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THE IMPACT OF AUTONOMOUS LEARNING ON GRADUATE STUDENTS' PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Ph.D.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation **"The impact of Autonomous Learning on Graduate Students' proficiency level in Foreign Language Learning**" was written by me in accordance with academic rules and ethical values. I also confirm that I benefitted from a lot of works and showed them in reference part. 29.07.2016

Halil KÜÇÜKLER

To my dearest daughters, Sevdenur and Suedanur and my wife Melek,
who always supported me in every phase of this study

FOREWORD

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ABBREVIATIONS

CALL : Computer assisted language learning
EFL : English Foreign Language
SCL : Student Centred Learning
SILL : Strategy Inventory for Language Learning
SRL : Self-Regulated Learning
ELT : English Language Teaching
L1 : The student's native language
L2 : The language being learned or studied
ALQ : Autonomy Learner Questionnaire
SPSS : Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SAC : Self-access Centre
YDS : English Proficiency Exam for Turks
PLSPQ : The Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire

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YABANCI DİL ÖĞRENMEDE LİSANSÜSTÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN YETERLİLİK SEVİYELERİNDE ÖZERK ÖĞRENMENİN ETKİSİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, özerk öğrenmenin lisans üstü öğrencilerin yabancı dil yeterlilik düzeyleri üzerindeki etkisini araştırmaktır. Bu çalışma(tez), 2014-2015 öğretim yılında, Balıkesir Üniversitesinde gerçekleştirilen iki çalışmaya dayanmaktadır. Çalışmanın birinci bölümü, lisans mezunu öğrencilerin kullandıkları yabancı dil öğrenme strateji ve yöntemlerinde ne oranda özerk olduklarıyla ilgili bir anket çalışmasını içermektedir. Çalışmanın ikinci bölümü, öğrencilerin ders alma ve almama durumlarına göre ortaya çıkan öğrenme farklılıklarını belirlemek için lisans üstü iki grup öğrencinin sınav sonuçlarını karşılaştıran deneysel bir çalışmadan oluşmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın birinci bölümü için lisans üstü öğrencilere iki farklı anket uygulanmıştır. Birinci anket, Zhang ve Li tarafından (2004) yılında yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğreniminde öğrencilerin nasıl özerk olduklarını belirlemek üzere geliştirilen '*Özerk Öğrenme Aktiviteleri ve Planları*' anketidir. İkinci anket, Reid tarafından (1987) yılında geliştirilen '*Algısal Öğrenme Stili Tercih Anketi*'dir. Bu anketler, 2014-2015 öğretim yılında Balıkesir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Sağlık ve Fen Bilimleri Enstitülerinde yüksek lisans yapan 750 öğrenciye gönderilmiş; bu öğrencilerden 504'ü bu anket sorularına cevap vermiştir. Bu anketlerden sonra aynı üniversitede yüksek lisans yapan öğrenciler için YDS sınavına hazırlık amaçlı iki farklı kurs programı uygulanacağı ilan edilmiştir. Bu anketlerin değerlendirilmesi sonucunda 30 öğrenci bu kurs programına katılacağını belirtmiştir. Bu 30 kişilik gruba ileri düzeyde İngilizce yeterlilik sınavı uygulanmıştır. Daha sonra 30 kişilik bu öğrenci grubu, gönüllülük esasına göre 15'er kişilik kontrol ve araştırma grubu olmak üzere ikiye ayrılmıştır.

Bu araştırmada kontrol grubuna sınıf ortamında geleneksel yöntemle düzenli olarak ders verilmiştir. Deney grubu ise derse katılmadan özerk öğrenme modeliyle sınava hazırlanmıştır. Çalışmaya katılan her iki grubun öğrenme ve strateji farklılıklarını görmek için katılımcılara SILL (Dil Öğrenme Stratejileri, Oxford, 1990) anketi de uygulanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın birinci bölümünün anket sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların % 73,2'sinin sınıf ortamında, % 25,8'inin özerk öğrenme yöntemiyle İngilizce öğrenmeyi tercih ettikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde uygulanan SILL (Dil Öğrenme Stratejileri) anketinin sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların dil stratejilerini kullanma eğilimlerinin ileri düzeyde (M:3,5-5.00)değil de orta düzeyde (M:2,9) olduğu belirlenmiştir. Yine bu çalışmanın ikinci bölümünde yer alan ve kontrol ve araştırma grubu olmak üzere yapılan deneysel çalışmanın sonucuna göre özerk öğrenme ile sınıf ortamında yabancı dil öğrenme arasında anlamlı bir fark olmadığı

ortaya çıkmıştır. Kontrol grubu % 48, 03; araştırma grubu % 47, 25 değerlerine sahiptir. Çalışmanın genelinden çıkan sonuçlara göre Yabancı Dil Yeterlilik Sınavı (YDS)'na hazırlanmada sınıf ortamında öğrenim gören kontrol grubunun özerk öğrenme grubu olan araştırma grubuna göre daha başarılı olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *özerk öğrenme, özerk dil öğrenme, özerk öğrenci, öğrenme stratejileri*

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level in foreign language learning. This study is based upon two types of research conducted at Balıkesir University in the academic years of 2014-2015. The first one is survey analysis on the graduate (Master of Arts) students' foreign language learning styles and strategies to find out what extent they are autonomous. The second one is an experimental study which compares the exam results of two groups of graduate students to find out the instructed and non-instructed learning differences.

Two kinds of questionnaires were administered. The first one was learner autonomy survey questionnaire developed by Zhang and Li (2004), which was administered to investigate how autonomous the participants were in learning English as a foreign language. The second one was the perceptual learning style preference questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Reid (1987). The two questionnaires were administered to 750 graduate students enrolled in the Institution of Social, Science Institution and the Health Institution at Balıkesir University in the academic years of 2014-2015. Only 504 graduate students responded the questionnaires. Then it was announced that there would be two types of English YDS preparation courses for the participants enrolled at Balıkesir University, Institute of M.A programs. 30 participants applied to join the courses. The participants are assigned to two groups, as instructed (control group) and non-instructed (research group) on voluntary bases. The instructed group attended English classes but non-instructed group worked for YDS exam in their free times, on their own and did not receive any lectures. During the study, one more questionnaire SILL (Oxford, 1990)(the learning strategy inventory for language learners' survey) was also administered to the instructed and non-instructed groups of students (30) to see the learning and strategy differences of both groups. The duration of the study was six months.

The results of data analysis showed that most of the participants preferred to learn English in class. But few students believed that they would be successful by self-study. The learners did not use strategies in high level (M:3,5-5.00) but they used them in medium (M:2,9) level. The findings revealed that there is not a significant difference between the instructed and non-instructed classes based on the results of the sample language proficiency tests (YDS) and real YDS scores. The mean of last formal YDS exam of the experimental group is 47, 25 and the mean of the control

group is 48, 03. We can, thus, come to conclusion that YDS exam preparation is more teacher dependent than individual autonomous study.

Keywords: *autonomous learning, language learning autonomy, learning strategies, learner autonomy*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Student-centred learning has been given much consideration over the last two decades, especially in foreign language learning where research concern has changed from teacher centred instruction to learner-centred view. Similarly, learner autonomy has been given much emphasis in foreign language education, particularly in relation to lifelong learning skills. Learner autonomy has transformed old practices in language classes. It has become the basis for the establishment of self-access language learning centres all over the world. Holec (1981) defines autonomous learning as the ability of an individual to reflect own experiences and subsequently take control of his or her learning thereafter. Compared to non-autonomous learning, autonomous learning is considered more effective. On the other hand, language proficiency is generally defined as the ability of a person to effectively use a language for various purposes such as writing, reading, listening, and speaking (Birgit, 1990).

Various studies have concluded that experts in various fields use more systematic and effective native-language reading comprehension strategies than novices (Rebecca & Martha, 1999). Language learners who end up with better language proficiency use language learning strategies that suit their age, personality, the purpose of learning, the stage of learning, and the type of language (Rebecca & Martha, 1999). In essence, suitable learning strategies fundamentally explain the performance of good language learner whereas unsuitable learning strategies explain the recurrent failure of poor language learners, and occasional weakness of good language learners.

Other than autonomous learning, other learning strategies include learner-centeredness and learning-centeredness (Richard *et al*., 1996). Learner-centeredness is characterized by what is taught, when it is taught, how it is taught, and the type of assessment that is made, in reference to the learner. On the other hand, learning-

centeredness is characterized by dual complementary aims that include focusing on language content and focusing on learning process (Jeffrey & Nancy, 2005). This paper focuses on autonomous learning in respect to proficiency level of graduate students in foreign language learning.

1.1.1 Foreign language learning

Foreign language learners acquire a new language in many ways, which include hearing and seeing, reasoning logically and intuitively, reflecting and acting, and memorizing and visualizing (Richard & Eunice, 1995). The speed at which a student learns a foreign language depends not only on the student's prior preparation and native ability, but also on the instructor's criterion of teaching and the student's characteristic approach to learning. The means in which a foreign language learner acquires, stores, and retrieves acquired information largely depend on his or her learning style and strategy. According to Felder & Silverman (1988), a mismatch between the teaching style of an instructor and learning strategy of a student is potentially detrimental to the acquisition of a foreign language. The mismatch is characterized by things such as students being bored and inattentive in class, students performing poorly in tests, and students concluding that they are not good at acquiring the foreign language and ultimately dropping out of the course (Richard & Eunice, 1995). In addition, the type of presentation mode of a foreign language determines the level of acquisition of the language. Generally, there are two main types of language presentation mode namely deductive and inductive presentation. Deductive presentation entails a foreign language learner beginning with the axioms, rules, or principles, deducing consequences, and formulating applications (Michael & Anna, 1990). On the other hand, inductive presentation is characterized by a student making an observation and inferring the governing principles.

The distinction between deductive and inductive presentation in respect to foreign language learning is fundamental in the acquisition of a foreign language (Graham, 2011). Language acquisition hereby means to gradually pick up the language, and to gain the ability to effectively communicate the language without necessarily articulating the rules. In essence, foreign language learners gradually absorb what they can from the constant input that bombards them, that is, everyday increasing their ability to make sense of, retain, and put into practice what they have absorbed

(Richard et al., 1996). Throughout the learning process, the learners improve their abilities to transfer learning styles and strategies, make assumptions on the emerging language system, and formulate and test principles and rules and either keep or discard them. This process, which is basically subconscious, continues until the learners fossilize. Fossilization happens when learners feel they have acquired what is necessary to communicate in the new language. The overall presentation that progresses from specifics to generalizations is fundamentally an inductive process (Graham, 2011). Thus, foreign language learners generally use inductive process to acquire a new language.

1.1.2 Importance of Proficiency

The importance of language proficiency in improving educational performance through enhanced communication can never be emphasized enough (Ludo & John, 1992). It has been observed that students who portray difficulties in language proficiency may not function effectively, not only in language related fields but also in other academic fields. When language proficiency of an individual is high, it consequentially improves the academic performance of the individual. Likewise, individuals with low language proficiency have demonstrated low academic performance. In a study conducted by Yushau and Omar (2015) focusing on the importance of English language proficiency in the performance of Mathematics, it is concluded that individuals with high English proficiency concurrently demonstrate high performance in Mathematics.

In a case where academic instructions are given using a language that a learner is less proficient, the learner faces the dual challenge of having to learn in a foreign language while concomitantly learning content from another discipline through the second language (Ludo & John, 1992). This considerably slows down or at times totally impairs the learning of the subject in which a foreign language is the medium of learning. Notably, English second language learners have often been considered less competent in academic related fields in countries where English is the native language partly because of the challenges they encounter while using English as the medium of learning other academic disciplines (Yushau, 2015).

Mastering proficiency in a given language is important as it allows an individual to effectively communicate using that language (Richard & Eunice, 1995).

Communication is essential in various aspects of life, right from personal life to corporate life. In an organization setting, language proficiency enhances good communication, which in turn is a vital tool in enhancing productivity and building a strong working relationship among one's colleagues and at various levels of the organization (Ana, 2005). Learners who invest time in building their language proficiency often deliver clear instructions. Clear instructions and communication, in turn, enhance the level of trust among one's peers and morale in general. In contrast, poor language proficiency leads to poor communication. In a case where an individual poorly communicates, especially within the context of an organization, the staff often become demotivated and at times question their abilities to perform the required tasks. Moreover, language proficiency enhances the employability of an individual (Ludo & John, 1992). An individual with excellent command of the language that an employer is targeting has a greater chance of being employed than an individual with low language proficiency in the target language. According to Ana (2005), high powered business executives often hire language consultants to coach them on how to effectively communicate.

1.1.3 Importance of Autonomous Learning

In the current world, most graduate students prefer to take charge of their learning as they work toward specific goals and objectives. When such students are allowed to take control of their actions, they work towards mastering and gathering information that will increase their knowledge, improve their abilities, and enrich the overall learning experience. This is something that can be achieved through autonomous learning. According to Holec (1981), autonomous learning is a pedestal of individuals' self-study where students are largely responsible for their learning. It allows students to acquire knowledge, attitudes, and skills through interaction and self-study. Therefore, this approach to learning strives to meet the need of students to take control over their learning process by facilitating the intrinsic acquisition of knowledge.

Graduate students, just like other learners, have unique learning, evaluation, planning, and reflection strategies that determine the extent to which they achieve learning goals and objectives. Moreover, their learning process is affected by a range of affective and cognitive factors. Autonomous learning takes such unique factors and preferences into account by promoting learning independence. Moreover, it

appreciates the fact that each student can learn independently. Students' desire to exercise their independent learning skills is linked to the endeavour of being independent in life. According to Holec (1981), the tendency to ignore or underestimate students' independent learning ability leads to a gradual loss of student independence, which can have an adverse impact on the overall development of the student. Therefore, autonomous learning gives students the opportunity to learn independently and use unique learning, evaluation, planning, and reflection strategies to achieve learning goals.

In any learning environment, students and teachers strive to come up with unique ways of achieving learning goals, acquiring knowledge and mastering concepts. Since each student is unique in his or her way, the strategies used by each to master concepts are often different. Autonomous learning provides an environment that allows both students and teachers to be innovative (Cao, 2000). In such an environment, students find new ways of acquiring knowledge while teachers come up with creative ways of enhancing teaching. Central to autonomous learning is the need for students to continually strengthen their comprehensive ability by being innovative throughout the process of learning and teaching (Holec, 1981). Furthermore, it allows teachers to know how best to interact with learning and impact knowledge in different learning contexts. In the long run, students will be better placed to acquire new knowledge, adopt learning strategies that work for them, and master new concepts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Turkish universities, there has been a growing concern for academicians to publish their research work or articles using different languages, especially English. Therefore, the lack of proficiency in second languages hampers their publishing role as academicians and hence create the need to solve this problem. Notably, research academicians in various universities in Turkey defend or communicate their research findings in conferences, presses, and other forms of gatherings. Academicians with low language proficiency find themselves unable to communicate clearly during such functions, and hence the need to solve this problem. Finally, graduate scholars in different universities in Turkey are mandated to pass proficiency exam (YDS), failure to which they cannot proceed with their education. This can be frustrating and

hence helping to solve failure in YDS exam can be of importance to the scholars. For this reason, this research advocates that if scholars can embrace autonomous learning after university graduation, they are more likely to overcome the problems. As such, investigating the effect on autonomous learning on graduates' proficiency in foreign language will help to solve the problems faced by the scholars in Turkish universities that use the YDS exam. It has been observed that both prospective English teachers and academicians have difficulties in passing the YDS exam. The fact is that some people take private courses such as "dersane" to pass the exam and end up paying a lot of money. However, it is believed that students can prepare for this test based on autonomous learning model because it involves the willingness on the part of the learner to become responsible for one's own instruction.

The growing population of English language learners in Turkey has created the necessity for courses that can give learners a more advanced understanding of English so that they can use the foreign language in academic settings. Yet, many learners have limited English language proficiency and exhibit a lot of difficulties. Many academicians face difficulties in passing their foreign language proficiency exam (YDS), and as such, their academic achievements are delayed.

After graduating from high school, students take university exam and settle in different departments such as English Department, English Philology, etc. in accordance with their scores in the Foreign Language Examination (YDS). In universities that use English as the main communication medium, students take an English proficiency test. In other universities where the medium of instruction is not English, they are completely exempted from English courses. Some of the departments stated above offer intensive English program.

There is no course that specifically prepares students for YDS (English Language Proficiency exam). Therefore, students do not know much about the YDS exam, thus, a special preparation is needed. In order to work as an English teacher in the Ministry of Education schools or at the universities, a prospective teacher must take an exam called YDS and achieve a high score. The problem is that the academicians also must take the same exam to be able to continue their PhD studies.

1.3 The Purpose of the study

The aim of this study is to research the impact of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level in EFL learning and encourage them towards independent learning, with the use of the strategies applied for developing their proficiency level in foreign language. Investigating the impact of autonomous learning on graduates' proficiency in foreign language will help to solve the problems faced by scholars in passing of YDS exam in Turkish universities, publishing research work and presenting research work in international conferences. The following are the specific research objectives that underpin this study:

1. To understand the graduate students' level of autonomy and the strategies they apply while coping with proficiency problems.
2. To help learners build and enrich their language proficiency.
3. To help learners develop their metacognitive skills.
4. To find out the proficiency difficulties of graduate students in EFL.

1.4 The Hypothesis of the Study

You can teach students English in primary and secondary schools, and also in university the graduate levels but it is their own obligation, not the teachers', to develop initiative of autonomous learning in order to enhance their foreign language proficiency development. In the light of this postulation, the hypothesis of this study is as follow: Graduate students are expected to have better language proficiency score through autonomous learning.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to achieve the desired goal and to approve or disapprove the hypothesis of the research, the following research questions will be answered:

1. What are the graduate students' learning styles and strategies?
2. To what degree are graduate students autonomous in their foreign language proficiency development?
3. What is the difference between instructed and non-instructed FL proficiency development and does this have any correlation with the graduate students' YDS results?

4. Can learners improve their language proficiency through autonomous learning?

1.6 Research methods

The present study embraced an experimental approach to research, gather data and analyse it. The data that was collected regards the influence of autonomous learning on graduate student's proficiency level in English learning. Experimental research design involves the manipulation of a variable of interest while randomizing the dependent factors. The experimental research design included a 'study group' of respondents whose results were compared with that of another group referred to as the 'control group'. Another part of the study involved a survey. The experimental research design was quantitative in nature, as opposed to qualitative. Quantitative research was ideal for the present project because it allows the researcher to analyse data using statistical manipulation, as opposed to analysis based on story narrations as in the case of the qualitative approach. Quantitative research facilitated quantification of the degree to which the graduate students are autonomous in their foreign language proficiency development. In addition, the approach enabled comparison of whether there is a difference between autonomous and instructed learners based on language proficiency tests (YDS) and real YDS scores.

