluation of Ability to Monitor the Usage of Learning Strategies

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
1. I can consciously monitor the usage of listening strategies during practice.	<i>f</i>	5	10	31	48	26	3,6	1,04
	<i>%</i>	4,2	8,3	25,8	40,0	21,7	7	
2. I can consciously monitor the usage of speaking strategies during practice.	<i>f</i>	7	7	26	52	28	3,7	1,06
	<i>%</i>	5,8	5,8	21,7	43,3	23,3	2	
3. I can consciously monitor the usage of reading strategies during practice.	<i>f</i>	3	7	26	56	28	3,8	0,94
	<i>%</i>	2,5	5,8	21,7	46,7	23,3	3	
4. I can consciously monitor the usage of writing strategies during practice.	<i>f</i>	5	4	25	50	36	3,9	1,00
	<i>%</i>	4,2	3,3	20,8	41,7	30,0	0	
5. I am able to find and solve problems in my method of studying.	<i>f</i>	3	5	24	55	33	3,9	0,93
	<i>%</i>	2,5	4,2	20,0	45,8	27,5	2	
6. I am conscious of whether or not my method of studying is practical.	<i>f</i>	5	6	23	45	41	3,9	1,05
	<i>%</i>	4,2	5,0	19,2	37,5	34,2	2	
7. If I realize that my method of study is impractical, I quickly find a more suitable one.	<i>f</i>	6	9	26	49	30	3,7	1,07
	<i>%</i>	5,0	7,5	21,7	40,8	25,0	3	

In Table 6, items related to evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies and its results are shown. For instance, according to Table 6, Item 5, "I am able to find and solve problems in my method of studying" ($m=3.92$, $sd=0.93$) and Item 6, "I am conscious of whether or not my method of studying is practical" ($m=3.92$, $sd=1.05$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. Besides, Item 1 "I can consciously monitor the usage of listening

strategies during practice." ($m=3.67$, $sd=1.04$) had the lowest mean score compared to others. Thus, results illustrated that every item in the evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies subscale had a 3.00 or higher mean score and indicated that participants had a moderate/high level of evaluating the ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies.



Table 7.

Descriptive Results of Evaluation of English Learning Process

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
1. Outside of class, I take advantage of various opportunities to practice my English. (e.g. Using English to talk to classmates about daily life; participating in English speaking activities, etc.)	<i>f</i>	11	7	31	44	27	3,58	1,17
	<i>%</i>	9,2	5,8	25,8	36,7	22,5		
2. I make an effort to overcome emotional issues that may hinder my English studies, such as shyness, anxiety, and inhibition.	<i>f</i>	7	5	20	58	30	3,82	1,04
	<i>%</i>	5,8	4,2	16,7	48,3	25,0		
3. I use available learning resources such as the library, internet, dictionaries, etc. to improve my English.	<i>f</i>	4	4	23	42	46	4,01	1,02
	<i>%</i>	3,3	4,2	19,2	35,0	38,3		
4. It is easy for me to put newly learned English into practice.	<i>f</i>	4	9	30	47	30	3,75	102,
	<i>%</i>	3,3	7,5	25,0	39,2	25,0		
5. I often study together with other people, such as practicing with a language partner, or practicing and reviewing materials with classmates.	<i>f</i>	8	17	33	35	27	3,47	1,18
	<i>%</i>	6,7	14,2	27,5	29,2	22,5		
6. While practicing English, I am able to realize my own mistakes and correct them.	<i>f</i>	4	5	26	59	26	3,82	0,93
	<i>%</i>	3,3	4,2	21,7	49,2	21,7		
7. When I discover my mistakes, I understand the underlying reason for making them (e.g. the interference from my mother tongue, or a lack of familiarity with grammar rules, etc.)	<i>f</i>	9	3	28	42	38	3,81	1,14
	<i>%</i>	7,5	2,5	23,3	35,0	31,7		
	<i>f</i>	8	6	25	48	33	3,77	1,11

8. I select effective methods to become a better language student (such as speaking with successful English students about their experiences, taking a journal of my own progress, reading English newspapers, magazines, novels, etc.).	%	6,7	5,0	20,8	40,0	27,5		
9. During the process of completing a certain English learning task, I keep in line with my predetermined plan.	<i>f</i>	6	7	28	52	27	3,73	1,03
	%	5,0	5,8	23,3	43,3	22,5		
10. During the process of completing certain English learning tasks, I often check and correct my comprehension of previously studied material.	<i>f</i>	5	6	27	49	33	3,83	1,02
	%	4,2	5,0	22,5	40,8	27,5		

In Table 7, items related to the evaluation of the English learning process and its results are given. For example, according to Table 7, Item 3, "I use available learning resources such as the library, internet, dictionaries, etc. to improve my English" ($m=4.01$, $sd=1.02$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. Besides, Item 5, "I often study together with other people, such as practicing with a language partner, or practicing and reviewing materials with classmates" ($m=3.47$, $sd=1.18$), had the lowest mean score compared to others. Thus, results illustrated that every item in the evaluation of English learning process subscale had a 3.00 or higher mean score except for Item 3. Results indicated that participants had a moderate/high level of evaluating the English learning process.

3.3. The Effects of Students' Demographic Features on Their Perceptions

With the help of LADE (Learner Autonomy in Distance Education) questionnaire, first, the students' perceptions on learner autonomy in distance education was examined. The second research question of this research tries to find answers to the effects of students' demographic features on these perceptions. Age, gender, high school type and academic department information of the students were gathered with the help of LADE questionnaire. T-test and ANOVA were applied to find the relationship with these features and the students' perceptions on learner autonomy in distance education.



Table 8.

ANOVA Results of Age and Learner Autonomy

Dimension	Age	N	M	SD	F	P-value
Evaluation of English Teacher's Aims and Requirements	18-19	71	3,76	0,73	0,81	0,44
	20-21	43	3,93	0,77		
	22-23	6	3,93	0,51		
Evaluation of Establishing Studying Goals and Plans	18-19	71	3,68	0,76	0,46	0,63
	20-21	43	3,80	0,81		
	22-23	6	3,90	0,48		
Evaluation of Learning Strategies Implementation	18-19	71	3,75	0,73	0,10	0,89
	20-21	43	3,75	0,78		
	22-23	6	3,90	0,60		
Evaluation of Ability to Monitor the Usage of Learning Strategies	18-19	71	3,83	0,69	0,46	0,63
	20-21	43	3,74	0,68		
	22-23	6	4,00	0,59		
Evaluation of English Learning Process	18-19	71	3,80	0,69	0,59	0,55
	20-21	43	3,66	0,73		
	22-23	6	3,88	0,71		
Overall	18-19	71	3,77	0,62	0,16	0,84
	20-21	43	3,76	0,65		
	22-23	6	3,92	0,51		

First of all, ANOVA was performed to determine whether participants' learner autonomy levels differ according to participants' age. Results shown in Table 8 indicate that there was no

significant difference between participants' learner autonomy and participants' age. Therefore, it can be implied that participants' learner autonomy did not differ according to their age.



Table 9.