1.6.1 Sampling and participants

The research used purposive sampling to recruit participants. Purposive sampling was convenient for the researcher because it saves time. This characteristic of purposive sampling is accrued to the fact that, in this sampling strategy, the researcher had the freedom to recruit participants purposively as long as they were willing to take part in the study. All the research participants were from the Institutes of Health and Social Sciences of Balıkesir University. For the case study, the sample comprised of 30 graduate students enrolled at the Institute of Social, Institute of Science and Institute of Health for MA program at Balıkesir University. The subjects took a proficiency test at the beginning of November (academic year 2014-2015) and the results were used to establish two groups for the research.

1.6.2 Data collection

Data was collected using a combination of two techniques. The first was the use of autonomous Learner Questionnaire (Zhang and Li, 2004). The second one was the perceptual learning style preference questionnaire (PLSPQ) developed by Reid (1987). The first technique guided the use of questionnaires for the survey and the second technique guided the use of proficiency tests for the English course case study that involved students who enrolled into the language course. The Learner Autonomy Survey questionnaire was administered to see how autonomous the learners were in learning English. Learner autonomy survey questionnaire enabled the researcher to recognize the independent learning styles and methods that participants used to improve proficiency in English. The PLSPQ was also employed to profile the roles of learner and the teacher. At the beginning of the English course, The SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning; Oxford, 1989) was applied to the learners. The questionnaire was used to identify what sort of language learning strategies graduate students use for YDS exam. Before the research, the contents of the course for both autonomous group and control group were prepared and the treatment for the experimental group was designed. In addition to this, a sample YDS was employed every two weeks. In short, data was collected from the control and experimental groups that passed YDS proficiency exam.

1.6.3 Data analysis

The goal of this research was to study the effect of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level in English learning. To analyse the research data collected from both the questionnaires survey and English course case study, a combination of both descriptive and inferential statistics was used.

Descriptive statistics involves calculation of measures of central tendency such as the mean, percentiles, and standard deviation and graphical and tabulation techniques. In addition to this, inferential statistics was used to generalise the descriptive results of the population from which the research sample was drawn (Trochim, Donnelly & Arora, 2015)

In this research, the study population includes graduates who aim to improve their proficiency level in foreign language learning. The inferential statistics include calculation of mean comparison techniques, such as the independent samples t-tests.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research will contribute to the understanding of the differences that exist between the traditional teacher-centred and autonomous graduate learners based on the results of the sample English proficiency tests (YDS) and real YDS scores. This will help to come to conclusion on whether YDS exam preparation is more dependent on teacher or individual autonomous study.

1.8 Permission of the study

The permission to conduct this empirical study was sought from the Balıkesir University in writing. The request was meant to get the university's consent to carry out the research. A letter was written to the head of Department of Foreign Language Studies. In addition, the researcher sought the informed consent of the participants. By signing an informed consent form, they acknowledged that they were fully informed about what the research involved and that their participation in this study was voluntary.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The research was conducted by a single researcher, a student, with limited time and financial resources. Therefore, the sample used, though adequate, may not have been entirely representative of the entire population of ESL learners. Since all the learners were drawn from the Science, Social and Health Institutes, the study is limited to the Institutes of Balıkesir University.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Teaching is a complex practice and can sometimes be very demanding especially when dealing with learners who do not have self-motivation. McCombs (2011, p. 1) emphasizes that teachers need to recognize the important connection between learner motivation and self-determination. Thanasoulas (2000) noted that these concepts have gained momentum since the 1980s, especially within the context of language learning. This is because of the widely held belief that more communicatively oriented language learning as well as teaching is largely dependent on the learner's role in the process of language learning. (Wenden 1998, p. xi). This means that language learning process is shifting responsibility from the teacher to the learner, or in other words, from teacher-centred to a more learner-centred learning. This marks a power shift in the teaching/learning process which was primarily held by the teacher in the traditional classroom. It allows some capacities for detachment, analytical reflection, and decision-making in the learning process, as well as autonomy of action since autonomous learners are supposed to have greater responsibility for, as well as taking control of, their learning (Thanasoulas 2000). McCombs (2011, p. 1) argued that motivation for learning is highly associated with whether or not a learner has opportunities to be autonomous and make important academic decisions. Learner-centred teaching/learning or autonomous learning however does not mean that the teacher abdicates his/her role in the language teaching/learning process. The teacher ought to help the learner to assume greater responsibility of his/her own learning and to become aware of as well as identify strategies that the learner could use to achieve this (James& Garrett 1991, p. 198).

2.2 Threshold Level Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) was published by the Council of Europe to be used as a reference for language teaching and learning at all levels as well as a European Language Portfolio which the council defined as a

common instrument that allows individuals who desire to maintain a record of the various elements of their language learning experience and achievement, be it formal or informal. This framework has been adopted by various countries in Europe . According to the recommendations, the framework will be used in the planning of language learning programmes, self-directed learning, and language certification (Little, 2001).

The original aim of CEFR was to provide guidance and a method of teaching, assessing and learning languages (İlin & Yildirim 2012). Little (2001) explains that the purpose of the framework is provide a common basis for elaboration of curriculum guidelines, language syllabuses, textbooks, and examinations among other related elements across Europe so as to serve the agenda of the Council of Europe with regards to cultural, educational and political matters. According to this author, this framework seeks to promote the development of learner autonomy and gives as much importance to learner self-assessment as it does to assessment by teachers and external authorities. By referring to CEFR's common reference levels, it means that language learning goals as well as content, irrespective of the context can be articulated as a collection of "I can" descriptors (Little, 2016). According to Little, the CEFR is an effective application to language learning in higher education particularly with regards to the definition of aims as well as learning outcomes and fostering of learners' capacity to manage their own learning (autonomous learning).

Studies on the effectiveness of this framework are scarce. While the framework is has been widely adopted across Europe and education programs implemented to provide in-service language teachers with ground to familiarize themselves with the framework, not much is known how teachers view this framework and its effectiveness in teaching or learning languages. İlin (2014) sought to establish this by conducting a study in Turkey which involved examining the opinion of teachers and students regarding the framework in terms of its positive and negative aspects. The views were explored from three viewpoints. First, the opinions of the participants regarding CEFR in general, secondly, their opinions on the efficacy as well as feasibility of CEFR, and third, their views on the negative and positive features of what CEFR brings to foreign language teaching. The study found that both teachers and students find the framework to be effective in terms of how it contributes to

language skills of the learner as it fosters communication as well as integration of all the four skills which the participants regard as a positive change in the way of teaching languages. The framework insists on placing the language learners as the centre of the lesson and emphasizes on modifying the assessment processes so that they are more relevant to the characteristic of the student at different levels of their learning process (Figueras, 2007). This process, according to the surveyed teachers and students, effectively satisfies learner needs in today's globalised world as it emphasizes on cultural interaction (İlin, 2014). The study also found that CEFR is viewed to be an effective means for ensuring that standards are maintained in the area of language learning.

Although the framework was found to be effective, it was found not to be feasible in the Turkish context from the perspective of the participants (İlin, 2014). The study identified that the main inhibiting factors that prevent feasible use of the framework include; the fact that most teachers still utilize the traditional approaches, economical inequalities in the country, and inability to synchronize objectives with practices so that more self reliant language learners can be trained. According to this study, there is need for in-service teacher education programmes that will enable language teachers to refresh their skills and knowledge, be informed of the latest development in the area of language teaching and learning, and have the opportunity to discuss and exchange ideas with their trainers as well as colleagues on how to improve the language teaching. İlin (2014) also emphasize on the need for teachers to be motivated with rewards and better wages or international exchange programs, and for schools to create better teaching conditions by making the classes less crowded and providing the required technological support as key to ensuring effective utilization of CEFR and reducing resistant to the change associated with its application. On the question of the positive and negative sides of the framework, İlin (2014) established more positive remarks than negative ones. The negative comments mainly criticized the irrelevance of CEFR to the Turkish context and not the framework itself.

Similar results were found by Hismanoglu (2013) who sought to establish whether the English language teacher education curriculum established in the year 2006 promotes the recommendations and language teachers; awareness of the CEFR framework that seeks to bring standards to modern teaching of language. The study

established that teachers have positive perceptions as well as high awareness levels regarding the CEFR framework and have great willingness to apply the framework in the ELTE curriculum as they believe that the framework offers more concurrent and better instructional skills. This study also established that use of the framework fosters self-reliance among language learners and enhances autonomous learning.

2.3 Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding

The linked notions of ZPD and scaffolding are key to many recent studies on teaching and learning. Bruner (1978) defines scaffolding as cognitive support that is provided by teachers to the students to assist them solve tasks that they would otherwise not be able to resolve working on their own without this support. He further describes it as a vicarious consciousness of sorts in which learners are taken beyond themselves through engagement in the consciousness of the instructor /teacher. This concept is closely associated with the ZPD concept developed by Vygotsky who describes it in his own words as "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential problem solving as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more able peers (1978: 86)."

Whereas collaboration with colleagues is mentioned by Vygotsky, it is apparent that he refers only to 'more capable peers", meaning that there must exist an intellectual asymmetry between the participants in any joint event. This is in line with Vygotsky's view of teaching and learning in which he assumes the same asymmetry (Fernández et al., 2001). Other studies have however noted that learning also takes place in collaboration between students whose conceptual understanding levels are similar. This implies symmetrical interactions can also lead to learning and development (Shabani et al., 2010).

2.4 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky suggests ZPD as a dynamic alternative to frameworks and models used in conventional psychological testing of individual ability (1978). This author suggested assessment of what an individual can do with the help of a teacher or an adult rather than assessing what they can do without help. Vygotsky hypothesized

that children who have achieved similar levels of conceptual development might differ in their readiness or potential to attain higher levels of understanding and that such differences can be exposed by providing structured help. This hypothesis has however been left to other scholars to explore so as to establish the implications as well as potential of the ZPD for educational as well as psychological research.

Shabani et al., (2010) explored the implications of Vygotsky's ZPD theory on instruction and professional development of teachers by exploring the contribution of ZPD to scaffolding and dynamic assessment concepts. This study established that ZPD through dynamic assessment notion, which it influences, provides an operational view of the actual level of the learner as well as a measure of both emerging and imminent development. It was also found that using ZPD concept unites instruction, traditional assessment, intervention and remediation. These scholars established that although ZPD offers an attractive framework for designing instruction and assessing learning, putting the model into practice poses serious challenges.

Rogoff et al (1989) found that ZPD is a crucial element in a learning process that is based on culture whereby children learn appropriate skills and knowledge from members of their society who have more expertise. This is in line with Vygotsky's argument that cognitive processes come out first at social level after which they are internalized and then transformed as individual ways of doing things or thinking (Vygotsky, 1987). Fernández et al., (2001) applied the ZPD concept in analysis of language interactions between teachers and students. These authors explain that a parent, teachers or a peer who is more capable offers directions and modeling to the child, to which the child responds through imitation. This implies that the concept needs to be reformulated and expanded beyond the asymmetrical and individual focus as is argued by Vogotsky. Fernández et al., argue that culture and cognition are dependent on each other as they create each other. They argue that symmetrical interactions enable children develop ways of understanding which is a result of their effort to apply the tools provided by their culture. Culture is therefore regenerated by the learners' efforts as they work together to apply and adapt these tools. Interaction with culture is therefore viewed as giving the children an opportunity to participate in

tasks and goals that they would not have been able to achieve alone (Fernández et al., 2001).

2.5 Scaffolding and Motivation for Autonomous Learning

The scaffolding concept has its origin in the works of Vygotsky (a psychologist) and in the early language learning studies. This concept was first used in educational context by Wood et al., (1976) who sought to explain how adults assist infants learn how resolve problems. These authors argued that for learning to occur, there must be appropriate social interactional frameworks. Wood et al., (1976) found that adults do not just demonstrate to infants how to solve problems or simply tell them how to do it, instead adults use the following six strategies; recruitment, direction and maintenance, reducing degree of freedom, frustration control, marking crucial features, and demonstration to support children's efforts temporarily until they attain sufficient skill. These are considered to be the original scaffolding strategies and it is important to note that three of them (frustration control, recruitment, and direction maintenance) are motivational while the remaining three are cognitive (Belland et al., (2013). Therefore scaffolding originally sought to enhance motivation and provide cognitive support in equal measures.

Instructional scaffolding notion was used by Applebee and Langer (1983) as a way of describing essential features of formal instruction. These authors argue that learning is a process that involves gradual internalization of the procedures as well as routines that are available to the learner from the cultural and social context in which the learning process occurs. In instructional scaffolding, the language student is assisted in tackling a new task by a language user who is more skilled and who models/designs the language task that is to be used either in writing or verbally (Applebee & Langer, 1983). Scaffolding is provided through modeling as well as through leading and probing questions that seek to elaborate or extend the knowledge already possessed by the learner. The teacher supports, encourages and provides additional props to the learner rather than evaluating their answers. Scaffolding gradually reduces as the learner's proficiency and competence grows until that point they are able to function autonomously with regards to that specific task and generalize to comparable circumstances.

Aphlebee (1986) identifies the following five criteria for effective scaffolding;

1. Ownership of the learning episode/event by the learner

The instructional task should allow the learners to make their own individual contribution to the activity as it progresses

2. How appropriate the instructional task is

This implies that the tasks should seek to build upon the knowledge as well as skills already possessed by the student but need to also be difficult enough to allow new and further learning to take place

3. A structured learning environment

Such an environment will provide a natural sequence of thought and language hence present the learner with useful strategies as well as approaches to tackle the task.

4. Shared responsibility

This implies that tasks should be solved jointly (by both the student and the teacher) as they interact in the course of instruction so that the teacher's role is collaborative rather than evaluative.

5. Transfer of control

As the learners internalize new routines and procedures, they should be guided to take greater responsibility for controlling the learning process and progress of the specific task such that the level of interaction actually increases as the student becomes more proficient and competent in the language.

Aphlebee (1986) highlights that the most interesting features of the five principles is that they present a new way of thinking about teaching routines that one is familiar with rather than encouraging wholesale abandonment of one's previous knowledge. Other scholars such as Long and Sato (1984) view conversational scaffolding as the starting point for language acquisition. According to Hatch (1978), language learning develops out of learning how to make a conversation from which syntactic constructions then develop. According to Hatch, the learner/student first learns how to conduct a conversation and then out of this interaction, they develop syntactic forms rather than what is assumed that form is learned and then used in discourse. This authors explains that constructing a conversation with a partner (termed as vertical construction), enables the learner to establish the prototypes that will be used for future syntactic development.

2.6 Scaffolding and Autonomous Learning

Belland et al., (2013) explain that teachers dynamically support the motivational needs of learners by applying teacher scaffolds. According to these authors, motivational support can be enhanced by incorporating motivational support computer-based scaffolds. Motivation in this context is regarded as the motivational goals of promoting autonomy, belonging, mastery goals, emotion regulation and expectancy for success Belland et al.,(2013) explain that these are the widely recommended goals in motivational literature. These scholars explain that autonomy is positively linked to positive learning processes as well as outcomes including deep learning and cognitive flexibility. Since autonomy is an inner approval of one's actions as emanating from oneself and acknowledging that they are one's own, an environment that supports autonomy can result in motivation for it being more intrinsic (Rienties et al., 2012). According to the authors, autonomy support can be achieved by providing opportunities for the learners to make choices, start self directed goals, and reducing pressures and threats directed at them.

In their explanation of how scaffolding can be used to promote autonomy, Belland et al., (2013) identify the following three guidelines which are borrowed from motivational literature; providing cognitive choices that are meaningful, using non-controlling language, and helping/encouraging learners to direct and take charge of their own learning. According to the authors, teachers can build the perceptions of their students regarding autonomy by providing cognitive choices as this allows the students to feel that they are in charge of their own decisions and actions. Secondly, the authors explain that teachers should use non-controlling language in any conservation they have with students. This implies that any language that will direct the students to act or think in a particular way through a threat such as assigning a bad grade or through pressure should be shunned as controlling language deters development of self-regulation and self-interest. According Su and Reeve (2010), explanatory rationales should instead be used o enable students understand the benefit of doing the specific target action. These authors point out that this can be achieved in two ways; 1) by incorporating in the scaffolding messages only non-controlling language, and 2), by portraying to the learners how beneficial learning of the scaffolded processes is to self-development. Thirdly, Belland et al., (2013)

explain that students should be able to direct and take charge of their own learning, identify learning problems, identify and employ strategies to tackle the learning problems/issues, and assess the effectiveness of the deployed strategies. Su and Reeve (2010) point out that self direction of learning is key in promoting autonomy and does not come naturally to individuals hence students need to be supported to develop it through scaffolding.

2.7 History of Autonomous Learning

The concept autonomous learning emerged in the 1970s (Little 2004, p. 15; Peters 2001, p. 46). During this period, the behaviourist approach to learning dominated education practice. It was used to refer to the 'self-determination' concept (or self-determination of students in this context). The deterministic perspective of behaviourists such as B. F. Skinner was based on the idea that people have free will to choose how they act; in other words, our behaviours are self-determined (Deci& Ryan 2006, p. 1560). In Moore's (1973) understanding, self-determination of students referred to students learning autonomously, deciding on their learning themselves of their own accord (Peters 2001, p. 1). The behaviourist's perspective defined autonomy as the regulation by the self (Deci& Ryan 2006, p. 1557). Moore (1973) used this concept to develop work for distance education and to argue against hegemony of educational technologists when the world was focusing on massive technological change in pedagogics and programmed instruction. Hegemony means "controlled regulation or regulation that occurs without self-endorsement" (Deci& Ryan 2006, p. 1557). Moore (1973) argued that adult education should be characterized by greater autonomy where adult learners engage in some form of self-directed learning.

Autonomous learning concept has since received greater attention from scholars and authors and has been widely applied in teaching/learning context. Several terms are today used to refer to autonomous learning, including: 'self-controlled learning', 'self-regulated learning', 'self-organized learning', and 'self-determined learning', which show the growing importance and acceptance of autonomous learning (Peters 2001, p. 47). The concept has been used to develop distance education programs and to engage students in experiments. In the 1990s, the concept was widely being applied in language pedagogy, including in foreign language classrooms (Little 2004,

p. 15). Interest in autonomous language learning has grown significantly in the 21st century to the extent that the number of books and papers published since the turn of the century matches those published between 1970 and 2000 (Benson 2011, p. 3)

2.8 Learner Autonomy

Autonomous learning, sometimes referred to as learner-centred or flexible learning, is a complex concept and therefore does not have precise definition (Little 2004). It is generally associated with the change in focus in classroom learning from the teacher to the learning. As MacDougall simply put forward autonomous learning is a kind of learning that is featured by "personalization, self-directedness, and less dependency on the educator for affirmation, and which therefore enhances rather than hinders the capacity for constructive collaborative participation in the learning process". (2008, p. 224) Self-directed learning is very important because it helps achieve effective engagement or quality participation in the learning process. It means that the learner is encouraged to restructure his/her existing knowledge or beliefs into a system of beliefs, conceptualizations, and values, as well as forming of reasoning which are the characteristics cognitive development of a mature.

Holec (1981, p. 3) provided a more comprehensive definition of learner autonomy in the context a university language learner and described it as the learner's skill to take control of learning and the responsibility for the decisions that are relevant to all features of learning including: deciding about the learning goals ; describing the content of learning as well as progressions such as; "choosing the suitable methods and the techniques used for learning; and checking the acquisition procedures necessary for proper and fluent speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.)"; and assessing or reflecting on acquired knowledge. Holec, who later summarized the explanation of learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" was one of the earliest proponents of leaner autonomy in learning process (Holec 2001, p. 48). Holec's perspective on the definition of learner autonomy is shared by Dickson's (1987), who defined it as "a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his or her learning and implementation of those decisions" (cited in Gardner & Miller 1996, p. 6). From these definitions, autonomous learning can be noted to be characterized by learner independence and learner taking greater responsibility of his/her learning, with the help of the teacher.

Taking responsibility in this case means taking ownership, fully or partially, of the many learning process including setting objectives, deciding about the methods to be used, as well as assessing the learning process (Yan 2012, p. 558), which were traditionally the roles of the teacher. This means that the learner is helped and encouraged to assume maximum amount of responsibility for what he/she wants to learn as well as how to learn it.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

Autonomous learning or learner-centred learning is founded on the constructivist theory of learning, initially developed by John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and Jean Piaget. Constructivism is largely based on Piaget's work. For Constructivists learning is knowledge constructing process through "active, mental process of development" or active construction of meaning (Gray 1997). Knowledge construction is dependent on four principles: what the learner already knows; ability to build new ideas by adapting or changing the old ones; ability to invent new ideas rather than mechanically accumulating facts; and ability to evaluate and reflect on the old ideas to come to new conclusions.

According to Piaget (1977), learning occurs through active construction of meaning as opposed to passive recipient. Piaget noted that when a learner encounters an experience or situation that contradicts the current thinking or knowledge held, a state of disequilibrium or imbalance occurs. The brain would then make attempts to restore equilibrium by making sense to the new information. This is done by associating the new information with what the learner already knows or by assimilating it into the existing knowledge. When the assimilation does not occur, the accommodation of the acquired knowledge occurs with the old way of thinking through reconstructing the present knowledge to a higher degree of thinking.

Piaget's view is consistent with the proposition of Kelly's theory of personal constructs. Kelly (1991) hypothesized that mental constructs and structures that they create determine the way people perceive the world. People's experiences determine how they construe or understand the world such that when they encounter new experiences, they attempt to fit the patterns over the new experiences.

The constructivist view generally holds that each learner constructs his/her own understanding based on previously acquired knowledge as well as current learning experiences. That is, learners actively construct knowledge while making references to existing cognitive structures (Piaget 1997). Jean Piaget and William Perry's conclusion is that "knowledge comprises active systems of intentional mental representations derived from past learning experiences derived from past learning experiences" (Damman 2007, pp. 3-4; University of California Berkeley n.d.; Vronsky 2014, p. 563). A learner would therefore interpret experiences and new information with regards to his/her extant knowledge, stage of cognitive development, personal history or experiences, cultural background, and so on. The learner would benefit from such factors to organize his/her experiences as well as selecting and transforming new knowledge.

The cognitive constructivist perspective views learning as "a process of constructing meaning, which is how people make sense of their experiences" (Baumgartner, Caffarella, & Merriam 2007, p. 291). Learners construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world around them through meaningful experiences and reflection on those experiences. As such, it places many emphasis on activity and discovery, as well as putting the learner at center as an autonomous learning (Collins 2008, p. 1).

The theory holds that learners construct knowledge by actively participating in experienced-based learning or meaningful learning activities (Baumgartner et al. 2007, p. 291). In other words, knowledge is actively constructed and therefore learning has to be presented in a way that allows for discovery (Piaget 1977). Basically, the constructivist view of learning advocates for engaging the learner in learning experiences that allows him/her to construct knowledge on his/her own, such as experiments, real-world problem solving, discovery learning, and so on, and to question him/herself and the learning strategies used to acquire and construct knowledge.

2.10 The Autonomous Learner and the Role of an Autonomous Learner

Autonomous learning is very important in language learning because of several reasons (Espinosa 2015, p. 115). One, it gives a learner the opportunity to take lead of his/her learning process. Two, it empowers the learner to be an independent user of the language. Pennycook (1997) emphasized that a learner needs to be

autonomous to learn as well as use the language. Three, it makes the learner aware that the teacher will not always be there to direct his/her learning process and this makes the learner to become more effective. Four, the autonomy accorded to the learner in itself makes the learner become motivated and enthusiastic towards learning, a view that is shared by Dickson (1995). Five, an autonomous learner is more secure in his/her learning. According to Espinosa (2015, p. 115), all these factors work to enhance language learning. Understanding the aim of his/ her learning programme, explicitly accepting the responsibility for the learning process, taking initiatives in planning as well as executing the activities, participating in the setting of the learning purposes, consistently reviewing his/her learning and measuring it effectiveness are the characteristics of an independent learner. (Holec 1981; Little 1991, 2004). An autonomous learner is therefore one who has developed some learning strategies and as a result can control his/her way of learning (Bajrami 2015, p. 423). This means that it is generally agreed that learner autonomy requires insight, a positive manner, ability to conduct own learning reflection, as well as being ready to have a proactive role in self-management and interacting with others.(Jingnan 2011, p. 28; Little 2004).

The learner's role in an autonomous learning set up is to actively join in the learning process, taking charge of own learning according to his/her needs and goals (Bajrami 2015, p. 425; Parab 2015, p. 58). The learner is expected to understand the objectives of learning specific contents, accept responsibility for own learning, take initiative in planning and executing learning activities, and engage in self-appraisal of own learning. Wenden (1998) outlined seven roles of the autonomous learner related to language learning: (a) the learner must be knowledgeable about their learning styles as well as strategies; (b) the learner must take active approach to the learning tasks at hand; (c) the learner must be willing to take risks important to his/her learning, such as communicating in the target language at all costs; (d) the learner must be good at guessing; (e) the leaner must attend to form and content, meaning he/she has to give importance to accuracy along with appropriateness (f) the learner must improve the target language into a separate reference system and be eager to review and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply; and (g) the learner must adopt a tolerant as well as outgoing approach to the target language. Researchers have suggested that

learners should keep self-reports, diaries and evaluation sheets, and logbooks among others to keep track of their learning progress (Thanasoulas 2000).

2.11 Conditions for Autonomous Learning

According to de Leon (2010, p. 291) and Thanasoulas (2000), autonomous learning is largely dependent on learner characteristics, which include motivation, attitudes, learning strategies such as cognitive and metacognitive, as well as language learning knowledge. These, however, do not mean that the learner can therefore learn on his/her own without the teacher; they only make it possible for the learner to attain autonomy. The teacher plays a very crucial act in guiding the learner during the learning process.

2.12 Learning strategies

Learning strategies are very important in developing learner autonomy because they help the learner study inside and outside the classroom, and as a result, develop own vision of learning (Espinosa 2010, p. 295). As Thanasoulas (2000) put forward special thoughts and attitudes are the learning strategies used by a learner to help him/her perceive, learn and retain new knowledge. Wenden (1998, p. 18) provided a definition within the context of language learning, as "mental steps or operations that learners use to learn new language and regulate their efforts to do so". Oxford (1999, p. 110) also described learning strategies as "specific actions, behaviours, steps, or techniques, such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task, used by students to enhance their own learning".

The common strategies are described below:

2.12.1 Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies "operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning" (O'Malley& Chamot 1990, p. 44; Thanasoulas 2000). They include: repeating new words in the head until one memorises them; experimenting using the newly learnt words in conversations; guessing the meaning of unknown words; choosing to use the foreign language as much as possible; recording oneself speaking and judging one's pronunciation; paraphrasing; choosing

the area of vocabulary to exploit; asking for clarification; and so on (Pulverness, Spratt, & Williams 2005, p. 53). Other strategies include deduction or conscious application of second language rules; inference, which involves matching unfamiliar word against a new word or information; transferring, which involves using first language knowledge to understand and remember facts and sequences in the second language; and contextualization, which is achieved by embedding a word phrase in a meaningful sequence (Thanasoulas, 2000). A learner would therefore build own learning strategies according to own personality, background, as well as learning style.

Bartoshesky et al. (2011, pp. 11-13) referred to the cognitive strategies as either task-based strategies or problem-solving strategies. According to the authors, several task-based strategies exist. The first strategy involves using what one already knows or background knowledge. This involves making associations and inferences, using context and background knowledge to understand meaning, perceiving the implicit message. It also involves using the background knowledge to make logical guessing and predictions, relate new information to own life which includes own experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and feelings. Background linguistic knowledge in the native language is also applied in learning the target language as well as to substitute or paraphrase words, sentences, or concepts.

The second task-based learning strategy involves the use of imagination. This includes the use of imagery or creating a picture in mind to comprehand and/or represent information; and using real life objects or role-plays to act out and/or to presume oneself in various roles in the target language, or to direct real objects to learn the target language. The third task-based strategy involves the use of organizational skills. This strategy includes finding or applying patterns and rules of the language such as letter and sound rules; using graphic organizers to create visual representations of important relationships between concepts and taking notes on important words, concepts and ideas; summarizing that involves creating “a mental, oral, or written summary of information” (p. 12); and paying selective attention to focus on specific pieces of information, ideas, structures, key words, and so on.

The final task-based strategy involves the use of a variety of learning resources, including the dictionary, the internet, as well as other reference material. It also involves working cooperatively with others to complete tasks, build confidence, as

well as to offer and receive feedback; and undertaking self-reflection (Bartoshesky et al. 2011, pp. 11-13). Yagcioglu (2015, p. 431) referred to working cooperatively with others as social/affective learning strategies. Espinosa (2010, p. 295) emphasized the importance of training the learners by the teachers to raise the awareness of their learning strategies so that they can use them effectively. If need be, the teacher can help learners change their learning strategies.

2.12.2 Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive knowledge, according to Wenden (1998, p. 34), includes all facts that a learner acquires about his/her own cognitive processes which are applied and used to obtain knowledge as well as acquiring skills in various situations. They are the strategies about language learning but not learning strategies themselves. As such, metacognitive strategies are the skills that a learner uses to plan or organize, manage, monitor, and evaluate the learning activity (Bartoshesky et al. 2011, p. 7; Thanasoulas, 2000). They follow a sequential process of learning. At the planning stage, the learner sets objectives and determines how he/she will achieve them. This may happen before or while the learning task is being performed. Managing learning involves determining how to learn effectively, arranging learning conditions that would help learn, seeking opportunities for making practice, and exerting efforts on the learning tasks. At the monitoring stage, learners behave as participant observers of their language learning, taking time to understand performance in the language and progress in the learning process.

Finally, at the evaluation stage, the learner examines the outcome of own learning attempts, accesses the criteria to use to evaluate it, and applies the criteria. It involves assessing how well the learning task has been accomplished and how well one has applied the learning strategies, and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies in accomplishing the task (Bartoshesky et al. 2011, p. 10; Wenden 1998, pp. 27-28). Some of these strategies comprise directed attention, which is applied when choosing beforehand to focus on general featuresof a learning task; selective attention, which is applied when considering to specific points of a learning task; self-monitoring, which involves controlling own performance while speaking; self-evaluation, which involves appreciating own performance based on own standards; self-reinforcement, which is rewarding oneself for achievement; and so on (Thanasoulas, 2000).

2.13 Learner attitudes

Language learning process is not just a cognitive activity. This is why the approach the learner adopts greatly influences the shape of his/her learning outcomes. For example, acquiring structure of a foreign language is not just a cognitive process because it also involves the socio-affective component (Thanasoulas 2000). The affective component is emotionally related to characteristics of an individual learner which influences the responses the learner to a situation. Other important factors include the social and psychological characteristics of the learner as well as the extent to which the learning process elicits emotional, psychological, and social reactions from the learner (Graham 1997, p. 92; Thanasoulas, 2000). Amongst the social and affective components that influence the learning process include self-esteem as well as the desire, which are considered the most important factors that have an effect on the ability of the learner in terms of overcoming the coincidental setbacks and trivial mistakes in the second language acquisition. (Little, 2004).

According to Dickson (1995, p. 165), the overwhelming proof exists indicating initiative learner or proactive one, the learners who achieve greater learning and learn better than the passive learners or those who depend on the information they receive from the teacher. The author attributes this to the view that autonomous learning makes the learner to enter learning more purposefully and with higher intrinsic motivation to learn. Achieving successful learning is dependent on the learner's view on the world as well as the learning activity, his/her sense of self, as well as the desire to learn (Thanasoulas 2000). This is why learners reflect on their learning in the sense of the language input they are exposed to or the needed optimal learning strategies to realize the objectives for the learning process.

From the definition of autonomous learning and the autonomous learner, it is evident that learner attitudes have significant function in autonomous learning. Attitude towards a foreign language, according Keramida and Tsiplakides (2010) and Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011, p. 994), is an important indicator of potential success in learning the foreign language. Wenden (1998, p. 52) defined learner approaches as "learned motivations, valued beliefs, evaluations, what one believes is acceptable, or responses oriented towards approaching or avoiding". The author noted that two types of attitudes are important to achieve meaningful learning: (a) attitudes that the

learner holds regarding the role in their learning process; and (b) attitudes about their ability as learners. This basically means that attitudes are an important part of metacognitive knowledge. According to Wenden (1998, p. 54), at any given time, other beliefs of the learner may shape and maintain the learner's attitude towards their role and ability in learning process. For instance, if a learner believes that a certain personality, which he/she possesses, cannot easily grasp a foreign language, it would be difficult for that learner to learn the language because of the belief that he/she is fighting a 'losing battle'. It would also be difficult for a learner who believes that learning the language can only occur in certain context to learn the language. For example, a learner who believes that meaningful learning only occurs in the traditional classroom context is likely to resistant autonomous learning strategies making it difficult for the learner to achieve meaningful learning.

The conclusion derived from this literature is that positive attitudes increase motivation for learning second language (Keramida&Tsiplakides 2010; Lennartsson 2008; Thanasoulas 2000; Oroujlou&Vahedi 2011). According to Keramida and Tsiplakides (2010), learners who consider learning a foreign language as positive and rewarding experience often have "higher levels of motivation, willingness to participate, and a high language performance". For example, the learner's belief in the usefulness of fluency in the target language in the future will increase his/her motivation and will strive to accomplish these goals in a short period. (Lennartsson 2008). Generally, learners who are intrinsically motivated and have positive attitudes are less likely to experience foreign language anxiety (Keramida&Tsiplakides 2010).

2.13.1 Learner motivation

Like attitudes, motivation has direct impact on second or foreign language learning. Motivation in foreign language learning is defined as the degree to which one shows effort to learn the target language due to a desire for achievement so as well as the self- satisfaction obtained from the language learning (Gardner 1985, p. 10). There are three general components of motivation, containing: "desire to achieve a goal, effort extended in this direction, and satisfaction with the task" (Thanasoulas 2000). The cognitive constructivists view motivation as largely intrinsic (University of California Berkeley n.d.). Since it includes "significant restructuring of existing cognitive structures" (Perry 1999, p. 4), achieving successful learning requires the

learner to make considerable personal investment (University of California Berkeley n.d.; Vronsky 2014, p. 563). According to the cognitive constructivist view, the learner has to admit the limitations of his/her knowledge and accept the necessity for modification or dropping the beliefs they hold. Motivated learner is therefore one who is willing to put effort into the language learning process.

Positive attitude and motivation provide main impetus to trigger foreign or second language learning and then the inspiration to continue the long and difficult learning process (Oroujlou&Vahedi 2011, p. 994). At the core of motivation is passion, which in this case relates to one's intrinsic goals and desires. Successful language learning is based on the learner him/herself as well as his/her needs, interests and reasons to learn the language (de Leon 2010, 289). This view is based on the cognitive constructivist perspective which states that a learner would achieve more memorable and effective learner if he/she takes control of it and adapts it according to his/her own needs and expectations. Successful learners, according to Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011, p. 995), are aware of "their preferences, their strengths and weaknesses, and effectively utilise strengths and compensate for weaknesses". All these are greatly influenced by passion for target language learning.

Learners are motivated in several ways and in various levels. According to Thanasoulas (2000), while some learners concentrate on grammar and memorizing, others would prefer to speak as well as role-play. There are also those who would prefer reading and writing, while there are also who would avoid speaking. Differences in motivation can further be explained with two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental motivation.

Learners with integrative motivation are motivated by the desire to speak the language, understand and/or be part of the culture of the target language, and to become familiar with the community of the target culture or even integrate into that society (Oroujlou&Vahedi 2011, p. 996; Thanasoulas 2000). The learner is motivated by the desire to gain proficiency in the language to be able to manage properly and socially and be part of the new society. It is hypothesized that "integrative motivation typically underlies successful acquisition of a wide range of registers and a native like pronunciation" (Finegan 1999, p. 568). However, in EFL context where the foreign language is learnt in environment where the target language is not the native language of the community, the integrative motivation

would be the desire to become bilingual and bicultural (Oroujlou&Vahedi 2011, p. 996).

However, instrumental motivation is "characterized by the desire to obtain something practical or concrete from the study of a second language" (Oroujlou&Vahedi 2011, p. 996). As such, the learner is motivated by the desire to gain proficiency in the target language to meet the prerequisite of school graduation for school or university graduation, read technical material, request higher pay due to language ability, find a good job, request for promotion, or to achieve higher social status. While both of these motivations are important for language aqcuisition, studies have shown that integrative motivation sustains long-term achievement when acquiring the target language (Crookes & Schmidt 1991; Ellis 1997). However, students are always more likely to state instrumental reasons than integrative reasons as their motivation for learning the target language (Oroujlou&Vahedi 2011, p. 996).

2.13.2 Self-esteem

Closely linked to both motivation and attitudes is learner self-esteem, which Thanasoulas (2000) described as "the evaluation a learner makes of him/herself with regard to the target language or learning in general". Drawing from Branden's (1994) definition, Rubio (2007, p. 5) identified self-esteem as "the disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life", which in this case are the language learning processes. It is basically one's own understanding of worthiness of the target language which is stated in attitudes that the learner holds towards the self. As such, it is both a psychological and social phenomenon. The individual evaluates own self based on some values and personal circumstances, and this could lead to different emotional states (Rubio 2007, p. 5). According to Thanasoulas (2000), a learner with a 'robust sense of self' is less likely to be marred by any non-positive evalution by the instructor. However, lack of learners' self-esteem may lead to negative attitude towards his aptitude as a learner. This can negatively affect the learner's cognitive performance, making the learner to view him/herself as incapable of learning the target language.

A learner's self-esteem determines his/her eagerness to take control of own learning as well as self-assured in his/her talent as a learner (Rubio 2007, p. 18; Thanasoulas 2000). This highlights why it is important that the teacher considers possible ways to

promote learner autonomy in a way that fosters self-esteem. The teacher and the learner should work together to enhance learner autonomy by forming learner centred classroom setting. “low threat, unconditional positive regard, honest and open feedback, respect for the ideas and opinions of others, approval of self-improvements as a goal, collaboration rather than competition” (Candy 1991, p. 337).