Independent t-test Results of Gender and Learner Autonomy

	Gender	N	M	SD	t	p
Evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements	Female	72	3,98	0,58	2,62	<u>0,01</u>
	Male	48	3,60	0,89		
Evaluation of establishing studying goals and plans	Female	72	3,82	0,64	1,40	0,16
	Male	48	3,61	0,92		
Evaluation of the learning strategies implementation	Female	72	3,87	0,61	2,13	<u>0,03</u>
	Male	48	3,58	0,87		
Evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies	Female	72	3,93	0,53	2,22	<u>0,02</u>
	Male	48	3,63	0,83		
Evaluation of English learning process	Female	72	3,83	0,59	1,45	0,14
	Male	48	3,64	0,84		
Overall	Female	72	3,88	0,45	2,08	<u>0,04</u>
	Male	48	3,62	0,79		

First, an independent t-test was used to determine whether learner autonomy levels differ according to gender. Table 9 shows that there was a significant difference between learner autonomy subscales and participants' gender except for the evaluation of establishing studying goals and plans ($t = 1.40$, $p = 0.16$, $p < 0.05$) and the evaluation of English learning process ($t = 1.45$, $p = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$). Results indicated that females are more competent than males in the evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements ($t = 2.62$, $p = 0.01$, $p < 0.05$), evaluation of the learning strategies implementation ($t = 2.13$, $p = 0.03$, $p < 0.05$), evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies ($t = 2.22$, $p = 0.02$, $p < 0.05$) and overall learner autonomy ($t = 2.08$, $p = 0.04$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, it can be implied that females' learner autonomy levels are higher than males.

Table 10.
Independent t-test Results of High School Type and Learner Autonomy

	High School	N	M	SD	t	p
Evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements	Private	78	3,78	0,73	-0,92	0,35
	State	42	3,92	0,74		
Evaluation of establishing studying goals and plans	Private	78	3,66	0,80	-1,55	0,12
	State	42	3,89	0,68		
Evaluation of the learning strategies implementation	Private	78	3,73	0,76	-0,46	0,64
	State	42	3,80	0,69		
Evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies	Private	78	3,81	0,71	0,002	0,99
	State	42	3,81	0,63		
Evaluation of English learning process	Private	78	3,74	0,72	-0,22	0,82
	State	42	3,77	0,68		
Overall	Private	78	3,75	0,65	-0,63	0,53
	State	42	3,82	0,57		

Furthermore, an independent t-test was used to determine whether learner autonomy levels differ according to the high school types of the participants. Table 10 shows that there was no significant difference between learner autonomy subscales and participants' high school types. Therefore, it can be implied that participants' learner autonomy levels did not differ according to their high school types ($p=0.35$, $p=0.12$, $p=0.64$, $p=0.99$, $p=0.82$, $p=0.53$).

Table 11.
ANOVA Results of Department and Learner Autonomy

Dimension	Department	N	M	SD	F	P-value			
Evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements	Business Administration	13	3,60	0,83	0,64	0,73			
	Civil Engineering	11	3,83	0,88					
	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	14	3,60	0,99					
	Industrial Engineering	8	4,05	0,29					
	International Finance and Banking	12	4,00	0,75					
	International Trade and Logistics	9	3,75	0,44					
	Psychology	23	3,99	0,52					
	Software Engineering	10	3,74	1,17					
	Translation and Interpreting	20	3,86	0,60					
	Evaluation of establishing studying goals and plans	Business Administration	13	4,12			0,66	1,08	0,38
		Civil Engineering	11	3,41			0,83		
		Electrical and Electronics Engineering	14	3,47			1,02		
		Industrial Engineering	8	3,65			0,60		
		International Finance and Banking	12	3,95			0,84		
		International Trade and Logistics	9	3,93			0,45		
		Psychology	23	3,77			0,65		
Software Engineering		10	3,64	1,04					

Evaluation of the learning strategies implementation	Translation and Interpreting	20	3,70	0,67			
	Business Administration	13	3,89	0,58	0,50	0,84	
	Civil Engineering	11	3,72	0,84			
	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	14	3,58	0,96			
	Industrial Engineering	8	4,00	0,54			
	International Finance and Banking	12	3,91	0,78			
	International Trade and Logistics	9	3,68	0,31			
	Psychology	23	3,77	0,61			
	Software Engineering	10	3,90	1,05			
	Translation and Interpreting	20	3,58	0,78			
	Evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies	Business Administration	13	3,90	0,49	0,45	0,88
		Civil Engineering	11	3,74	0,81		
		Electrical and Electronics Engineering	14	3,64	1,00		
		Industrial Engineering	8	3,85	0,40		
		International Finance and Banking	12	3,92	0,73		
International Trade and Logistics		9	3,74	0,41			
Psychology		23	3,98	0,50			
Software Engineering		10	3,77	1,06			
Translation and Interpreting		20	3,68	0,61			
Evaluation of English learning process		Business Administration	13	3,82	0,75	0,80	0,59

	Civil Engineering	11	3,53	0,94		
	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	14	3,42	0,96		
	Industrial Engineering	8	3,75	0,46		
	International Finance and Banking	12	3,99	0,72		
	International Trade and Logistics	9	3,70	0,45		
	Psychology	23	3,86	0,48		
	Software Engineering	10	3,	1,06		
	Translation and Interpreting	20	3,75	480,		
Overall	Business Administration	13	3,86	0,49	0,59	0,78
	Civil Engineering	11	3,63	0,78		
	Electrical and Electronics Engineering	14	3,53	0,92		
	Industrial Engineering	8	3,84	0,32		
	International Finance and Banking	12	3,96	0,70		
	International Trade and Logistics	9	3,75	0,36		
	Psychology	23	3,88	0,41		
	Software Engineering	10	3,80	0,99		
	Translation and Interpreting	20	3,77	0,46		

Moreover, ANOVA was performed to determine whether participants' learner autonomy levels differ according to participants' departments. Results shown in Table 11 indicate that there was no significant difference between participants' learner autonomy and participants' department.

Therefore, it can be implied that participants' learner autonomy did not differ according to their department.

3.4. Ways to Foster Learner Autonomy According to the Students

In order to understand the message hidden under the thoughts, applying interviews is of great importance (Newcomer et al., 2018). For this reason, 10 students of these 120 preparatory school students were chosen according to their availability. Seven of them were female and three of them were male. The interviews took approximately 10 to 15 minutes in an online environment called Zoom. The participants used pseudonyms in order that their information would be kept confidential. The interviews were transcribed immediately on the day they took place so that any detail would not be forgotten. Then the students' answers were coded and gathered under common themes. From these processes, the subheadings given in table 12 emerged.

Table 12.

Interview Categories and Frequent Words

Categories	Frequent words
Ways to become autonomous	Autonomy-friendly environment Being aware of one's own capacities Teacher support Authentic materials Learning methods and strategies
Self-evaluation of autonomy	Encouragement Controlling the learning process The contribution of distance education Independent learning
Teacher support	Teacher guidance Learner-friendly environment Care about students' needs
The contribution of distance education on learner autonomy	Flexible timetable More time to have rest and study Motivation More energetic

3.4.1. Ways to Become Autonomous

The interviews started with a question asking the students ways to become autonomous for learners. Although the majority of the answers were related to being aware of one's abilities and teacher support, there were some other ways suggested by the interviewees. For example, Mrs. B. says, *"Learners need to adapt to all circumstances quickly and study in a student-friendly environment created by the teacher"*. Mrs. I. adds, *"By recognizing one's own capacity, being*

aware of the things one can do, and developing self-sacrifice, one can become autonomous in learning". Also, Mrs. E. says that, *"Autonomy in learning can be achieved by getting support from the teachers. Learners can realize what they need to pay attention to while studying by consulting to teachers."* A few other interviewees highlight the importance of authentic materials and choosing suitable learning methods. Thus, they believe that there are things both teachers and learners should do to foster learner autonomy.