2.14 Teachers’ role in autonomous learning

Teachers’ role in learner autonomy has been strongly influenced by Vygotsky’s cognitive development perspective, which perceive acquisition as “a matter of supported performance and emphasizes the interdependence of the cognitive and social-interactive dimensions of the learning process” (Little 2004). In accordance with this perspective, the main role of a teacher is creating as well as maintaining a learning environment where learners can participate in autonomous and encourage them to become more autonomous. Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011, p. 998) also note that the teacher has a duty to establish learner centred environment in which students feel comfortable participating in learning activities. The teacher does this by implementing teaching practices that promote motivation and positive attitude, such as giving positive feedback and reinforcement. According to Oroujlou and Vahedi (2011, p. 999), this increases students’ satisfaction, self-confidence, and self-esteem as it gives them a sense of accomplishment and encourages positive self-evaluation.

In autonomous learning set up, the role of teacher changes from that normally assumed in teacher-centred classroom to those that promote learner-centred teaching and learning, where the learner assumes greater responsibility of the learning process. Generally, a teacher has multiple roles in autonomous learning situations, including transmitting language knowledge; counselling, providing learning resources, assessing learning, as well as facilitating, coordinating, and organizing learning (Jingnan 2011, p. 29; Wright 1987, p. 12). Helping the learner become autonomous is dependent on the teacher’s knowledge of learner autonomy as well as his/her ability to implement it into real learning setting or the curriculum to complement classroom teaching (Balcikanli&Reinders 2011, p. 6; Barfield & Brown 2007; Benson 2007, p. 24). This means that the teacher has to understand the new roles associated with this teaching/learning method. Jingnan (2011) also emphasizes

that a teacher needs to have a set of skills relevant for helping the learner develop autonomy. According to Bajrami (2015, p. 423) and Yan (2012, p. 559), promotion of autonomous learning is contingent to great extent on how the teacher is aware of the new roles.

The cognitive constructivist perspective is that since knowledge is actively constructed, the teacher should encourage and facilitate discovery learning by supplying resources needed as well as offering guidance to the students as they "attempt to assimilate new knowledge to old and to modify the old to accommodate the new" (University of California Berkeley n.d.). In other words, the teacher should serve as a facilitator of the learning process (Yan 2012, p. 560). In this sense, the teacher is supposed to help the learner "set learning goals, select learning content and progressions, choose the learning method and strategy, watch the learning process, and evaluate the learning effect" (Jingnan 2011, p. 29). Balcikanli (2010, p. 91) and Holec (1981, p. 3) also note that helping the learner to determine the goals in language learning process, describing the contents and advancements, deciding about the methods and techniques to be adopted in the learning process, monitoring the procedures of the target language learning as well as assessing the acquired knowledge are the duties of a teacher. These enable the learner to establish a personal agenda for learning, plan, monitor, and monitor own learning process (Balcikanli 2010, p. 91; Chan 2003, p. 35).

As a facilitator, the teacher offers psycho-social support as well as technical assistance. Psycho-social support in this case attributes to support geared towards motivating the learner and raising the learner's awareness (Yan 2012, p. 560). The teacher assumes the role of a counsellor (Bajrami 2015, p. 426). The teacher helps the learner to acquire explicit understanding of his/her language learning beliefs, motivations, habits, and expectations in the second or foreign language course (Jingnan, 2011, p. 29). The teacher has to help the learner become aware of own learning strategies, and this is achieved by asking the learner to report what he/she thinks while performing a learning task assigned to him/her or to provide retrospective report (Thanasoulas 2000; Wenden 1998, p. 79). It can also be done using questionnaire, interactive discussion, or interview (Jingnan, 2011, p. 29). The aim is to help the learner form correct beliefs of and attitudes towards learning the target language and to train him/her to develop autonomous sense of learning. Dam

(2000, p. 18) stated, “What we can do is give our learners an awareness of how they think and how they learn – an awareness which hopefully will help them come to an understanding of themselves and thus increase their self-esteem.” Therefore, a major part of implementing autonomous learning is applying various strategies and learning techniques as well as helping the learner in finding the suitable methods for the learner (Bajrami 2015, p. 426). Learners need to make informed choices and this means that they need to grasp the logic behind the learning methods and have time to experiment them to decide about the strategies that best suits them for each situation. Nunan (2003) cautioned that the teacher should be careful about not guiding the learners only on the strategies they themselves desire. On the other hand, technical support involves assisting the learner to plan and fulfil his/her learning activity, evaluate learning, and acquire language knowledge and skills. As a facilitator, the teacher also offers guidance to the learner and helps the learner to get the knowledge and skills as well as to motivate the student to learn actively and autonomously (Yan 2012, p. 561). The teacher takes into account the present knowledge of the learner(s) when constructing the curriculum or structuring new learning material/content. As a guide, the teacher teaches the learner effective ways of learning the target language autonomously and helps the learner develop listening and speaking (such as pronunciation) skills and communicative competence (Han 2014, p. 24; Xu & Xu 2004, p. 78). The teacher must also stimulate the learner’s interest and enthusiasm in the language learning, encourage him/her to speak in the language often, and motivate him/her to participate in communicative activities (Han 2014, p. 31; Yan 2012, p. 561). The teacher must also be willing to work with the learner to solve his/her learning problems.

As an organizer and designer of the learning process, the teacher organizes some communicative activities to give learners opportunity to practice the target language (Han 2014, p. 24; Xu & Xu 2004, p. 78). The teacher has to engage the learner in learning activities that gives the latter the opportunity to practice what he/she has learnt (Bajrami 2015, p. 426). Since the teacher’s major role in the teaching/learning process is to impart knowledge, he/she should provide relevant references and learning materials for target language learning, including internet learning resources (Xu & Xu 2004, p. 78). Although schools and universities have language learning self-access resources, maintained at resource centres and libraries, the teacher has to

take responsibilty of the picking of learning supplies, counselling, and managing and ensure that the learning resources recommended to the learner are consistent with the learning content (Jingnan 2011, p. 30). The learning materials selected by the teacher should be those that arouse the learner's interest and are consistent with his/her learning level so as to promote his/her confidence and satisfaction (Yan 2012, p. 562).

Another important role of the teacher in autonomous learning is to observe and evaluate process. Han (2014, p. 25) and Xu and Xu (2004, p. 78) concur that the teacher has to consistently provide the learner with feedback of his/her performance in the language learning process while offering guidance. The language teacher has to encourage the learner to keep learning reports so as to be able to monitor own learning process and assess own learning progress. Jingnan (2011, p. 31) emphasises that the learner has to be aware of own learning performance and encouraged to reflect on his/her strengths and weaknesses in specific learning tasks. The teacher should help the learner analyse his/her situation based on the learner's self-reports and make reasonable suggestions.

2.15 The impact of autonomous language learning on learners' proficiency

Many scholars and authors agree that autonomous learning is an effective approach to learning (Riihimaki 2013). Boyno (2011) found autonomous learning strategies and styles as one of the essential elements that affect language proficiency development among high school English foreign language learners. Du (2013) investigated students' perspectives of participating in autonomous foreign language learning project at a community college. Self-directed learning is simply autonomous learning. As Knowles (1975, p. 18) termed as self-directed learning:

> a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

The data was collected through focus groups interviews. The findings suggested that self-directed learning can result in improvements in motivation, knowledge domain,

as well as meta-cognitive skills including ability to prioritise learning tasks, independently locate learning resources, develop suitable reading strategies, synthesise, and self-evaluate critically, especially if there is strong commitment to self-directed learning. These outcomes are consistent with the results of a similar self-directed portfolio project for English as a Second Language students executed by Lo (2010). The study reported meta-cognitive benefits, including awareness of personal strengths weaknesses as well as improvements in critical thinking. A major strength of Du's (2013) study is that the participants had varying levels of academic performance. There were top-performing students, second-tier performing students, and weak students and each group was interviewed separately, allowing the researcher to identify patterns among students of similar achievement levels.

Several studies have provided evidence indicating that autonomous learning is an effective language learning strategy. Grenfell, Michel, and Wilczynski (n.d.) conducted study to establish the impact of introduction of an autonomous learning programme on the learning experiences of the Modern Foreign Languages students. The students were engaged in student-focused and enquiry-based learning. 14 students, 7 studying French and 7 studying German were selected for this study. Evidence gathered through open-ended interviews and focus group discussion as well as feedback collected from the students showed that the learning experience was successful on two levels. One, the researchers noted visible improvement in self-motivation and enjoyment of independent as well as collaborative work outside classroom teaching. Second, the students reported that the programme had increased their self-confidence as learners. The students reported that they felt they possessed a clearer understanding of their own learning style and as a result were more confident in their abilities to devise and implement learning strategies according to their learning needs. A major strength of this study is that the attendees in this study were selected from a group of learners participating in an ongoing autonomous language learning programme offered by the Open Access Centre and the School of Modern Languages.

Lee's (2011) findings also showed autonomous language learning can be beneficial to learners. The study examined how the use of blogs and face-to-face interactions with native speakers while relying on the teacher's guidance and feedback can advance intercultural competence. The students noted that blogging supported self-

directed learning as it gave them opportunity to individually and socially construct meanings to develop intercultural knowledge as well as skills. However, a few students experienced difficulties constructing their ideas and views logically in the target language (Spanish). The study concluded that well-designed autonomous learning tasks can enhance the development of metacognitive as well as cognitive skills, such as critical thinking skills.

2.16 Classroom Foreign language learning compared to autonomous learning

Learner autonomy in foreign language education is widely discussed and is generally accepted to be an effective learning strategy (Yagcioglu 2015, p. 428). For example, Yagcioglu (2015) conducted a study in which he engaged 90 university students at Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey, in several autonomous learning activities and found the strategy to be effective for learning English. The learning activities included using photos, charts, music and songs, and the internet to give them opportunity to practice English as much as possible, including pronunciation, communication, learning new words, and so on. The researcher noted improved positive attitudes towards English and greater motivation. The students also developed metacognitive skills. Kamberi (2013) also conducted a study which sought to establish ways of upgrading learner autonomy in language learning and found autonomous learning strategy to enhance learners' proficiency in the language. In this study, 31 students studying English language were randomly selected and engaged in journal writing. The journals were collected and reviewed regularly. The students found the strategy very motivating. However, the research did not extend further to establish the extent of language learning achieved by the students or how much the students learnt in the process.

Generally, few studies have extended to establish the extent of the effectiveness of autonomous language learning, including how much the learners engaged in autonomous language learning learnt as well as whether or not it is more effective compared to the traditional classroom learning. In a study conducted at University of Missan in Iraq, Abdulbaqi and Rahim (2011) found evidence indicating that autonomous language learning is more effective compared to non-autonomous language learning. EFL students who were engaged in autonomous learning performed significantly better in writing than students who were taught using

conventional ways. A major strength of this study is that the validity of the autonomous learning programme, questionnaire, test, as well as the scoring scheme were determined by experts or jury members in the field of EFL and linguistics.

2.17 Preparing foreign language learners for proficiency exams

Foreign language proficiency exams such as TOEFL, IELTS, CPE, YDS, and so on generally test skills in the zones of listening and reading comprehensions, vocabulary, besides grammatical accuracy. According to Chen (2014, p. 342) and Fai point out that preparation of English language foreign learners for exams have influenced English teachers to pursue examination-based teaching practices. Both learning and teaching have largely been exams focused and product-oriented as students are often engaged in many written exercises as well as rote-learning strategy to prepare for examinations (Fai 2015, p. 8). Poon (2004, p. 308) noted that many English foreign language learners rarely speak English in their daily life because they are not encouraged and motivated to do so. Occasionally, in many foreign language learning cases, the medium of instruction is the local language. This has been noted in China (Fai 2015, p. 11), Finland (Riihimaki 2013, p. 6), Turkey (Saricoban 2011, p. 403), and Iceland (Stefánsdóttir&Turloiu 2011, p. 31). Even communication and interaction in daily classroom routines is mainly done in the local language. The language teachers teach the learners what the exam instructions require them to do in their lessons for them to understand exam instructions presented in the target language (Saricoban 2011, p. 403).

Basically, many teachers apply teacher-centred teaching strategies to prepare students for proficiency exams to (Chen 2014, p. 342; Fai 2015, p. 3). Teacher-centred education focuses on teaching in which the teacher controls what is taught, when, as well as under what conditions (Chen 2014, p. 342). The teacher transmits knowledge, skills, as well as values to students. According to Fai (2015, p. 9), Teachers generally use transmissive and didactic way of teaching as well as rigid teaching approaches. Although few in number, some teachers, especially novice teachers, sometimes prefer student-centred teaching/learning methods such as communicative approach or task-based learning strategies. However, according to Fai (2015, p. 9), the tight teaching schedules do not allow the teachers opportunity to implement or practice student-centred approaches. It forces them to focus on

covering the syllabus to prepare students for exams, which are mainly pen-and-paper examinations. Even school internal assessments emphasise reading and writing drawn from textbooks, overlooking speaking. Saricoban (2011) who examined how foreign language tests in Turkish universities are currently constructed noted that foreign language tests mainly focus on recognition rather than production skills of foreign language learners. Consequently, language teachers favour teaching writing- and reading-related skills. Less attention is paid to promoting authentic and direct communicative skills such as speaking and listening. The same has been noted in Canadian second language English teaching, where students have been noted to spend significant amount of time every week improving reading and writing skills but only 40 minutes practising speaking and listening skills (Davis 2013, pp. 85-86).

Since content areas of examinations are largely drawn from textbooks, textbook-bound teaching is very common (Carless & Wong 2000, p. 213). Teaching for external standardised tests, such as TOEFL, many teachers adopt the "teaching to test' culture, in which students are asked to apply many practice tests; basically through repetition and drilling to enable them familiarise with the test format (Fai 2015, p. 10). In Chinese schools for example, teachers increase the mastery of students in exams students using mock exams or mastery quizzes to enhance students' memory for examination items as well as their understanding of conceptual knowledge (Chen 2015, p. 348). Basically, the focus is to increase memorisation. This is because the teachers are under pressure to help the students pass the tests.

The situation is quite different in European countries. Self-assessment is also being promoted with stress on logbooks and periodicals. The use of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) is already being implemented in several schools to promote self-assessment (Riihimaki 2013, p. 6; Stefánsdóttir&Turloiu 2011, p. 29). ELP is "a practical tool for learners who learn or have learnt a language to reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences" (Stefánsdóttir&Turloiu 2011, p. 29) so as to assume greater role in their learning. It is a valuable document that is kept by students for their learning process in/outside school and they use it to record and mirror on their language learning and cultural experiences. The purpose of using ELP is to help learners develop their communicative skills by reflecting on their learning, planning ahead, and engaging in autonomous learning (Kohonen 2007).

2.18 An autonomous learner is likely to be more prepared for exams

Although it is practical to teach all the target language abilities such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening within the classroom, students easily study on their own, individually, to complete their work simultaneously and report to class (Davis 2013, p. 85). In typical classroom learning, students do not get the opportunity to participate in meaningful learning activities necessary for developing other skills. Teacher-directed learning seems to be more practical and useful when the learning involves acquiring an unknown or complex concept (Brydges et al. 2010, p. 1834). Davis (2013, p. 85) emphasises that other than the usual reading- and writing-related assignments, students need to be engaged in learning activities that ensure that they practice out of the classroom as much as possible. Brydgeset l. (2010, p. 1833) suggest that the reason why autonomous learners have greater learning opportunity is because they have "control of an element of practice and therefore are metacognitvely, behaviourally and motivationally active in their learning".

In the foreign and second language learning, Oxford (1999) identified several studies which have found some connection between use of autonomous language learning strategies and proficiency in the target language. The findings showed that learners used autonomous learning strategies that fitted them more closely to learning tasks to achieve better learning. For example, in an earlier study conducted by Dreyer and Oxford (1996 cited in Oxford 1999, p. 116) among 305 Afrikaans-speaking learners of English, Oxford (1999, p. 116) reports that 46% of the variance in TOEFL was explained by the SILL, particularly metacognitive, social, and affective strategy use. In another work conducted by Takeuchi (1993 cited in Oxford 1999, p. 116), SILL items estimated 58% of the variance in Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT) scores in 78 first-year English foreign language students at a Japanese women's college. SILL is a language learning strategy-assessment instrument with Likert-scaled items classified into six different types of strategies, including memory-related, cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, compensatory strategies. It is mainly used to assess an individual learner's typical strategy. Studies reviewed by Oxford (1999) provided evidence indicating more proficient second or foreign language learners use these strategies often.

In a research based on the medical field which compares the achievements of four different groups, Brydges et al. (2009) found autonomous learning to be more effective compared to teacher-directed learning. The four groups included self-guided learners with pre-set process goals, self-directed learners with pre-set outcome goals, teacher-directed learners with pre-set learning process goals, as well as teacher-directed learners with pre-set outcome goals. The results showed that students who adopted to "the pre-set process goals performed better on retention than those whose access to instruction was externally controlled" (Brydges et al. 2009, p. 512). However, those who focused on outcome goals did not experience similar benefits. The reason behind the poor performance of the teacher-directed groups may be explained with the lack of learner autonomy that is necessary to customize the production of knowledge based on their specific needs (Brydges 2009, p. 512). This suggests that the students in the self-guided learning group with pre-set process goals were able to design the curriculum based on their needs in the learning process and they benefit from autonomy to accomplish effective skill retention. According to Cuban (2007, p. 3) students achieve greater learning if they are guided by the teacher while engaged in different learning tasks, such as participating in activity centres within the room, working with other students to complete project tasks, and undertaking independent work. Ceylan's(2015) study showed that applying autonomous language learning strategies increase learner autonomy and helps learners understand their language learning process as well as their strengths and weaknesses. This positively impacts their language proficiency development. On the contrary, the results of Smerdov (2012) conducted to examine exam-orientedness dilemma in China suggest that that teacher-directed learners are more prepared for exams than autonomous learners. The researcher engaged both groups of students: the experimental group and control group. The experimental group comprised 58 students who were taught for two semesters (one academic year) making use of student-centred English language teaching/learning method, gradually making them autonomous learners. The control group was taught using teacher-centred teaching methods over the same period. Class records or test records, results of semi-structured interviews, and video records of the learning process were used to analyse the amount of learning achieved. The test results showed that while the students in the control group had an improved mean test score, those in the experimental group had lower mean test score compared to the baseline. The control group scored about

6.5 points higher than the experimental group in the final text, and improved by about 4 points as the experimental group mean test score reduced by about 5 points. The researcher did not extend further to examine how statistically significant the difference, decrease, and improvement were. However, the results generally suggest that students engaged in teacher-centred teaching methods are more prepared for exams than those engaged in student-centred teaching/learning methods. However, lesson transcripts showed that learners in the experimental group could facilitate their own discussion, enabling them to provide meaningful explanations and comments to textbook assignments.