3.4.2. Self-Evaluation of Autonomy

After some information on how to become autonomous is gathered, the interviewees were asked whether they believe they are autonomous or not. Also, they were asked the reasons behind these thoughts. Four out of 10 students claimed that they are not autonomous while 6 of them declared being autonomous.

The students who don't believe that they are autonomous gave their reasons for thinking so. For example, Mrs. G. B. said that, *"I need someone to push me so that I can become motivated to learn on my own"*. Also, Mr. A. stated that, *"I have some difficulty on controlling the learning process by myself"*. On the other hand, Mr. E. and Mr. C. prefer learning from the teachers who are experts in their fields.

On the other side, there are interviewees who considered themselves as autonomous learners. They also gave their reasons for thinking as such. Firstly, Mrs. A. highlights the importance of distance education on her autonomy with these words: *"I partly became an autonomous learner this year. I am an introvert and I like to be home. That is why it was easier for me to adapt to distance education. Also, I knew that it was an opportunity for me to be diligent as it was more comfortable."* Secondly, Mrs. B. has some words as, *"I think I am an autonomous learner, because I have a personality that likes to research and learn new things by myself, and I really like learning something. Therefore, I am not in favor of not being able to learn something on my own."* Likewise, Mrs. I, Mrs. L. and Mrs. K claimed that they love discovering new things on

their own. Finally, Mrs. E. utilizes her ability to plan the learning process well and loves being autonomous in learning.

All in all, some of the interviewees use the advantages of being autonomous in learning while the others think that without someone to push, it is impossible for them to survive in the learning process.

3.4.3. Teacher Support

After trying to find some answers to the ways for fostering learner autonomy and the interviewees' self-evaluation of autonomy, the importance of teacher support was researched with the help of the third interview question. The interviewees all agreed to the importance of teacher guidance on being autonomous, however, they differed in the ways how teachers could help the learners become autonomous learners.

Most of the interviewees highlighted the importance of autonomous-learner-friendly environment which lets learners create their own learning path with the guidance of teachers. Also, the interviewees assumed that the learners should be encouraged by the teachers to become autonomous. For instance, Mrs. G. B. stated that, *"First of all, teachers can help the learners become courageous. They should care about the learners' ideas and create learner-friendly environments. They should teach the lessons in a warm-hearted way instead of being prescriptive."* On the other hand, Mrs. L. explained the significance of teacher support in autonomy with these words: *"I think teachers should not be systematic robots. Instead of forcing the student to do something, regardless of the subject, he should raise him free. Because a student who can experience this freedom discovers himself more easily. For example, teaching should not be limited only to school. Students are always curious and want to learn everything. Outside, at home, in any social or non-social environment, the teacher should be in active communication with his students. In this way, students become successful and confident individuals not only in education, but also in their entire lives."*

To sum up, the interviewees want their teachers to encourage them, create autonomous-learner-friendly environments and care about their needs. With these implementations, students may become autonomous in learning more easily.

3.4.4. The Contribution of Distance Education on Learner Autonomy

The last question of these semi-structured interviews was about the contribution of distance education on learner autonomy according to the interviewees. While some of them agreed that distance education had a positive impact on their autonomy, others claimed that having lessons online did not have any contribution on their autonomy. The interviewees also supported their claims with related reasons.

Most of the interviewees, namely eight out of 10, believe that distance education fostered their autonomy in learning. For example, Mrs. B. and Mrs. K. stated that in distance education, one needs to be able to learn individually. This need helped them become more autonomous. On the other hand, Mrs. G. B. said, *“Distance education contributed to my autonomy because in face-to-face education, we had to wake up early in the morning and that was affecting my motivation negatively. But in distance education, I can sleep and rest well. When I have a rest, I am more productive and eager in my lessons”*. Moreover, Mrs. A. added, *“I think distance education had a positive effect on my autonomy because I was mostly at home and I had more time to plan my day, and to study”*.

The rest of the interviewees, namely two out of 10, believed that having lessons online did not have any contribution on their autonomy. For instance, Mr. A. found it hard to concentrate on studying and learning out of the classroom environment. On the other hand, Mrs. L. adds, *“I think distance education did not have any contribution to my autonomy. I spent all day looking at the screen. After classes were over, I was doing homework again. I had no time for myself or motivation. Because of this, my enthusiasm for learning also ran away”*.

All in all, some interviewees preferred face-to-face education in terms of being autonomous while the others benefited from distance education to foster their autonomy.



CHAPTER IV

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

4.1. Introduction

This study aims to examine the impact of distance education on learner autonomy. Furthermore, it searches whether students' five demographic features (age, gender, high school type and academic department) makes difference on their perspectives of learner autonomy in distance education. In order to find answers to the research questions of this study, LADE (Learner Autonomy in Distance Education) questionnaire and structured interviews were applied in the 2020-2021 academic year. The questionnaire was conducted with 120 preparatory school students while the interviews were conducted with 10 preparatory school students of the same private university. The data gathered via the questionnaire was analysed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The discussion related to the research questions and the findings are presented in detail in this chapter. After that, the implications of the study are shown. Finally, the suggestions for future research are given.

4.2. Discussions

This study provides crucial outcomes related to the students' perceptions on learner autonomy in distance education. The discussions of the findings and research questions are provided in this part of the study.

4.3. The Perceptions of Students on Being Autonomous in Distance Education

The first research question of this study aims to investigate the perceptions of students on being autonomous in distance education. In line with this aim, the second part of the LADE (Learner Autonomy in Distance Education) questionnaire was applied to 120 preparatory school students and related data were gathered.

According to the results, this study shows that most of the students in this study have moderate/high level of learner autonomy in distance education. They also have moderate/high level of evaluating English teacher's aims and requirements, learning strategies implementation, the ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies, the English learning process in total, and establishing study goals and plans. This result is different from the findings of the studies conducted at the beginning of 21st century in Turkey. Those were the times when classrooms were teacher-centred and autonomy levels of the learners were extremely low because learners were highly dependent on the teachers (Sert, 2006; Yumuk, 2002). However, with the rapid change in the style of teaching, classrooms started to be student-centred and the autonomy levels of the learners naturally began to be higher as it could be seen in many recent studies (Dokuz, 2009; Olur, 2013; Ünal et al., 2017).