2.19 Current situation of autonomous learning

Generally, a cultural shift in the field of education exists to learner autonomy learning strategy especially due to the broad range of resources available (Benson &Chik 2010). Self-guided language learning outside the classroom is becoming more common. The education systems in Western countries today immensely emphasize on put a lot of emphasis on differentiation as well as learning abilities and interests of individuals as national curriculums make references to giving learners choice and creativity (Stefánsdóttir&Turloiu 2011, p. 7). Autonomous learning caters for all these as the focus of education shifts from teaching to learning. Benson (2011) and Benson and Chik (2010) concur that self-guided or autonomous learning is becoming the proper learning for the 21st century as the open-ended nature of the learning strategy matches the large quantity of resources available. The internet has increased the growth of self-access centres. Self-access centre, according to de Leon (2010, p. 293), is an academic centre of independent learning, where a learner practices and uses the language to develop and improve their language abilities. These centres have IT resources, particularly the internet, and audio-visual materials as well as material devoted to “learning to learn process” (de Leon 2010, pp. 293-294). Normally, there are tutors at these centres to guide and support learners (King 2011). Learners are therefore free to learn based on their own needs, interests, as well as areas to develop.

2.20 The future of autonomous language learning

One of the main features of the 21st century education is learner autonomy.. Kurtz (2012) observes that the growth of autonomous learning is set to increase with the growth of technologies that provide platform for accessing the internet. Already language students are using smartphones to supplement their language learning. Foreign language learners and language educators are increasingly using their smartphone technologies and capabilities to access the internet to complement their learning. For example, from the internet, it is easy to learn meanings of words, concepts, and phrases; learn correct spelling of words; learn pronunciations; and so on. Educators increasingly "expect their students to enter the classroom very technologically adept" (Kurtz 2012, p. 1). It is expected that autonomous language learning is expected to increase remarkably as more and more language learning resources are disseminated online. Another aspect of autonomous language learning that is expected to grow tremendously is research on autonomous language learning (Benson 2011b) as educators and scholars seek to find how best to use technology to enhance autonomous language learning.

2.21 Related empirical studies

Bayat (2007) investigated how autonomy perception is associated with classroom behaviour of english as aforeign language studnets by conducting a descriptive quantitaive reserach using "intermediate level English learners attending Preparatory Classes in School of Foreign Languages at Dokuz Eylül University" as the study population of this study and proportioned random sampling as the sampling method of 503 undergraduate participants. The results indicated that English language learners studied had high autonomy perception in general. Autonomy perception was found to be statistically significantly related to reading comprehension achievement. It was found that the higher autonomy perception the students had the more successful they were in reading comprehension. In addition, between autonomy perception was also found to be there were statistically significant relatied to classroom behaviors of students. Significant relationships were identified between usingmetacognitive strategies subscales and taking language learning responsibility, and student classroom behaviors. Students having higher autonomy perception were found to have more positive behaviors compared to those with lower autonomy

perception. Significant relationships were also established between between reading comprehension and classroom behaviors. This study empahsizes on the importance of autonomy on language proficiency achievement. The study design and methods used for the study in data collection and analysis were appropriate for achieving its goal. The sampling method was appropriate as its randomness ensured that the sample was represantative of the poplation and its sizewhich represented the 33% of the whole population ebsured that the data collected wuld be valid enough to enable generalisation. Data was collected using a question whose items were based on the Autonomy Perception Scale, Reading Comprehension Test and Classroom Behaviors Scale which areognised instruments that were appropriate for the study based on the objectrives.

In another Turkish study, Ceylan (2014) used foreign language students in Kocaeli University 2013- 2014 education year as the study population and conducted an experimental study in which he sought to examine the effect of language learning strategy on learner autonomy development and language achievement. The study involved conducting pre-test surveys on language learning strategies and learner autonomy. Experiments were then conducted by training the students in the experimental groups on language learning strategies for the specified period of time and then observed until the end of the first term on their use of the language learning strategies while the control groups was not subjected the training. Post-tests were then conducted at the end of the term. The findings demonstrated that there was significant difference in the overall average scores of the first term grades (before training), and at the end of the term after the training as well as between the experimental and the control groups at the end of the training. Findings from the experimental groups show that training students on language learning strategies may result in better foreign language proficiency, particularly at the beginning levels. Ceylan concludes that the more strategies the students employ, the more frequently and more autonomous they become by starting to take the responsibility of their own learning process which enhances their language learning proficiency. By conducting an experimental study, Ceylan has been able to provide empirical evidence on the importance of autonomous learning strategies as we are able to see the impact of these strategies on foreign language proficiency achievement among learners.

Based on the observation that the Turkish educational system still uses traditional educational methods that hinder autonomous language learning which is acknowldged as one of the most fundamental objectives of education, Yapıörer (2013) sought to explore the conceptions of EFL learners of learner autonomy. The study specifically aimed to establish EFL learners' perceptions of different autonomous behaviours that are important to learners in their language learning. The study concentrated on the following areas; learners' readiness for self-direction, their conceptions of independent work, their beliefs regarding the role of class and teacher, their conceptions of the teacher's role in explanation and supervision, their attitudes towards certain language learning activities, their readiness to share responsibility in content selection, their roles in determining objectives as well as self-evaluation, their perceptions of external assessment in their motivation, and attitudes towards the culture of the language they are learning. The study carried out a quantitative research and collected data using a survey questionnaire based on the " Autonomy Learner Questionnaire" which is appropriate for the study as it contains items seeking to assess the respondnets perceptions regarding all the specified areas. It was administered to 114 seventh grade students perceptions at Şehit Selahattin Elemantary School in Hakkari, Turkey. 114 is an appropriate sample size considering the fact that not many students learn foreign language in a single school. Quantitative approach was also appropriate as the aim of the study was to view the perceptions and coenceptions of the respondnets and not go into explanations of why. The findings demonstrated that although the learners have more autonomy over some of the aspects of learning, they have less wareness as well as readiness over the others. Implying that there is need for teachers to incraese awareness on all the crucial areas of autonolous learning and guide the students so that they can cultivate autonomy in their learning. This study is important as it provides more insight in the level of awareness of autonomous learning and behavior in students in Turkey and therefore identifies areas that educators should work on in order to enhance autonomous learning for foreign language students.

Other studies conducted elsewhere also reveal the importance of autonomous learning on foreign language proficiency achievement. Dafei based his study on the global economy imperatives which dictate that education needs to focus on lifelong learning and production of individuals who are autonomous and with ability to train

themselves so as to meet changing economic circumstances and needs. Dafei notes that empirical evidence on the how the development of autonomy is associated with acquisition of language proficiency is scarce and hence conducted a study to establish the same studying non English majors (sample size of 129) in a Chinese teachers college. The study specifically sought to explore how learner autonomy influences English proficiency using interviews and a questionnaire. This study established that English language proficiency of the students was positively associated with their learner autonomy. The findings of this study provide insight to both learners and teachers of English as a foreign language as they enlighten teachers on why it is important for learners to be self-dependent in learning the language and enhance their English proficiency. The study identified teaching of learning strategies, giving students more responsibility, guiding reflection, and cultivating positive attitudes as some of the strategies that can be used to foster autonomous learning. This study is important because of the mixed method approach used whereby both qualitative and quantitative data was collected ensuring that the strengths of qualitative data collected through interviews complement the weaknesses of the quantitative data and vice versa. This ensured that the findings are statistically reliable, valid, generalizable while at the same time rich and in-depth ensuring complete understanding of the issue being investigated. The sample size used was also appropriate to provide adequate data for the study.

Pan (2015) also conducted an empirical study to explore leaner autonomy and learning strategies in Taiwan context. This study specifically investigated the language learning strategies preferred by junior high school students in Taiwan, their English learning autonomy level and, how English learning autonomy is related to the language learning strategies used using a quantitative approach. Using a sample of 130 students, the results established that the learners had the level of English learning autonomy of the participants was average and that there was infrequent use and application of language learning strategies. It was found that learners at this stage tend to apply memory strategies more frequently than they apply affective strategies and seldom engaged in English related activities after school. Pan concludes that in order to address these issues, and fully engages the students and finally enhances their autonomy, there is need for English language teachers to allow the students to choose the learning activities they prefer and to decide on how much

time they will spend on the task. Students should also be allowed to discuss the learning goals as well as materials with the teacher so as to raise their interest and motivation. Freedom and direction to inspire motivation, student creativity and autonomy are crucial (Pan, 2015). While the methodology used to conduct the study was appropriate based on the research objectives, the quality of the findings would have been increased if qualitative data was included and also some data collected on the views of the teachers.

In another study, Han (2014) examined the role of language teachers in developing learner autonomy by conducting a literature review. The study reviewed studies conducted from both teachers' and students' perceptions and identified the roles as the following among others; facilitators and consultants, being active participants, guiding students, organizer and designer of strategies to be used, source of inspiration and supporter, monitor and evaluator, cooperator, resource supplier, and atmosphere creator. The main limitation of this study is use of secondary data other than conducting a primary research and providing empirical evidence. Secondary data is often associated with some limitations such as not knowing the biases or errors made and the extent to which they may have affected the findings. The number of studies reviewed was also not extensive and most of the studies are old (considering the paper's year of publication as 2014) hence the information may outdated.

Riley (1996) explored various concepts and methodologies that are suitable for conducting research into self-access and autonomous learning. This author discussed the conflict between quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Riley, epistemological problems that are associated with the quality and status of our knowledge are not just limited to academic woods. They are in fact the founding questions of all the scientific, philosophical and intellectual traditions in the world. Riley explains that 'intellectual traditions have no definite definition as they man different things to different people and until coherent decision regarding what counts as knowledge is reached, 'intellectual tradition' remains that way.

In his explanation of the suitable methodology for studying self access and autonomous learning, Riley (1996) explains that the nature as well as development of self access can best be understood by applying the framework of sociology of

knowledge developed by Mannheim (1936 and Schutz (1962). Riley discusses the points that researchers should keep in mind, the precautions to take when designing research studies and how to ensure that the methodology used is appropriate. Riley identifies knowledge claim which he describes as the degree of generalizability of the findings as key in research. He explains that it should be clear as to what populations the findings, and conclusions can be applied to and whether they can be extrapolated. Secondly, he points out that the researchers should ensure that there is full disclosure of the data as well as the results and the conditions of the experimentation or observation so as to ensure critical appraisal and replicability of the study under what he terms as publication. Regarding which approach to apply between quantitative and qualitative approaches, Riley discusses the limitations and strengths of both methodologies and provides guidance on how to select the appropriate approach. Quantitative research seems to have more weight in his discussion. The current study will be based on his suggested approach when conducting the study.

Most of the studies on the topic have used quantitative approach providing that that is numerical in nature and not providing more details that would enable a deeper understanding of the topic. Only one study combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches and provided data that is not only reliable and generalizable but also in-depth and rich in details. The studies have also concentrated mostly on student perceptions on autonomous learning and its effect on proficiency level on foreign language learning. Studies seeking to compare the perceptions of teachers to that of students are scarce. The existing studies either only examined just the teachers or just the students. There is need for a comparative study. Regarding sampling procedures, most of the studies have used appropriate sample size and appropriate sampling methods as most involved randomness which is key to addressing issues of external validity. Experimental studies are also scarce yet empirical evidence is important in identifying the specific effect of autonomous learning. There is need for more experimental studies so that it can be clearly understood how autonomous learning affects proficiency attainment in foreign language.

2.22 Conclusion

The literature reviewed for the purpose of this study has provided rich insight into autonomous language learning and its impact. The literature has provided evidence that autonomous language learning is widely practised in teaching language learning though the uptake is still slow due to challenges such as inadequate time for implementing it. Despite that, there is evidence that language teachers often integrate many learning activities that promote autonomous learning in their teaching (Brydges et al. 2009; Brydges et al. 2010; Du 2013; Kamberi 2013). However, research on whether autonomous language learning leads to greater learning compared to traditional classroom language learning or not has been limited and inconsistent. Few studies have explored this issue, and even the few have failed to provide statistically comparable results. Most of these studies have mainly provided general observed benefits. This provides the impetus for further studies on this issue.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Learning autonomy refers to the ability of the learner to set goals for personal learning. The learner takes charge and is held responsible for his learning. However, the teacher creates and maintains the learning environment. The learning environment should support the learning of the students. In this regard, this study investigates the influence of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level in foreign language learning. In this section, the researcher explains the research sample, methods, design, procedure, informants, as well as the measuring tools that were used during the research.

3.2 Subjects of the study

The case study was conducted with 30 graduate students, all of whom were enrolled for Master of Art programmes in Social, Science and Health Institutes at Balıkesir University. Control and experimental groups were selected for the research. The study was carried out during 2014-2015 academic year. Information about the preparation of the two types of exams for YDS was given to them. Comprehensive information was provided about the courses. 15 students wanted face to face study method while the other half wanted an autonomous group.

3.2.1 Control Group

The 15 learners who preferred face to face study method took their regular course lectures in class. They received instruction from their teacher face to face. The lectures were provided two days per week, both totalling to eight hours. The course went on for six months until the 5th of April.

3.2.2 Experimental Group

The group comprised of 15 learners. Learners studied their topics as indicated in the syllabus through autonomous learning. Every week, a sample YDS test was sent to

them by email and then the results were checked weekly. The subjects were checked every week to give feedback. The study was carried out until the YDS Exam date.

3.3 Research Methods and Procedures

This research went for six months. The experimental group was left to study on their own for the proficiency exam. The learners of control group took their regular course lectures in class with the teacher face to face and received instructions.

3.4 Tools of Research

3.4.1 Questionnaires

The main goal of the questionnaires was to analyse autonomous learning of English among the graduate students and to find out the perception of the students about learning English before the study.

3.4.1.1 Learner Autonomy questionnaire

The questionnaire framework was a student autonomy survey that was developed by Zhang and Li (2004). The questionnaire was employed to evaluate learners' foreign language learning styles and strategies for the purpose of determining the degree to which they are autonomous. Student's autonomy survey was employed to help determine the participant's personal activities in learning. The questionnaire has five major parts including learner's awareness, self-efforts, wider self-contained activities, self-esteem, and application of materials, motivation and technology-use in learning.

3.4.1.2 The Perceptual Learning Style Preference questionnaire

The PLSPQ was developed by Reid (1987). The questionnaire has two parts which include the role of the learner and the teacher.

3.4.1.3 Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990)

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (Oxford, 1990) was given to the research participants. The questionnaire covered fifty items. The participants were requested to arrange for their use of the strategy on a Likert scale. This scale consisted of ' never' or 'almost never'. The purpose of conducting the questionnaire was to help in identifying the language learning strategies as well as learning styles that are used by

the graduate students in YDS examination. The learners' strategies, as well as learning styles were analysed under strategies such as Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective and Social.

3.4.2 Sample YDS Exam and Syllabus

Prior to this research, the course topics for both autonomous and control group were organized. The course started at the beginning of November. For every week, learners in the control group were taught vocabulary, grammar, and reading topics for at least 8 hours. The experimental group studied autonomously. In addition, a sample YDS test was administered every two weeks and their scores were analysed and compared to see the progress.

3.4.3 Language Learners Histories

Before the course, the learners wrote a language learning history. They were asked questions about their duration of study of English language and the difficulties they had faced in learning English.

3.4.4 Proficiency tests

Before the course commenced, there were some preliminaries that were applied to determine advancements in the proficiency level and the trainees' level. Throughout the course, learners were tested two times per month using proficiency tests. In the last three months, the experimental group took sample test weekly. The participants took 15 sample YDS tests in total. The last test was the formal YDS exam that was done in April, 2015.

3.4.5 Foreign Language Proficiency Course

For the purpose of preparation, the students were exposed to grammatical work, reading skills and vocabulary. For the control group, the course involved regular classroom lessons. On the other hand, the experimental group studied at personal levels using basic learning strategies.

3.4.6 Course materials

The main areas of study for the experimental group and the control groups were vocabulary, grammar, and reading. Since proficiency exams contain vocabulary

questions, grammar questions, sentence completion, translation questions, paragraph completions, reading questions, irrelevant sentences, cloze tests, and dialogue questions, several ready-made YDS tests available from both national and international sources were used to prepare the participants to take their examination effectively. These sources include the following.

3.4.6.1 Vocabulary Publishing

1. Elementary Vocabulary by B. J. Thomas Longman
2. Vocabulary in Use Intermediate /Student's Book with Answers by StuartRedman, with Lawrence
3. English Vocabulary in Use Advanced with Answers and CD-ROM byMichael Mc Carthy, Felicity O'Dell, Cambridge Publishing
4. Reading words for YDS Vocabulary in Context by Akın YargıPublishing
5. Vocabulary Tests or YDS by Career Books Publishing
6. YDS Vocabulary by Dilko Publishing

3.4.6.2 Grammar publishing

1. Building Skills for proficiency by CesurÖztürk
2. YDS Vital Grammar by YEDİİKLİM
3. YDS English Grammar by DİLKO
4. Grammar Tests for YDS by Osman Çetin

3.4.6.3 Reading

1. YDS reading for YDS by Karaca publishing
2. Preparation for YDS Reading by Akın Publishing
3. Reader at work I-II by Middle East Technical University Department of Basic English
4. Reading Passages and Close Tests for YDS by AbidinCoşkun
5. CAE Exam Reading Success
6. Advanced Reading Comprehension Tests

3.4.6.4 Online Resources:

1. Free English Tests and Exercises Online for ESL, TOEL, TOEIC,GRE, SAT, GMAT

http://englishteststore.net/

2. FreeExamVocabulary Builder byAccelaStudy

https://itunes.apple.com/...exam-vocabulary

3. English Tests: Test your English - English Grammar Online

www.ego4u.com/en/cram-up/tests

4. SAT Reading Comprehension – Major Tests.com

www.majortests.com/.../reading-comprehensio..

5. YDS DenemeSınavları - Sınav Online

www.sinavonline.net/eng/yds/sorular.asp

www.mamger.dil

3.4.7 Course Procedure

The topics and YDS sample exams in the syllabus were sent to the experimental group through email. The learners forwarded their answer sheets through email. The answer sheets were analysed based on performance in each question type. The question-types included the following:

1. 6 vocabulary questions,
2. 10 grammar questions,
3. 10 close test,
4. 10 sentence completion
5. 6 translation questions
6. 20 reading questions
7. 5 dialogue questions,
8. 4 close meaning,
9. 4 paragraph completions,
10. 5 irrelevant sentences.

Every question-type revealed the strong and weak sides of a participant. Each practice test revealed the details of the participants. The sample tests were given each month.

3.4.8 Reflection of question types

For each participant in the experimental and the control groups, answers to each question types in every sample test were surveyed to determine their weaknesses and give feedback.

3.4.9 Formal YDS Proficiency exam

All participants in both groups completed the course. They took the formal YDS exam during the spring term on the 4th of April, 2015. The results of the YDS exam were statistically analysed.

3.4.10 The Questionnaire responses of participants who passed the YDS exam

After the release of the result of the YDS examination, 11 participants passed - 5 from the control group and 6 from the experiment group. Following due completion of the questionnaire, analysis was closely done. The findings are discussed later in the dissertation.

3.4.11 Questionnaire

The data included interviews of learners that passed the YDS exam. The questionnaire was meant to assess their ideas to determine the degree to which graduate students demonstrate autonomy in foreign language proficiency development.

3.5 Research Ethics

In line with the administration's research rules and regulations, the required permission was sought from the rector of the institution. The ethics board of Istanbul Aydın University was consulted to ensure that research ethics was observed in the acquisition and handling of participants. Additionally, the participants were informed about the study. They were requested to sign informed consent forms to confirm that they understood the study and that their participation was on voluntary basis.

3.6 Data analysis procedures

Primary data was obtained from the questionnaire. A sample of the exam results was analysed quantitatively using the statistical methods of packaging. The measures of central tendency were calculated for the items recorded.

3.7 Reliability and validity

The research tools used in this study have been validated in previous research. Zhang and Li (2004) applied the PLSPQ in their studies. The Autonomous Learning Questionnaire was developed by Reid (1987). Additionally, the SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning) was developed by Oxford in 1990. The tools have been used in various investigations involving questionnaires administered to different participants. Ceylan's study (2014) applied the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the questionnaires - autonomy responsibility, 635, autonomy ability, 754, and autonomy use of English, 670. In Karabıyık's study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient for the questionnaires was 888. In the study of SILL, 920 is the Cronbach alpha coefficient for questionnaires. Lastly, the Cronbach alpha of the study of autonomous learning questionnaire is 903.

4. DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

One of the issues that have elicited debate among scholars today is the ability of students to learn a language without the aid of a teacher. Some scholars argue that students can employ various self-study methodologies to learn a language (Abbasian &Hartoonian 2014). Other scholars presupposes that teachers have a role to play in the enhancement of a student's learning of foreign language. Based on the differences observed, this study seeks to assess the impact of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level when learning foreign language.

4.2 Sources of Primary Data

The data collected from the following sources was analysed appropriately.

1. Autonomous Learning Questionnaire (Zhang and Li, 2004).
2. PLSPQ (The Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire) (J. Reid, 1987).
3. SILL (Strategy Inventory for language learning) (R. Oxford, 1989).
4. Analysis of Language Learners Histories.
5. Statistical results of the sample proficiency exams.
6. Responses of participants (Both control group and experimental group) who passed the YDS exam.
7. Questionnaire to the control and experimental groups passed YDS proficiency exam.

4.3 Learner Autonomy Questionnaire Analysis

In total, 504 graduate participants (Master of Arts students) participated in this study. 236 participants were from the Social Institute and 249 participants were from the Science Institute of Balıkesir University. 19 participants from the Health Institute also answered the questionnaires. On the questionnaires, variables such as the

institutions and gender of the participants were analysed. No significant results were found between the institutions.

4.3.1 Between-Subjects Factors

Table 4. 1: The number of participants who answered the questionnaires.

Institute	Value Label	N
1	Social Institute	236
2	Science Institute	249
3	Health Institute	19

4.3.2 Group Statistics

Table 4. 2: The group statistics of the results of previous proficiency exam before the study.

(First Score) Gender	N	M	Std. Dev.	Df	t	p
Male	257	47.77	14.150	502	2.561	.772
Female	247	44.68	12.841			

*= **P<0, 05**

From table 4.2, it is clear that the male participants were more successful than the female participants. The mean scores are 47.77 for the males and 44.68 for the females.

4.3.3 Learner awareness

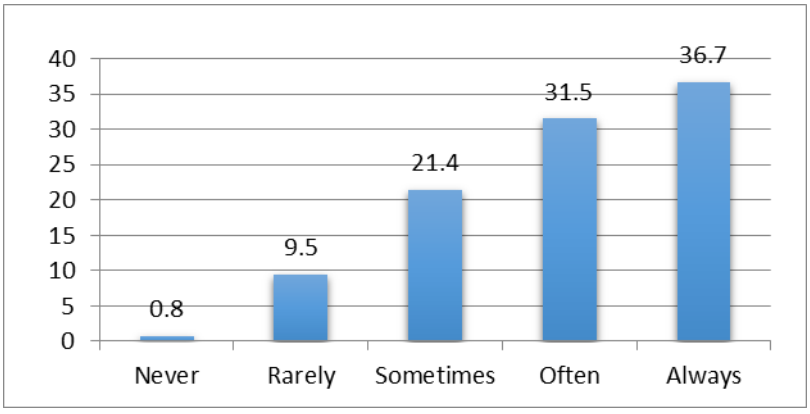

Figure 4.1: I think I have the ability to learn English well.

Figure 4.1 shows that 68.2% of the participants believe that they have the ability to learn English well. However, 9.5% of them believe that they rarely have the ability. 0.8% say that they do not have the ability to learn English well. In the analysis of the student's ability to learn English well, it is ascertained that majority of the

participants demonstrate a high levels of ability with their sum being 89.6%. Specifically, 36.7 % of them are individuals who think they have a high ability to study English. They are closely followed by 31.5 % of the participants who demonstrate that they often have the ability of learning English whereas 21.4%, 9.5 % and 0.8 % of the participants are those that believe that they have a lower ability to learn English with the degrees of their capability labeled as 'Sometimes', 'Rarely' , and 'Never' respectively .

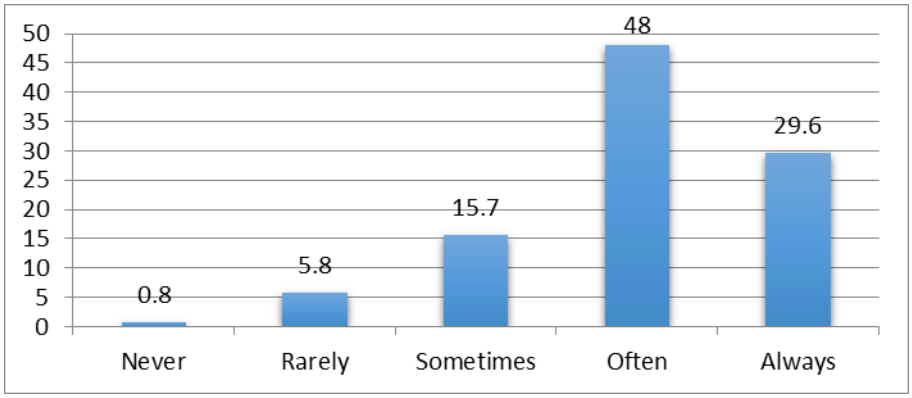

Figure 4.2: I make decisions and set goals of my learning**.**

Figure 4.2 shows that 77.6% make decisions and set goals when learning English. 6.6% of them do not make decisions and set goals of learning. 15.7% of them chose "sometimes". Notably, the participants reveal that they have a high ability to set their goals, with 93.3% of them selecting the categories 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always'. However, under these categories, 15.7% of the participants sometimes make goals. This is an indicator that most of the participants preferred to establish goals but not on a regular basis. In addition, it is observed that 0.8% of the participants do not set goals or make decisions at all.

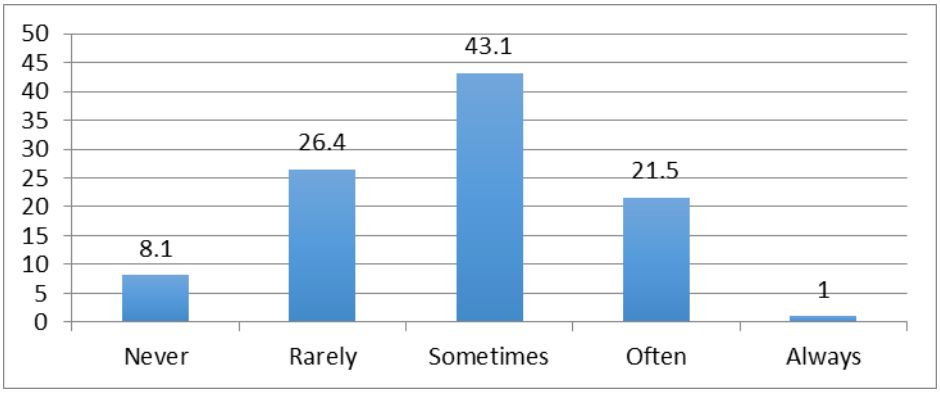

Figure 4.3*:* I make good use of my free time in studying English.

Figure 4.3 shows that 21.4% of the participants always make good use of their free time. 43.1% of them sometimes make use of their free time while 26.4% of them rarely make use of their free time to study English. 8.1% of the participants chose "never" indicating that they never use their free time to study English. Considering the results above, it is not easy to claim that a majority of the participants have the habit of studying English efficiently in their free time. It is observed that most of the participants do not make use of their free time to study English with the sum of the positive categories; 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always' being 65.5%. Just 1% of the participants demonstrate that they always use their free time to learn English. On average, 43% of them reflect the fact that they spend some of their time to study English while 8.1% have never used their free time to study.

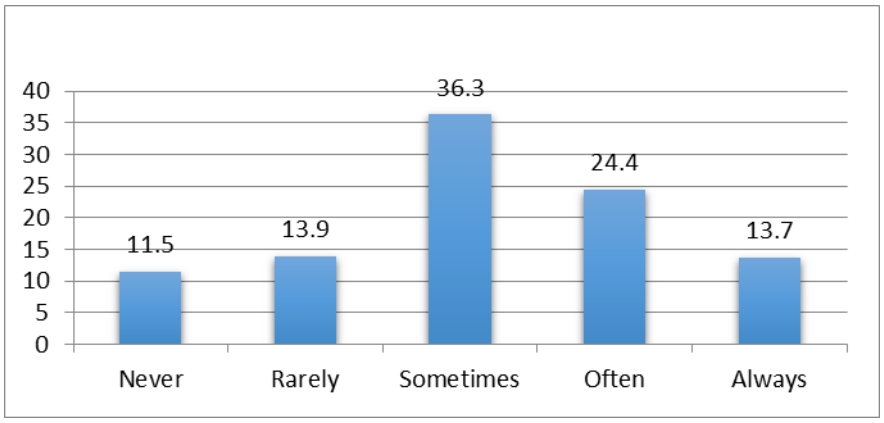

Figure 4.4: I preview before the class (i.e. see summary, lessons etc.).

Figure 4.4 indicates that 36.3% of the participants sometimes preview lessons before the class. 48.1% of the participants state that they usually preview before the class. However, 25.4 % state that they do not preview before the class. A clear examination of the figure indicates that the participants have an unbiased interest in previewing before classes, with the sum of the positive categories;'sometimes', 'often', and 'always 'being 74.4%. This is presented by 36.3% of the participants who sometimes have to study or carry out a preview before studies and 24.4% of them who often read summaries or lessons prior to class time. Comparing those who rarely preview and those who always preview, there is a small disparity or range of 0.2%, indicating neutrality.

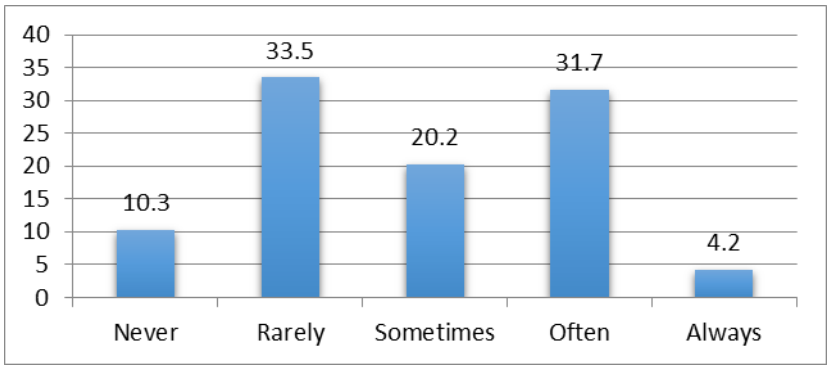

Figure 4.5: In the class, I try to use every opportunity to take part in the activities where and when I can speak in English.

Figure 4.5 shows that 35.9% of the participants use every opportunity to take part in the activities where and when they can speak in English. However, 43.8% of them do not use every opportunity to take part in the activities. From the figure, it is evident that the gap between those who rarely make use of activities in class to speak English and those that always take part in such activities is very wide. This is an indication that most of the participants do not utilize classroom activities to enhance their language. Additionally, the maximum percentage of individuals that take advantage of classroom activities to learn English is 4.2 % while the average of those who rarely and never use classroom activities is 21.9%.

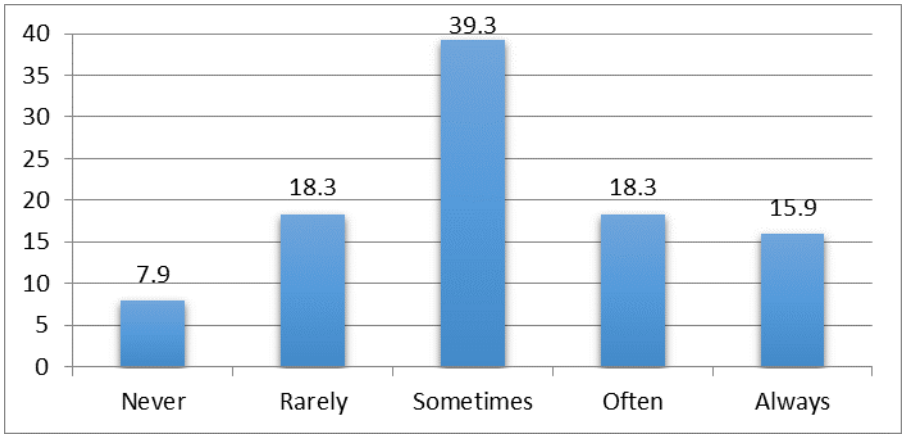

Figure 4.6: I speak confidently in front of people.

Figure 4.6 shows that 34.2% always speak confidently in front of people. A slightly higher percentage of participants with 39.3% sometimes feel confident speaking in front of people. However, 26.2% of them rarely speak confidently in front of people. It is clear that the highest percentage which is 39. 3% consists of individuals who can sometimes speak in front of people while the lowest percentage; 7.9 % consists of participants who demonstrate the inability to speak in front of people. The range

therefore in this case is 34.9% which shows that there is great disparity between the groups. Notably, the number of participants who rarely engage in public speaking and those that do so often is equal, indicating that there is no disparity between the two groups.

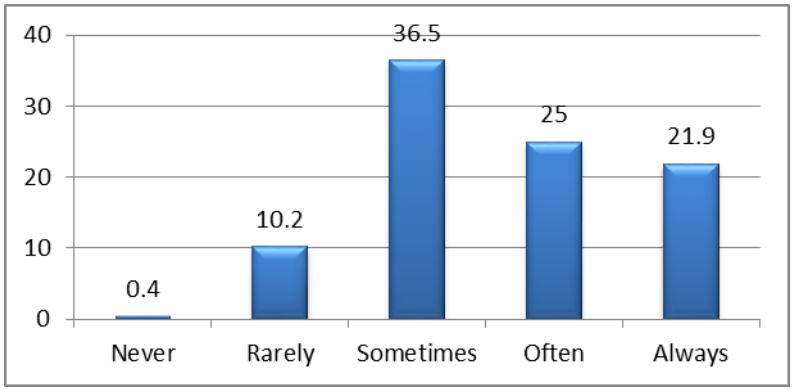

Figure 4.7: I make notes and summaries of my lessons.

According to Figure 4.7, 36% of the participants say they sometimes make notes and summaries of their lessons while 46.9% state that they usually make notes and keep summaries. By taking the sum of those that 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always' make notes and summaries of classwork, it is evident that on average, 82.9% of the participants have a good attitude towards this approach of learning. However, the category under 'sometimes' represents the highest number of participants that use part of their time to summarize notes of the lessons that they attend. Furthermore, it is ascertained that only 0.4% of the participants do not make notes at all implying that most of the participants have a high preference to note taking and summary making.

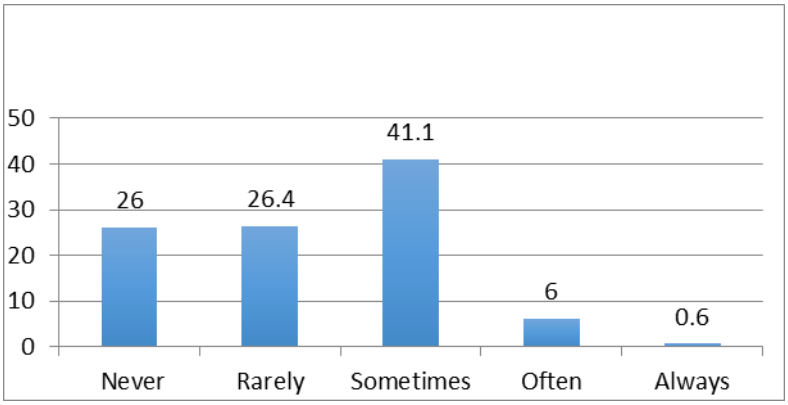

Figure 4.8: I talk to the teachers and friends outside the class in English.

Figure 4.8 shows that 41.1% of the participants "sometimes" talk to their teachers and friends in English outside the class while 6.6% chose that they always do so. 52% of the participants state that they do not talk in English to teachers and friends outside the class. From the results above, we may claim that more than half of the participants do not speak English outside the class. In the assessment of the participants' use of English when communicating with friends and teachers, it can be deduced that 0.6 % do not always employ this strategy. The category under 'sometimes' constitutes the highest percentage of participants who have a high preference to use English to communicate with teachers and friends. Finally, taking the sum of the percentages of the categories labeled 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always' gives 47.7%.

4.3.4 Broader autonomous activities

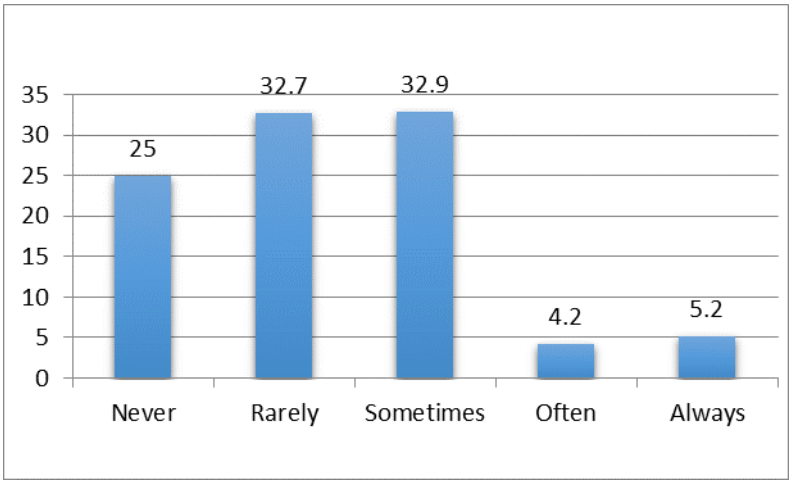

Figure 4.9: I practice English outside the class also such as: record my own voice; speak to other people in English.