As a beginning, the participants' level of learner autonomy in distance education was analysed with the help of 5 questions within the framework of the first research question. The results demonstrated that the participants' evaluation of teacher's aims and requirements ($m=3.83$, $sd=0.74$) has the highest score compared to the other questions. This finding is crucial because it demonstrates that the participants could understand the teachers' aims and requirements more easily than the whole learning process in general. Learners might be able to internalize these aims and accomplish them more easily via understanding the teachers' aims and requirements. Also, the interior development of the learning objectives might foster an expanded ability to screen, assess and deal with the learning process (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Therefore, understanding the teachers' aims and requirements might have a positive reinforcement on the learners' autonomy level. On the other hand, according to the results shown in Table 2, participants' evaluation of studying goals and plans ($m=3.74$, $sd=0.77$) has the lowest score in this category. This result is similar to the one found by Yang (2013) who figured out that learners had some difficulty in accomplishing their plans. It can finally be concluded that the students need to be more active in

setting goals and plans to become more autonomous. As Teng (2019) states, autonomous learners ought to actively participate in learning and take charge of their self-planning.

After the descriptive statistics of the learner autonomy subscales were analysed, the descriptive results of each subheading were evaluated. The first subheading, namely "Evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements", had 5 questions to be answered by the participants. The students rated the questions from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). According to the results, item 4, "*I clearly understand the teacher's intention during in-class learning activities*" ($m=3.97$, $sd=0.98$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. This finding may show that the participants were able to understand the teacher's intention most of the time during in-class learning activities. This analysis is important because learners are generally more willing to learn when they comprehend the intention of the teacher (Hrimech & Bouchard, 1998). Yet, out-of-class activities are also crucial in order to foster learner autonomy. For instance, a study conducted by Sharp, Pocklington and Weindling (2002) demonstrated that so as to improve learners' metacognitive skills and inner motivation which lead to autonomy in learning, out-of-class activities are of great importance. Thus, learners need to improve themselves with out-of-class activities in addition to in-class ones. On the other hand, Item 1, "*I clearly understand the teacher's aims*" ($m=3.61$, $sd=1.16$) had the lowest mean score compared to others. Therefore, it may be concluded that out of class, it becomes harder for the learners to understand the aims of the teachers. This may mean that they need teacher support to understand their aim, which is a crucial aspect of being an autonomous learner in distance education. If they understand the teachers' aims and take part in the learning process personally, they are more likely to address the techniques and strategies for information obtaining (Abrami et al., 2011). A study conducted by Cui (2017) showed that English teachers are able to foster autonomy in their learners with the help of their mediating ability. Thus, teachers ought to help learners become autonomous in understanding the objectives of themselves and the lessons.

The second subheading, namely “Evaluation of studying goals and plans”, included 5 questions which were to be answered by the participants. According to the findings, Item 5, *"I am good at establishing study goals based on the requirements outlined by the class"* (m=3.85, sd=0.92) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. This may demonstrate that the participants need teachers’ help so as to establish studying goals and plans. A study carried out by Gao (2010) demonstrated similar findings. According to these results, Chinese university students were not able to put their plans into action without teacher support. However, especially in distance education, students need to create and accomplish their plans in order to be successful (Babayigit & Guven, 2020). On the other hand, Item 1, *"Outside of assignments given by the teacher, I have a clear plan for studying on my own."* (m=3.62, sd=1.18), had the lowest mean score compared to others. This finding is also in line with the previous one mentioned above. Thus, most of the participants are in need of teacher support to be autonomous in creating goals and plans. Having an objective and making plans are some of the important signs of learner autonomy and success in language learning (Benson, 2011; Cotterall, 2000). In addition, it should not be neglected that in distance education, the contribution of the learners is of vital importance in order to get productive outcomes (White, 2014). Therefore, learners ought to be more active in creating and accomplishing their plans to be more autonomous and successful in language learning.

The third subheading, namely “Evaluation of Learning Strategies Implementation”, had 5 questions to be answered by the participants. The questions were asking the participants their ability of reading, listening, writing and speaking skills in addition to strategy implementation in general. According to the analysis of the data gathered via these questions, Item 5, *"I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my written English"* (m=3.83, sd=0.97) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. So, it may be stated that writing skill of the learners surpassed their ability of other skills. The reason for this result might be that having online lessons may have a positive impact on writing skills of the learners. They can get help from the internet or a dictionary. This usage of computer and internet may also foster their autonomy (Schwienhorst,

2002). In order to advance autonomy in writing, teachers should create learning environments in which learners can both collaborate and work on their own. To provide learners with this, teachers can divide learners into groups and send them to break out rooms in an application used for distance education called Zoom. In distance education, learners feel more powerful in writing as found in this dissertation and teachers may also have a contribution as suggested above. On the other hand, Item 1, *"I have a complete understanding of the learning strategy"* ($m=3.55$, $sd=1.14$), had the lowest mean score compared to others. This result might demonstrate that understanding the learning strategy in general is harder for the participants than to utilize 4 skills separately. This echoes with the results given by Yang (2013) who found that in all subcategories of learner autonomy, controlling and assessing the learning process were the weakest ability of the university students. However, it should not be neglected that the more learners take the ownership of their learning, the more they become autonomous and successful in learning (Balcikanli, 2010).

The fourth subheading, namely "Evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies" included 7 questions to gather information from the participants. According to them, Item 5, *"I am able to find and solve problems in my method of studying"* ($m=3.92$, $sd=0.93$) and Item 6, *"I am conscious of whether or not my method of studying is practical"* ($m=3.92$, $sd=1.05$) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. It may be understood that the learners are aware of the practicality of their method and use methods on their own effectively as an autonomous learner. Some results from another study carried out by Sun (2013) are in line, demonstrating that using learning strategies efficiently might foster learner autonomy. Moreover, Oxford (2008) states that, "Learning strategies are generally signs of learner autonomy" (p.52). Thus, it can be inferred in this study that the participants could use appropriate strategies and remedies for their problems with the help of their autonomy in learning. On the other hand, Item 1 *"I can consciously monitor the usage of listening strategies during practice."* ($m=3.67$, $sd=1.04$) had the lowest mean score compared to others. This finding may show that listening abilities of the learners ought to be improved compared to their other abilities. While listening a conversation in

foreign language, people generally try to understand every word they hear and when they miss even a word, they miss the rest of the conversation. Another problem can be that foreign language learners mostly attempt to prepare their answers in a conversation which is in the target language rather than listening efficiently. These issues also affect learners in real life in addition to their academic life. This result is in line with the one found by Udosen (2014). She figured out in her study that learner autonomy provides learners with the skills and attitudes which may help them solve their real-life matters. In addition, these problems may be overcome with the help of language teachers. Teachers ought to help learners utilize appropriate learning strategies so as to foster autonomy in listening and all other skills (Yan & Wang, 2010).

Finally, the fifth subheading, namely “Evaluation of English learning process”, included 10 questions to be rated by the participants. According to the results, Item 3, *"I use available learning resources such as the library, internet, dictionaries, etc. to improve my English"* (m=4.01 sd=1.02) had the highest mean score compared to other items in the subscale. This is an important finding because this item included a condition needed to be an autonomous learner, which is getting help from any available resource. In line with this finding, Cheng (2019) found in his study that learning materials, information literacy and learning environments are some of the aspects which affect learner autonomy. Autonomous learners mostly know how to benefit from a bunch of materials (Noguchi & McCarthy, 2010). So, the participants in this dissertation mostly utilize available learning resources in order to advance their autonomy. On the other hand, Item 5, *"I often study together with other people, such as practicing with a language partner, or practicing and reviewing materials with classmates"* (m=3.47, sd=1.18), had the lowest mean score compared to others. This finding might demonstrate that especially in distance education, learners prefer working in a more isolated way and they do not prefer peer work. However, to foster autonomy in learning, learners need to work in collaboration with their peers and teachers according to many studies (Benson, 2011; Blidi, 2017; Lamb, 2017; Murray, 2014; Oxford, 2003; Ushioda, 2009). Hence, autonomy

does not require working in isolation; rather, it promotes collaboration and group work (Little, 1995).