Figure 4.9 shows that 32.9% of the participants sometimes and 32.7% of them rarely practice English outside the class whereas 9.2% of the participants practice English outside the class. From the results, we can conclude that the majority do not practice English outside class. By summing the percentages of the groups under the categories 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always', we obtain 42.3% which further demonstrates that fewer participants have a preference of using English outside classroom. On the contrary, the categories 'Rarely' and 'Never' have an aggregate of 57.7% of the participants. This is an indication that most of the participants do not practice English outside classroom settings.

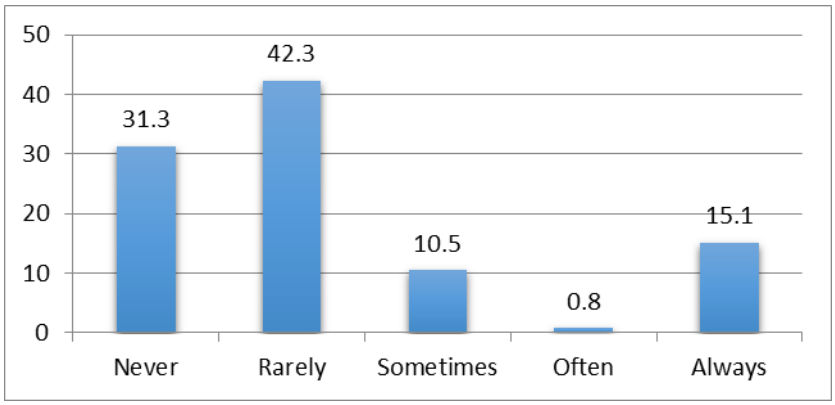

Figure 4.10: I use library to improve my English.

Figure 4.10 shows that most of the students do not use library to improve their English. 73.6% of participants reflect that they do not use library. However, a small minority with 15.9% use library to improve their English. It is observed that the sum of those who prefer to use library to improve English is 26.4% with the category of 'often' posting the smallest percentage of use. Checking on the difference between the category under 'always' and 'rarely', we obtain a negative value of 27.2% which further supports that individuals do not prefer the use of library for improvement of English.

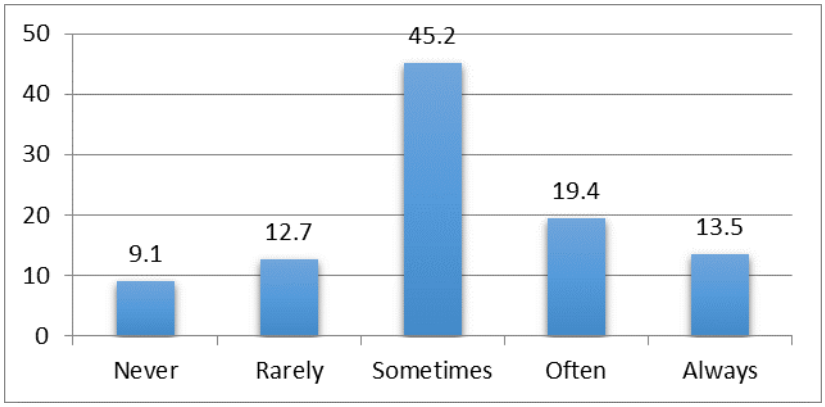

Figure 4.11: I use audio-visual materials to develop my speech.

Figure 4.11 shows that 45.2% of the participants sometimes use audio-visual materials to improve their speaking skill. 32.9% of the participants usually use audio-visual, watch English movies, read English newspapers etc. while 21.8% of the participants do not use audio-visual materials. From the figure, 78.1% of the participants are seen to have a positive attitude towards the use of audio-visual material to enhance speech. Notably, out of this percentage, 13.5% of them are constantly using this approach to enhance speech.

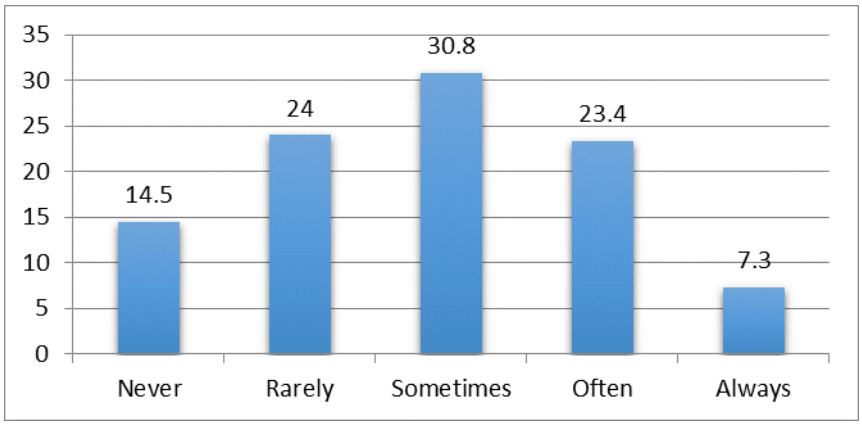

Figure 4.12: I attend different seminars, training courses, conferences to improve my English.

Figure 4.12 indicates that 30.8% of the participants sometimes attend seminars and courses. 30.7% of the participants usually attend different seminars, training courses, and conferences to improve their English. However, 38.5% of the participants state that they do not. Under the group of participants in the categories, 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always', it is clear that the 'always' category has the least individuals engaging in seminars, training and conferences to enhance language. However, the summation of the percentages of these categories gives 61.5%. This indicates that on average, the use of seminars and training is preferred by the participants.

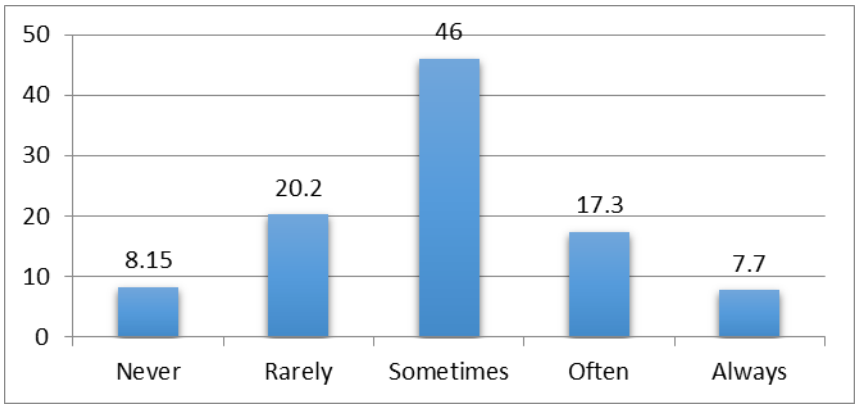

Figure 4.13: I take risk in learning the English language.

Figure 4.13 shows that 46% of the participants sometimes take risks in learning English. 25% of participants indicate that they always take risk in learning the English language. 20.2% of them state that they rarely take risk and 8.1% of the participants never take risk. On average, it is evident that 71.13 % of the participants like to take risks in learning English. Understandably, out of those, 7.7% are the ones

who are always willing to take risks. This implies that 63.43% of them still have some fear when taking the risk of studying English.

4.3.5 Self-esteem

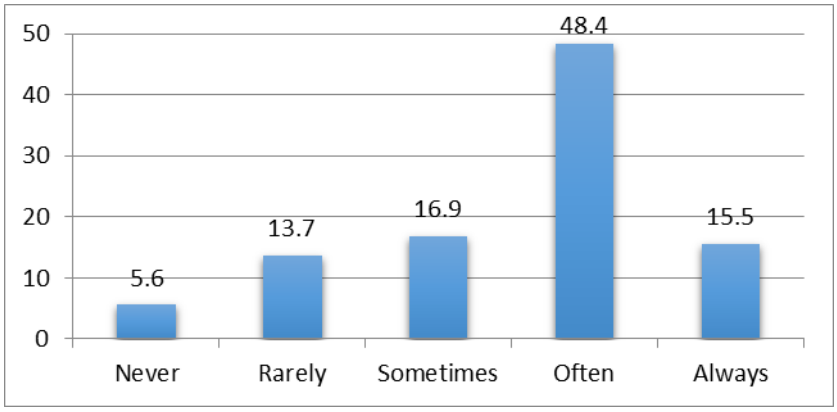

Figure 4.14: I note my strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.

Figure 4.14 shows that 48.4% of the participants often note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English. 15.5% of the participants indicate that they "always" note. 13.7% of the participants "rarely" and 5, 6% "never" note their strengths and weaknesses. On summing the three categories; 'sometimes', 'often', and 'always', we deduce that 80.8% of the participants are ready to record their strengths and weakness in studying English and improve on them. Moreover, the range of those who often note areas of weakness and those who never note is 42.8%. This high range indicates that the participants still prefer to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and to work on them to enhance English.

4.3.6 Use of reference materials

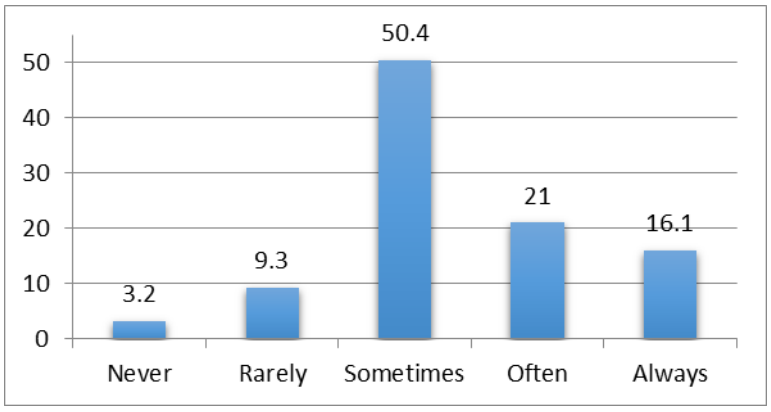

Figure 4.15: I revise lessons and seek the reference books.

Figure 4.15 shows that over half of the students with 50.4% sometimes revise lessons and use reference books 37.1% indicate that they revise lessons and seek the reference books. However, 12.5% indicate that they do not revise lessons and seek the reference books. It can be deduced that 87.5% of the participants prefer to revise lessons and seek reference books. Nevertheless, those who always use this approach are represented by 16%, which gives a range of 71.5% from the aggregate of 87.5 %. It is also clear that only a few individuals do not use reference books since only 3.2 % of the total participants are under this category.

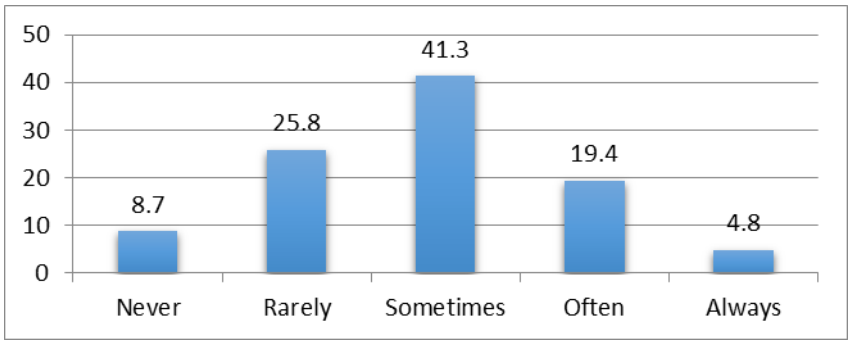

Figure 4.16: Besides the contents prescribed in the course, I read extra materials in advance.

Figure 4.16 shows that 41.3% of the participants “sometimes” read extra materials in advance while 24.2% of them always do so. From the figure, it is observed that 65.5% of the participants make use of extra reference materials. Precisely, out of this, only 4.8% show persistent use of the approach to improve their studies. Moreover, 8.7% do not use extra reference materials in advance.

4.3.7 Motivation

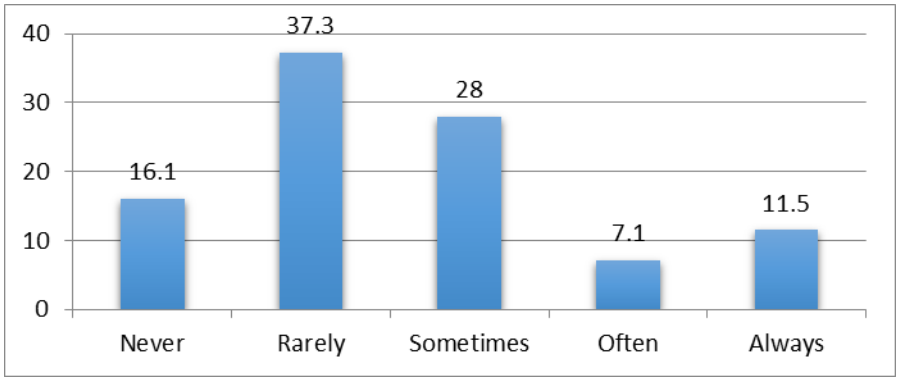

Figure 4.17: When I make progress in learning, I reward myself such as: buying new things and celebrate parties etc.

Figure 4.17 shows that 37.3% of the participants rarely make progress in learning English by rewarding themselves. 18.6 % of the participants reward themselves by buying new things and celebrating parties. Figure 4.17 indicates that 53.4% of the participants do not show improvement in English by rewarding themselves. On the other hand, 46.6% of them improve through this method. This implies that self-rewarding has little influence on language enhancement.

4.3.8 Use of technology in Learning

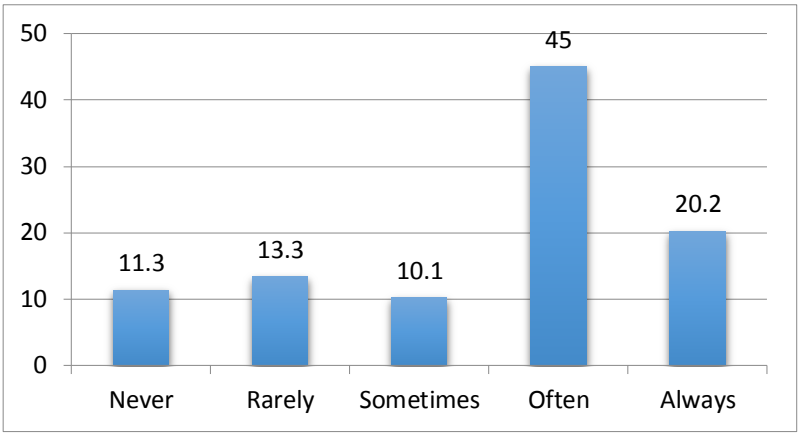

Figure 4.18: I use internet and computers to study and improve English**.**

Figure 4.18 shows that a majority of the participants, 65.2%, use the internet and computer to study English. The figure illustrates that 75% of the total participants prefer to use technology to improve their English. Out of the 75%, 45% frequently use technology to enhance language. This implies that most of participants like to use technology as a language improvement tool**.**

4.4 The Perceptual learning style preference questionnaire analysis

4.4.1 The learners' perceptions of roles in learning English

In this section, the learners' perceptions of roles in learning English are evaluated and shown in graphs.

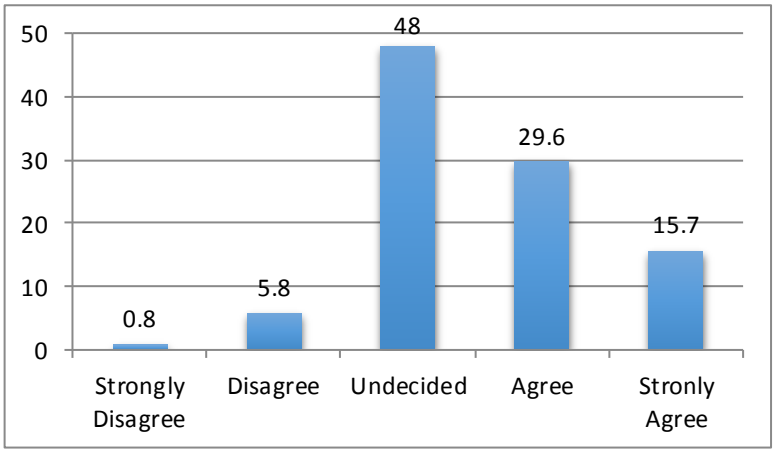

Figure 4.19: Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English.

Figure 4.19 shows that most of the participants (29.6%) agree and 15.7% strongly agree that they have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practising English. It is observed that most of the participants were undecided on whether students should find their own ways of practicing English. Additionally, 0.8% strongly disagreed that they can improvise their own methods of practicing language**.** On average, 45.3% of them agree that students can use the approach to improve language.

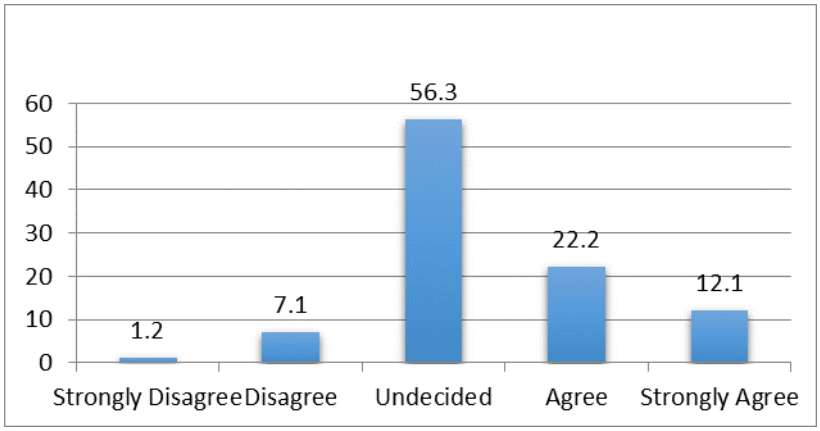

Figure 4.20: Students should use much self- study materials to learn English.

Figure 4.20 shows that 56.3% of the participants are undecided about using self-study materials. 22.2% 'agree' and 12.1% 'strongly agree' that they should use self-study materials. It can be deduced that only 34.3% of the participants prefer the use of self –study materials to learn English. This implies that the participants have a higher preference for employing their own methods to improve language.

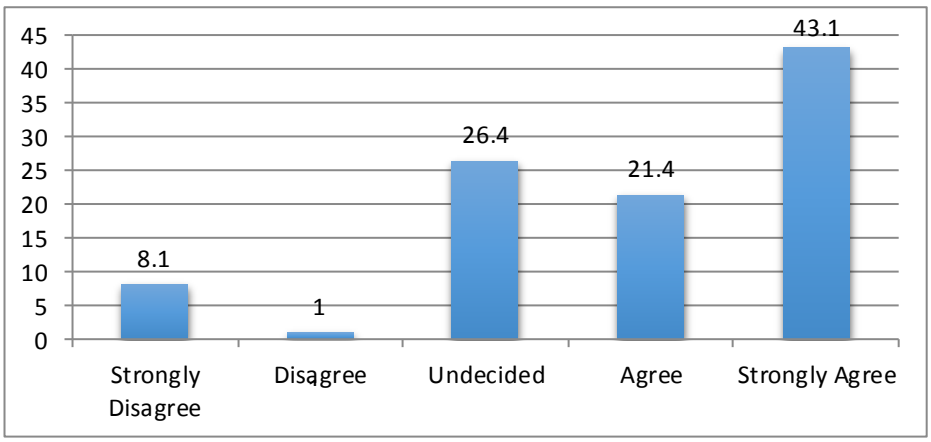

Figure 4.21: Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.