4.4. The Effects of Students' Demographic Features on their Perceptions

The second research question of this study aims to explore whether the students' demographic features make any change on their perceptions of learner autonomy in distance education. In line with this objective, the first part of the LADE (Learner Autonomy in Distance Education) questionnaire was applied to 120 preparatory school students and related data were gathered about four demographic features of the participants, namely age, gender, high school type and academic department.

First of all, ANOVA was applied to decide whether participants' learner autonomy levels differ according to their age. The ages were grouped into three, namely 18-19, 20-21 and 22-23. The participants were asked to choose the appropriate option. In accordance with the results, there was no significant difference between participants' learner autonomy and participants' age. Therefore, it can be concluded that the ages of the participants did not have an important impact on learner autonomy in distance education. This finding is in line with many studies claiming that autonomy is not dependent on age (Ng & Confessore, 2015; O'Reilly, 2014, Scott et al., 2014). Normally, one can assume that older people may be more autonomous because of their maturity. But, according to this research, age is not a significant demographic variable for learner autonomy in distance education. So, teachers can foster learner autonomy in any age group with the same techniques.

Secondly, an independent t-test was used to determine whether learner autonomy levels differ according to gender. According to the results, females are more competent than the males. For example, in the evaluation of the learning strategies implementation part, females had more answers showing their close connection to autonomy in distance education ($t = 2.13$, $p = 0.03$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, it can be concluded that female learners' autonomy levels in distance education are

higher than males. This echoes with the findings of many studies claiming that female learners have better levels of autonomy (Andreou et al., 2005; Boyno, 2011; Deniz et al., 2013; Deregözü & Hatipoğlu, 2018; Hanbay, 2013; Lowe, 2009; Naeghel & Keer, 2013; Oxford et al., 1993; Razeq, 2014, Şanlı, 2016; Varol & Yılmaz, 2010; Vatanartıran et al., 2014; Zhao & Chen, 2014). There can be many reasons for this. First of all, females are generally more willing to try and learn new things and learning a new language is one of them. This willingness may affect their autonomy positively. In addition, females are mostly more responsible and organized. This can also be a booster of their autonomy. In a nutshell, females are generally more occupied in learning a new language and this study demonstrated that their autonomy levels support this fact.

Thirdly, an independent t-test was used to determine whether learner autonomy levels differ according to the high school types of the participants. The participants graduated from either a private or a state high school. According to the results, there was no significant difference between learner autonomy subscales and participants' high school types. Therefore, it can be implied that high school types of the learners did not have a significant effect on the autonomy level of the learners in distance education ($p=0.35$, $p=0.12$, $p=0.64$, $p=0.99$, $p=0.82$, $p=0.53$). This finding is in line with the results of some studies (Derrick, 2001; Ponton, 1999). One can assume that private schools provide learners with more opportunities and this can lead to higher autonomy levels. Yet, this assumption may be refuted with this finding. Thus, no matter where they graduate from, the learners have more or less the same capability of being autonomous in distance education.

Finally, ANOVA was performed to determine whether participants' learner autonomy levels differ according to participants' future departments. According to the results, it can be indicated that the future departments of these preparatory school students did not have any significant impact on the autonomy of the learners in distance education. This finding contradicts with the results of another study conducted by Alkan and Arslan (2019). According to these researchers' findings, the autonomy level of the learners significantly differs according to their departments. The reason for difference may be that the participants in this study were preparatory school students and they have

not had any lessons in their academic department yet. But, in Alkan and Arslan's (2019) study, the students were in their departments, not in the preparatory school. Thus, it can be concluded that in the preparatory school, the learners have more or less same capacity of becoming autonomous regardless of their future academic departments.

All in all, this study examines whether certain demographic features of the learners (age, gender, nationality, high school type and academic department) make any difference in their perceptions of autonomy in distance education. Except for gender, none of the features had any significant difference on their perceptions.

4.5. Ways to Foster Learner Autonomy According to the Students

The interviews for the qualitative data took place in an online environment called Zoom. 10 out of 120 preparatory school students were interviewed in accordance with their availability. The interviews were transcribed and some common themes were created during this process.

4.5.1. Ways to Become Autonomous

There are several ways to foster autonomy in distance education. Some of them were highlighted by the interviewees: teacher support, being aware of one's abilities, a student-friendly environment, authentic materials and choosing suitable learning methods. In line with these findings, Yan and Wang (2010) emphasized the importance of teacher support to foster learner autonomy. It should never be forgotten that autonomy does not mean working in isolation without any help from the teacher. As a beginning, learners need teacher support to become autonomous. When they are autonomous, they still need the teacher as a facilitator rather than a teacher who creates a teacher-centred environment. Also, according to Pashler et al. (2019), everyone has a unique style of comprehending and saving any information, which should be supported with being conscious of one's capabilities. This does not mean that one is limited with their capacity. Yet, knowing the level and style of comprehension may help learners to get information more confidently and easily. Moreover, Little (1991) states that when provided with appropriate means,

learners can acquire autonomy more easily and a student-friendly environment is one of these appropriate means. It should not be neglected that the learning environment is of vital importance. For example, when the classroom is teacher-centred, one cannot talk about autonomy in that classroom at all. To foster autonomy, a student-friendly and autonomy-friendly environment is needed by the learners (Vygotsky, 1991). On the other hand, authentic materials are closely related to the real life and they may provide learners with the ability to use the target language more easily. Teachers may also prefer using authentic materials in order to foster autonomy (Ciornei & Dina, 2015). They are also cheaper and easier to find. The constructive effect of authentic materials especially for learner autonomy cannot be denied. Finally, Oxford (1990) claims that if the learning methods and strategies are used appropriately, learning a new language in an autonomous way becomes more efficient and easier. As it was said before, everyone is unique in their style of learning. For this reason, one certain method is not able to fit each student. There are many different and efficient techniques and methods to learn another language autonomously and learners should adopt the most appropriate ones for themselves.

4.5.2. Self-Evaluation of Autonomy

Being conscious of one's abilities is one of the important aspects of being autonomous. Another important aspect is being aware of whether one is autonomous or not and the reasons for this assumption. For this reason, the interviewees were asked whether they believe they are autonomous and to give their reasons for thinking so. Six out of 10 students claimed being autonomous while four participants stated that they are not autonomous at all. Looking at the results of the questionnaire and the statements of the interviewees, it can be concluded that the participants are moderately autonomous in distance education. This result is in line with the ones found by Dede (2017) and Kurt and Acat (2016). These researchers found that the autonomy levels of the participants were hardly above the average. Self-assessment is one of the crucial aspects of learner autonomy and with this question, the interviewees evaluated their autonomy level. After these

results, they are expected to improve themselves, become conscious of the ways to be autonomous and apply what they have learnt.

4.5.3. Teacher Support

Autonomy means one's having control over their learning process. Yet, it does not require learners to be all alone in the whole learning process. Teachers are naturally more experienced than the learners and they are more aware of different learning techniques and methods. Learners are in need of teachers even when they are autonomous. The importance of teacher support was highlighted by many researchers as highlighted by many researchers (Andrade & Bunker, 2009; Esch, 1997; Fanariti & Spanaka, 2010; Little, 1995; Murphy, 2007; Pons, 1990; Po-ying, 2007; Railton & Watson, 2005; Santos & Camara, 2010; Yan, 2010; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990). The interviewees in this study all agreed on the importance of teacher support in autonomy and they were asked how teachers can help learners become autonomous. It can be concluded from their answers that learners need the encouragement of their teachers to become autonomous. This finding is in line with what Po-ying (2007) stated, claiming that the learners should be provided with the encouragement and support of the teacher in order to be autonomous. Some other interviewees added that in addition to the encouragement provided by the teacher, the collaboration and communication between the teacher and the students ought to increase to advance autonomy especially in distance education. This finding is in line with the one found by Huang (2007). In his study, Huang found that the participants were in need of more connection and cooperation with the teachers. In a nutshell, there are many things teachers can do to support the advance of autonomy in their classrooms (Ramos, 2006; Reeve, 2006; Stefanou et al., 2004).

4.5.4. The Contribution of Distance Education on Learner Autonomy

Distance education has been in our lives for many years, however, with the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, it has gained much more importance than ever. In distance education, learners should take more responsibilities in their learning process. This necessity highlights the importance

of learner autonomy in distance education. The interviewees of this study were asked a question about the effects of distance education on their autonomy and their reasons for thinking so. Most of the interviewees, namely eight out of 10, stated that distance education fostered their autonomy. Some of them think that learning individually gains more importance in distance education and this obligation advanced their autonomy. This finding is in line with the ones found by Balcikanli (2010) and Joshi (2011). These researchers claimed that autonomous learners are able to control their own learning process (Balcikanli, 2010; Joshi, 2011). Also, Wang and Palincsar (1989) found in their study that having more responsibilities over their learning motives students to learn more. Thus, teachers should be conscious of this fact that and give more responsibilities to their students. Some other participants attributed their autonomy to being at home comfortably. Learners mostly feel more flexible with their timetable in distance education and this may boost their energy level towards learning a new language. Also, they may find more time to improve themselves outside the classroom walls where autonomy is mostly needed. On the other hand, two participants were not satisfied with the virtual classes. These learners are the ones who do not believe that they are autonomous learners. This finding is crucial because especially in distance education, learner autonomy gains much importance. Most of the students who are not autonomous have more difficulties compared with the autonomous ones. This finding echoes with what Goulão (2014) stated. He claimed that learners need to exercise more control over their learning process in distance education. Also, McGarry (1995) highlights that "...if students are to become autonomous learners, it is self-evident that they will need to exert some measure of control over their learning" (p. 6).

In a nutshell, the interviewees were mostly happy with distance education. They believed that they are autonomous learners, which made studying and learning easier. They were aware that distance education requires more autonomy, so, they tried to have more control over their learning. They were conscious of the fact that teacher support is of vital importance in advancing autonomy in distance education.

4.6. Implications of the Study

In light of this research, distance education requires learners to be more autonomous and teachers should help the learners become autonomous. Learners are more responsible of their learning in distance education and autonomy helps them deal with these processes more easily. For this reason, current study has some implications for both learners and teachers.

First of all, learners should set objectives, reflect on the process and seek assistance from teachers or peers. Learners ought to have weekly, monthly and semester goals for action plans. These objectives have to be reachable and logical. Whenever learners accomplish an objective, they will feel more motivated to learn. In addition, reflection may enable learners to have some ideas on their learning process. To reflect on their learning process, learners can complete a checklist and then think about a personalised action plan. Moreover, autonomy does not require learners to be alone throughout these processes. Learners ought to be open to get help from their teachers and friends whenever they need.

Second of all, teachers have many opportunities to create an autonomy-friendly environment which fosters learner autonomy. For instance, they can use class agenda so that learners can know about the learning process covered in the classroom. They may allow choices and let learners be more responsible of their learning. They might also help them reflect on their learning by asking them open-ended questions about their learning process. To create curiosity, teachers ought to boost learners critical thinking skills by asking them more elaborated questions. Moreover, teachers can provide learners with peer feedback sheets so that learners can learn from each other.

4.7. Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research

In spite of the fact that this research reached crucial results for the field, it has some limitations. First of all, the sample size for the questionnaire was enough to deduct some valid results, yet it can always be bigger and this may affect the results. On the other hand, the number of the participants for the interviews might be more because for the current study, it was hard for the

researcher to convince more students due to Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, this study was conducted with the preparatory school students and the effect of their academic department on their autonomy could not be examined deeply. For this reason, this study may be conducted with department students and different results may arise. In addition, since it was found out in current study that autonomy is independent of age, this study can be conducted with samples from different age groups. Finally, there are many ways to foster autonomy both for the teachers and the students. In any further research, these implications may be applied and the outcomes of them may be analysed.

4.8. Conclusion

People start learning something from the very beginning of their lives until they die. There is always something to learn. For this reason, people should be life-long learners. Autonomy, having control over learning, helps someone be a life-long learner. Autonomous people know how to learn something on their own. They may need assistance sometimes, but most of the time they are conscious of the strategies and techniques to learn something independently. Autonomy gains more importance in distance education than face-to-face education because learners are more responsible for their learning in distance education. For this reason, this study concentrated on this fact, which is of crucial importance especially in Covid-19 pandemic. The constructive impact of distance education on learner autonomy is a fact accepted by most of the participants. Also, the participants mostly agree that teacher support is indispensable to foster autonomy in distance education. Finally, most of the learners are happy with having distance lessons as they believe that this affects their learning process positively.

As a concluding remark, current study has demonstrated that there are many implementations for both the students and the teachers to foster learner autonomy in distance education. Seeing that autonomy makes learning easier and more permanent especially in distance

education, learners and teachers ought to be aware of these findings and put these implementations into practice.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethic Committee Approval of Çağ University

T.C	
ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ	
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ	
TEZ / ARAŞTIRMA / ANKET / ÇALIŞMA İZİNİ / ETİK KURUL İZİN TALEP VE ONAY TUTANAK FORMU	
ÖĞRENCİ BİLGİLERİ	
T.C. NOSU	
ADI VE SOYADI	GAMZE KALYONCU
ÖĞRENCİ NO	20198059
TEL. NO.	
E - MAİL ADRESLERİ	
ANA BİLİM DALI	İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ
HANGİ AŞAMADA OLDUĞU (DERS / TEZ)	TEZ
İSTEKDE BULUNDUĞU DÖNEME AİT DÖNEMLİK KAYDININ YAPILIP- YAPILMADIĞI	2020 / 2021 - BAHAR DÖNEMİ KAYDINI YENİLEDİM.
ARAŞTIRMA/ANKET/ÇALIŞMA TALEBİ İLE İLGİLİ BİLGİLER	
TEZİN KONUSU	Uzaktan Eğitimde Üniversite Bağlamında Öğrencilerin Öğrenci Özerkliği Algılarının İncelenmesi
TEZİN AMACI	Uzaktan eğitimde önemi artan öğrenci özerkliğinin üniversite öğrencilerinin gözünden değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmaktadır.
TEZİN TÜRKÇE ÖZETİ	Yabancı bir dil öğrenmek için yalnızca sınıf ortamında görülen eğitim yeterli değildir. Öğrencinin, sınıf ortamı dışında kendini geliştirmesi gerekir. Her öğrenciye uygun çalışma stratejisi farklıdır. Öğretmenler öğrencilere bu stratejileri fark etmeleri konusunda yardımcı olmalıdır. Öğrencilere dil öğretmenin yanı sıra öğretmenlerin görevi onlara öğrenmeyi öğretmektir. Eğitimin merkezinde öğrenciler olmalıdır. Uzaktan eğitimde öğrenci özerkliğinin önemi artmıştır. Bu çalışmada üniversite öğrencilerinin bu konu hakkındaki fikirleri araştırılacaktır.
ARAŞTIRMA YAPILACAK OLAN SEKTÖRLER/ KURUMLARIN ADLARI	Toros Üniversitesi 45 Evler Kampüsü

İZİN ALINACAK OLAN KURUMA AİT BİLGİLER (KURUMUN ADI- ŞUBESİ/ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ - İLİ - İLÇESİ)	Toros Üniversitesi 45 Evler Kampüsü - Yenişehir / MERSİN	
YAPILMAK İSTENEN ÇALIŞMANIN İZİN ALINMAK İSTENEN KURUMUN HANGİ İLÇELERİNE/ HANGİ KURUMUNA/ HANGİ BÖLÜMÜNDE/ HANGİ ALANINA/ HANGİ KONULARDA/ HANGİ GRUBA/ KİMLERE/ NE UYGULANACAĞI GİBİ AYRINTILI BİLGİLER	Mersin ilinin Yenişehir ilçesinde bulunan Toros Üniversitesi 45 Evler Kampüsü Yabancı Diller Bölümü öğrencileri	
UYGULANACAK OLAN ÇALIŞMAYA AİT ANKETLERİN/ ÖLÇEKLERİN BAŞLIKLARI/ HANGİ ANKETLERİN - ÖLÇEKLERİN UYGULANACAĞI	1) Effectiveness of Activities on Learner Autonomy (EALA) Questionnaire (Etkinliklerin Öğrenci Özerkliği Üzerindeki Etkisi Anketi) (32 maddelik Likert ölçeği) 2) Uzaktan Eğitimde Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Öğrenci Özerkliği Algılarını İncelemeye Yönelik Mülakat Soruları	
EKLER (ANKETLER, ÖLÇEKLER, FORMLAR, V.B. GİBİ EVRAKLARIN İSİMLERİYLE BİRLİKTE KAÇ ADET/SAYFA OLDUKLARINA AİT BİLGİLER İLE AYRINTILI YAZILACAKTIR)	1) 1 adet (4) Sayfa Etkinliklerin Öğrenci Özerkliği Üzerindeki Etkisi Anketi. 2) 1 adet (1) Sayfa Anket İzin Formu. 3) 1 adet (1) Sayfa Mülakat Soruları. 4) 1 adet (1) Sayfa Bilgilendirilmiş Mülakat Onam Formu.	
ÖĞRENCİNİN ADI - SOYADI: GAMZE KALYONCU	ÖĞRENCİNİN İMZASI: Enstitü Müdürlüğünde evrak aslı imzalıdır TARİH: 14 / 04 / 2021	
TEZ/ ARAŞTIRMA/ANKET/ÇALIŞMA TALEBİ İLE İLGİLİ DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU		
1. Seçilen konu Bilim ve İş Dünyasına katkı sağlayabilecektir.		
2. Anılan konu İngiliz Dili Eğitimi faaliyet alanı içerisine girmektedir.		

1.TEZ DANIŞMANININ ONAYI	2.TEZ DANIŞMANININ ONAYI (VARSA)	ANA BİLİM DALI BAŞKANININ ONAYI	SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRÜNÜN ONAYI			
Adı - Soyadı: Dr. Senem Zaimoğlu	Adı - Soyadı:	Adı - Soyadı: Şehnaz Şahinkarakaş	Adı - Soyadı: Murat Koç			
Unvanı: Dr. Öğretim Üyesi	Unvanı:	Unvanı: Prof. Dr.	Unvanı: Doç. Dr.			
İmzası: Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası:	İmzası: Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası: Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.			
14.04.2021 / / 20....	3.05.2021	19.05.2021			
ETİK KURULU ASIL ÜYELERİNE AİT BİLGİLER						
Adı - Soyadı: Şehnaz ŞAHİNKARAKAŞ	Adı - Soyadı: Yücel ERTEKİN	Adı - Soyadı: Deniz Aynur GÜLER	Adı - Soyadı: Mustafa BAŞARAN	Adı - Soyadı: Mustafa Tevfik ODMAN	Adı - Soyadı: Hüseyin Mahir FISUNOĞLU	Adı - Soyadı: Jülide İNÖZÜ
Unvanı : Prof. Dr.	Unvanı : Prof. Dr.	Unvanı: Prof. Dr.	Unvanı : Prof. Dr.	Unvanı: Prof. Dr.	Unvanı : Prof. Dr.	Unvanı : Prof. Dr.
İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.	İmzası : Evrak onayı e-posta ile alınmıştır.
7.06.2021	7.06.2021	7.06.2021	7.06.2021	7.06.2021	7.06.2021	7.06.2021
Etik Kurulu Jüri Başkanı - Asıl Üye	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi	Etik Kurulu Jüri Asıl Üyesi
OY BİRLİĞİ İLE	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Çalışma yapılacak olan tez için uygulayacak olduğu Anketleri/Formları/Ölçekleri Çağ Üniversitesi Etik Kurulu Asıl Jüri Üyelerince İncelenmiş olup, 10 / 06 / 2021 - 01 / 12 / 2021 tarihleri arasında uygulanmak üzere gerekli iznin verilmesi taraflarımızca uygundur.				
OY ÇOKLUĞU İLE	<input type="radio"/>					
AÇIKLAMA: BU FORM ÖĞRENCİLER TARAFINDAN HAZIRLANDIKTAN SONRA ENSTİTÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ SEKRETERLİĞİNE ONAYLAR ALINMAK ÜZERE TESLİM EDİLECEKTİR. AYRICA FORMDAKİ YAZI ON İKİ PUNTO OLACAK ŞEKİLDE YAZILACAKTIR.						

Appendix B: Consent Form for the Questionnaire

Consent Form

I confirm that I have been informed about the nature of the study and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the research.

I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.

I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and without negative consequences.

I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this consent form.

Participant:

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Researcher:

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix C: Learner Autonomy in Distance Education (LADE) Questionnaire

Survey of Non-English Preparatory School Students' Perceptions of Autonomy

Dear Student,

The ability to motivate oneself to study English on one's own is the key to achieving a higher level of English proficiency. We hope that the results of this survey will help us establish more effective evaluation and teaching methods. Please take a few minutes of your time to fill out the following anonymous questionnaire; there are no "correct" answers, simply answer each question based on your experience, all the information collected will be confidential and will be used for research only. Your opinion is very important to us, thank you for your cooperation. Based on your experience, please circle or check the most appropriate answer to each question.

PART.I – Demographic Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Nationality: _____
4. Academic Department: _____
5. Previous School Type: state / private

PART.II – Questions on Learner Autonomy

A. Evaluation of English teacher's aims and requirements

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1. I clearly understand the teacher's aims.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. It is easy for me to make the teacher's goals into my own goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. I clearly understand the importance of making the teacher's goals my own, as well as studying hard to achieve those goals.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. I clearly understand the teacher's intention during in class learning activities.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. In class, it is easy for me to keep up with the teacher's pace.	1	2	3	4	5	

B. Evaluation of establishing studying goals and plans

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree
1. Outside of assignments given by the teacher, I have a clear plan for studying on my own.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. When studying English, I establish practical goals for myself based on my true English level.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. I am good at adjusting my studying plans based on my progress.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. I am good at creating a practical studying schedule for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I am good at establishing study goals based on the requirements outlined by the class.	1	2	3	4	5	

C. Evaluation of the learning strategies implementation

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1.I have a complete understanding of the learning strategy.	1	2	3	4	5
2.I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my listening comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
3.I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my spoken English.	1	2	3	4	5
4.I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my reading comprehension.	1	2	3	4	5
5.I can consciously employ effective strategies to improve my written English.	1	2	3	4	5

D. Evaluation of ability to monitor the usage of learning strategies

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
1.I can consciously monitor the usage of listening strategies during practice.	1	2	3	4	5
2.I can consciously monitor the usage of speaking strategies during practice.	1	2	3	4	5
3.I can consciously monitor the usage of reading strategies during practice.	1	2	3	4	5
4.I can consciously monitor the usage of writing strategies during practice.	1	2	3	4	5
5.I am able to find and solve problems in my method of studying.	1	2	3	4	5
6.I am conscious of whether or not my method of studying is practical.	1	2	3	4	5
7.If I realize that my method of study is impractical, I quickly find a more suitable one.	1	2	3	4	5

E. Evaluation of English learning process

	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	Strongly Agree
1. Outside of class, I take advantage of various opportunities to practice my English. (e.g. Using English to talk to classmates about daily life; participating in English speaking activities, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	
2. I make an effort to overcome emotional issues that may hinder my English studies, such as shyness, anxiety, and inhibition.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. I use available learning resources such as the library, internet, dictionaries, etc. to improve my English.	1	2	3	4	5	
4. It is easy for me to put newly learned English into practice.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. I often study together with other people, such as practicing with a language partner, or practicing and reviewing materials with classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. While practicing English, I am able to realize my own mistakes and correct them.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. When I discover my mistakes, I understand the underlying reason for making them (e.g. interference from my mother tongue, or a lack of familiarity with grammar rules, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	
8. I select effective methods to become a better language student (such as speaking with successful English students about their experiences, taking a journal of my own progress, reading English newspapers, magazines, novels, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5	
9. During the process of completing a certain English learning task, I keep in line with my predetermined plan.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. During the process of completing a certain English learning tasks, I often check and correct my comprehension of previously studied material.	1	2	3	4	5	

Thank you again for your cooperation and support!

Appendix D: Informed Consent Form for the Interview

A Research about Learner Autonomy in Distance Education

- I,, voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [.../.../2021] and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- I understand that taking part in the study will include being interviewed and audio recorded.
- I have been given adequate time to consider my decision and I agree to take part in the study.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages and other research outputs but my name will not be used.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Name of Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix E: Study Information Sheet for the Interview

Study Information Sheet

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this study. This information sheet explains what this study concentrates on and how I would like you to participate in it.

The purpose of this study is to understand students' perceptions on learner autonomy in distance education. In order to elicit your opinions, you will be interviewed by me. If you agree to do this, the interview will be audio recorded and will last approximately half an hour. The information provided by you will be used for research purposes. Your individual responses will not be identified.

I would like to thank you again for participating in my research. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions throughout the research.

Appendix F: Interview Questions for Investigating Learner Autonomy in Distance Education

- 1- How do learners become autonomous?
- 2- How can teachers help learners become autonomous?
- 3- Do you think you are an autonomous learner? Why? / Why not?
- 4- Did distance education contribute to your autonomy? If so, how?

Appendix G: Consent Form of Conducting Questionnaires and Interviews (Çağ University)



T.C.
ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Sayı : E-23867972-044-2100004005
Konu : Gamze KALYONCU'nun Tez
Anket İzni

04.06.2021

TOROS ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜNE

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programında kayıtlı Gamze KALYONCU isimli öğrencimiz, “**Uzaktan Eğitimde Üniversite Bağlamında Öğrencilerin Öğrenci Özerkliği Algılarının İncelenmesi**” konulu tez çalışmasını Üniversitemiz öğretim üyesi **Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Senem ZAİMOĞLU** danışmanlığında halen yürütmektedir. Adı geçen öğrenci tez çalışmasında **Üniversitenize bağlı Yabancı Diller Eğitimi bölümünde öğrenim gören öğrencileri** kapsamak üzere kopyası Ek’lerde sunulan anket uygulamasını yapmayı planlamaktadır. Üniversitemiz Etik Kurulunda yer alan üyelerin onayları alınmış olup, gerekli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ünal AY
Rektör

Appendix H: Official Permission from Toros University



T.C.
TOROS ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ
Öğrenci İşleri Daire Başkanlığı

Sayı : E-15313039-044-5421

22.06.2021

Konu : Gamze KALYONCU'nun Tez Anket İzni

ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜNE

Üniversiteniz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programında kayıtlı olan **Gamze KALYONCU** isimli öğrencinizin "**Uzaktan Eğitimde Üniversite Bağlamında Öğrencilerin Öğrenci Özerkliği Algılarının İncelenmesi**" konulu tez çalışmasının anket uygulamasını Üniversitemize bağlı Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulumuzda yapması Rektörlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.
Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini arz ederim.

Prof.Dr. Ömer ARIÖZ
Rektör

Appendix I: Ethics Committee Request



T.C.
ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Sayı : E-23867972-050.01.04-2100003653
Konu : Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği
Kurulu Kararı Alınması Hakkında

22.05.2021

REKTÖRLÜK MAKAMINA

İlgi: 09.03.2021 tarih ve E-81570533-050.01.01-2100001828 sayılı Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu konulu yazınız.

İlgi tarihli yazınız kapsamında Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü bünyesindeki Lisansüstü Programlarda halen tez aşamasında kayıtlı olan **Alper Baltacı, Aysun Demir, Gamze Kalyoncu, Ömer Cengiz** isimli öğrencilerimize ait tez evraklarının "Üniversitemiz Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulu Onayları" alınmak üzere Ek'lerde sunulmuş olduğunu arz ederim.

Doç. Dr. Murat KOÇ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürü

Appendix J: Ethics Committee Approval



T.C.
ÇAĞ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Rektörlük

Sayı : E-81570533-044-2100003952

02.06.2021

Konu : Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği
Kurul İzni Hk.

SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

İlgi : 22.05.2021 tarih ve E-23867972- 050.01.04-2100003653 sayılı yazımız.

İlgi yazıda söz konusu edilen Alper BALTACI, Aysun DEMİR, Gamze KALYONCU, Ömer CENGİZ isimli öğrencilerin tez evrakları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Kurulunda incelenerek uygun görülmüştür.

Bilgilerinizi ve gereğini rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Ünal AY
Rektör