Figure 4.21 shows that almost half of the participants (43.1%) strongly agree that they have to evaluate themselves to learn better. The majority of graduate students think that they have to evaluate themselves to learn better. The figure illustrates that 64.5% of the participants prefer the use of self –evaluation for improvement in language. Therefore, it is clear that this is a better approach to learning than the use of self –study materials and improvisation of self-study methods. Only 1% disagrees that students can improve in language by evaluating themselves.

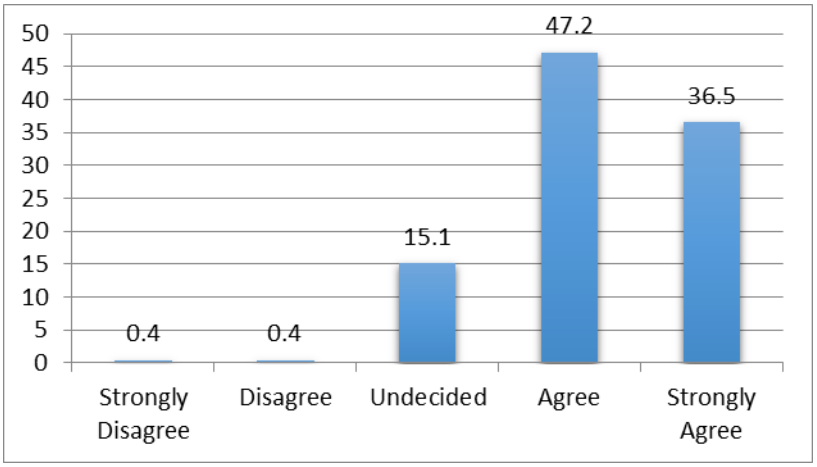

Figure 4.22: Students should mostly study what has been mentioned under the course because studying English course is actually for exam purpose.

Figure 4.22 shows that 47.2% of the participants agree that they should mostly study what has been mentioned under the course while no participants disagree with this statement. 36.5% of the participants selected “strongly agree”. In total, 83.7% of the graduate students believe that the English courses are useful for them because they think the English course is actually for exam purpose. A close analysis of the figure

indicates that most of the participants have a preference that students should focus on what is mentioned in class so as to pass exams. Notably, the 83.7% constitute participants that demonstrate great acceptance of this approach. This is an indicator that the methodology is better than all the approaches discussed above. Also, it is observed that those who do not agree with this strategy compirse only 0.8% of the total population.

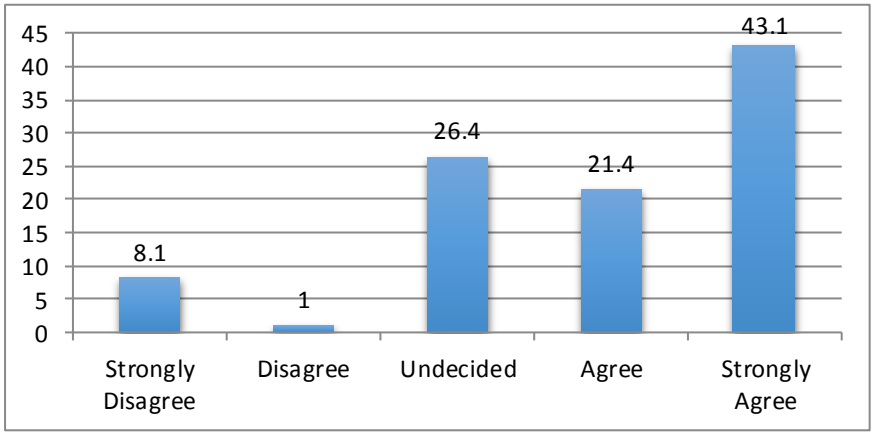

Figure 4.23: Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.

From figure 4.23, 64.5 % of the students think that they have to evaluate themselves to learn better. 9.1% say they do not and the rest of the students 26.4% are undecided. The figure illustrates that 43.1% of the students evaluate themselves to learn better. Therefore, most of the students use this approach to enhance their language.

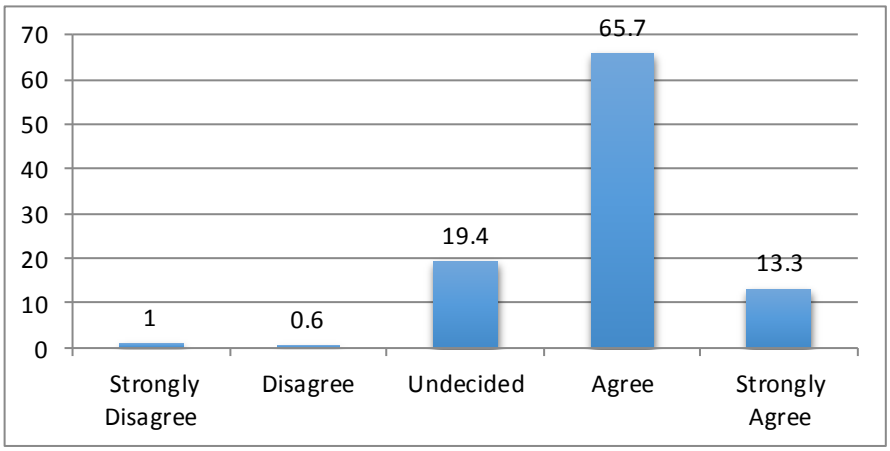

Figure 4.24: Students should build clear vision of their learning before learning English.

Figure 4.24 shows that the majority of the participants (65.7%) agree that they should build clear vision of their learning before learning English. 13.3% of participants

chose “strongly agree”. It is evident that 79% of the students agree that they should set out a vision before they can learn English. However, 1.6% of the participants do not develop a vision before studying. Therefore, this becomes the second best method of learning language.

4.4.2 The role of the teacher

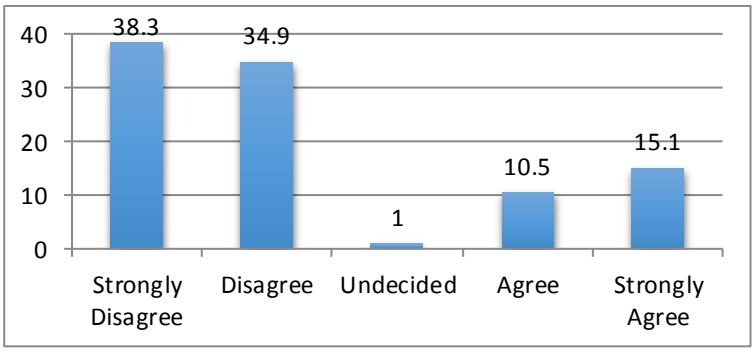

Figure 4.25: A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.

Figure 4.25 shows that 38.3% of the participants strongly disagree and 34.9% disagree that a lot of learning can be done without a teacher. In total, 73.2% of participants are dependent on the teacher. They do not believe that a lot of learning can be done without a teacher. The figure depicts that 25.6% of the participants agree that a lot of learning can be done without a teacher. Also, 1% of them demonstrate uncertainty of how they can learn without a teacher. Hence, this presents that teachers have a role to play in enhancing the learning of language

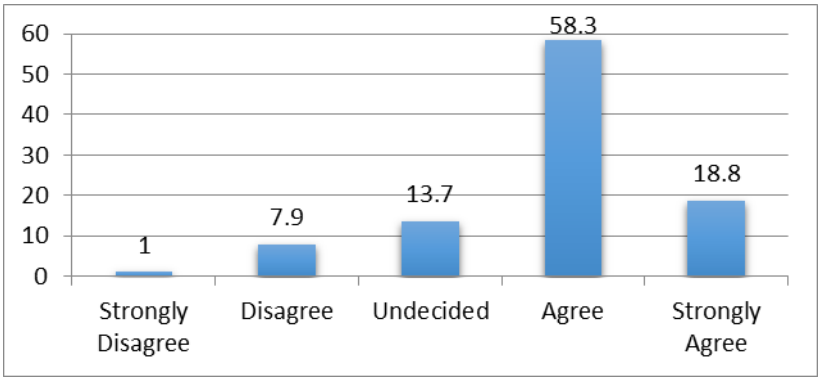

Figure 4.26: Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English

Figure 4.26 shows that 58.3% of the participants agree that teachers have to be responsible for making their students understand English. A big majority of the graduate students, 77.1% put responsibility on teachers to make students learn

English. The figure illustrates that teachers have a role in making students comprehend English. However, 8.9% of them disagree that teachers have the responsibility of ensuring that learners comprehend language. 13.7% of them remain undecided.

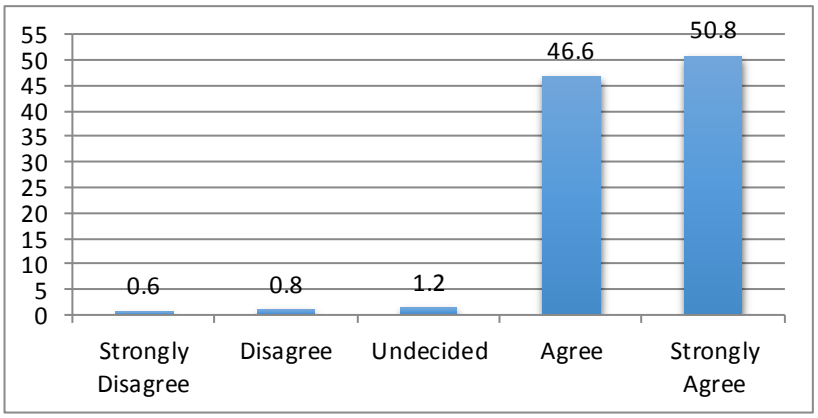

Figure 4.27: Teachers should point out the students' errors.

Figure 4.27 shows that over half (50.8%) of the participants strongly disagree and 46.6% agree that teachers should point out students' errors. This also shows that more participants are dependent on their teachers. Based on the analysis of the figure, it is evident that 97.4% of the participants are in agreement that teachers should point out the students' errors. On the contrary, 0.6% of them do not agree that it is the role of a teacher to highlight mistakes. The implication here is that teachers have a significant role in enhancing students' performance.

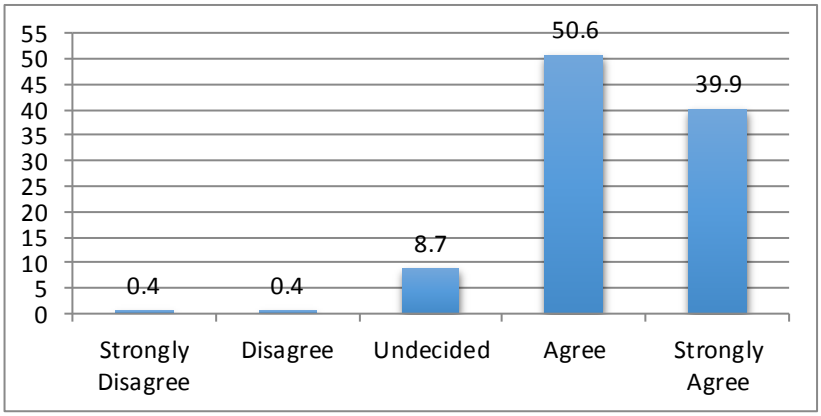

Figure 4.28: Teachers should teach the 'what' and the 'how' of English

Figure 4.28 shows that 50.6% of the participants agree and 39.9% strongly agree that teachers have to teach not only "what" but also "how" of English. This is another result of dependence on teachers. It is observed that teachers 90.5% of the

participants agree that teachers ought to teach the 'what' and 'how' aspects of English. Understandably, 0.8% of them are not in agreement that teachers employ these techniques to studying language. However, in relation to the role of teachers, it is evident that their major role is to point mistakes.

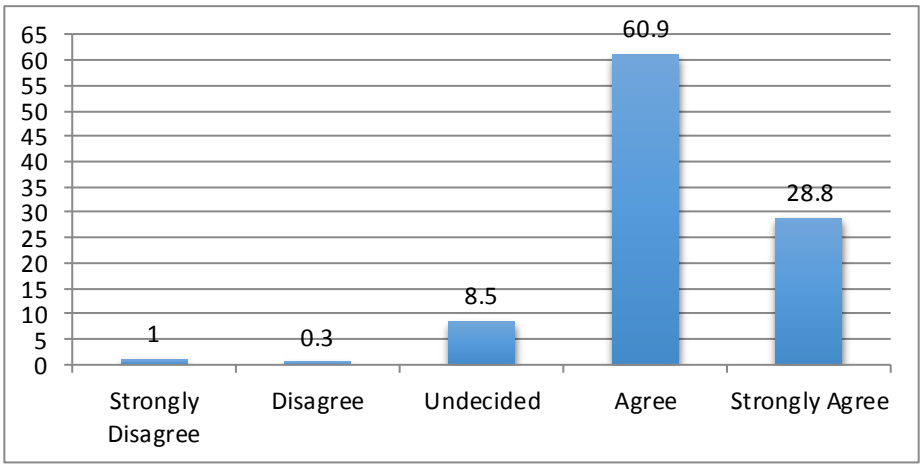

Figure 4.29: Teachers have to provide exam oriented notes and materials.

Figure 4.29 shows that 60.9% of the participants agree and 28.8 strongly agree that teachers have to provide exam oriented materials. A keen assessment of the figure indicates that 89.7% of the participants agree that teachers provide notes that are exam oriented. However, 1.3% of them do not prefer this approach to learning at all. 8.5% of the participants depict uncertainty on the use of this approach to learning.

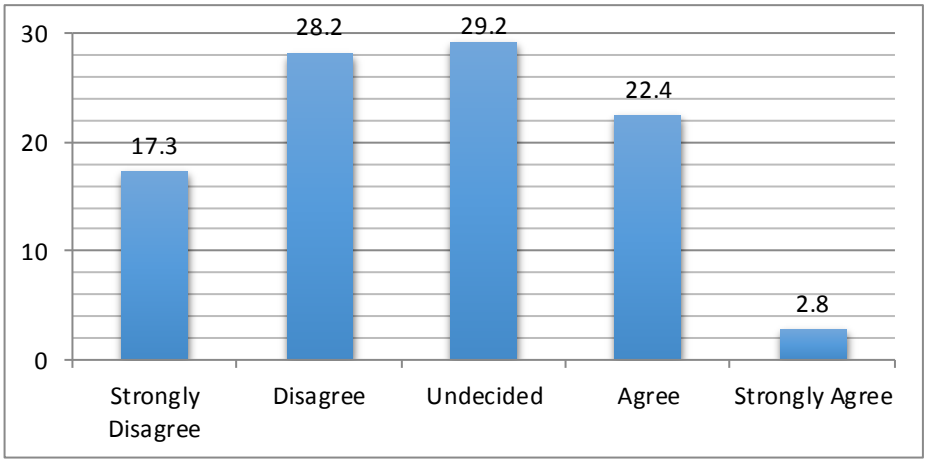

Figure 4.30: Students' failure is directly related to the teachers' classroom employment.

Figure 4.30 shows that 29.2% of the participants are undecided about whether or not the failure of the students is related to the teacher. However, 28.2% of them disagree with this opinion. It is clearly seen that students have a clear vision to learn English but they prefer to learn English while dependent on the teacher. The figure shows

that 25% of the participants are of the opinion that students' failure is related to the teacher's ability to deliver in class. Additionally, 17.3% of them are in disagreement that teachers' classroom activities affect the failure of students. This indicates that there is no relationship between student's failure in class and teacher's activities in class.

4.5 Data analysis of the Questionnaire of SILL (Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners Survey)

The second questionnaire in this study was SILL (Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners Survey) (Oxford; 1990) and it was administered to the participants of the case study groups. The participants of both groups were asked to choose the frequency at which they used some written strategies. The SILL (Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners Survey) (Oxford;1990) questionnaire had fifty items showing different strategies. Each question had a 5 point Likert scale. The responses to the questions were scored from (1) 'Never or almost never of me' to (5) 'always or almost always true of me'. The results of this section were analysed according to Oxford's (1990) classification to averages. Table 4.3 below indicates the meaning of each score.

Table 4. 3: The Classification of SILL (Oxford, 1990).

Frequency	Description	Score
High	**Always or almost always** **Generally used**	**4.5 to 5.00** **3.5 to 4.4**
Medium	**Sometimes** **Generally not used**	**2.5 to 3.4** **1.5 to 2.4**
Low	**Almost or almost never used**	**1.5 to 2.4**

Below are the results of the SILL questionnaire for both groups. The first group is about Mnemonic strategies of the control class and experimental class.

Table 4.4: Mnemonic strategies of the control class and experimental class**.**

A	Group	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
1	Control	15	3.46	,91	0.00	28	1.000
	Experimental	15	3.46	,51			
2	Control	15	3.00	,84	-2.08	28	.046*
	Experimental	15	3.53	,51			
3	Control	15	2.93	,96	0.60	28	.540
	Experimental	15	2.73	,79			
4	Control	15	2.80	,86	0.00	28	1.000
	Experimental	15	2.80	,56			
5	Control	15	2.66	1,04	0.20	28	.842
	Experimental	15	2.60	,73			
6	Control	15	4.06	,59	1.26	28	.216
	Experimental	15	3.80	,56			
7	Control	15	2.33	,72	0.00	28	1.000
	Experimental	15	2.33	,48			
8	Control	15	3.73	,45	-0.41	28	.679
	Experimental	15	3.80	,41			
9	Control	15	3.20	1,08	0.20	28	.839
	Experimental	15	3.13	,63			

*p is significant at the level of 0.05(2-tailed)

First, we check on the p-values of the two classes against the significant level of 0.05. The table indicates that most of the p-values are greater than 0.05. This implies that the two groups are not statistically different. However, item one is less than 0.05, indicating that there is some statistical difference between the two classes for the same item. Next, we check on the values of t- tabulated and t-calculated to see whether there is any difference. Since the t-value is larger than t-calculated, there is a difference between the two groups. From the table, it is evident that t- value is larger than the t-calculated for item 3 and 6, implying that there is a difference in the means and standard deviation for these items in the control class and the experimental class. Additionally, the t-value is found to be less than the t-calculated for items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9, which imply that there is no much difference among the two groups. From the results of the statistical manipulation, it is seen that participants apply all the strategies to learn vocabulary or to remember more effectively. Checking on the mean for the control class, it is observed that the mean is 3.13 while that of the experimental class is also 3.13. This further supports the idea that there is no difference between the two groups. From the table, it is evident that the item that was mostly used by the participants was item 6. Under this item, the control class had a

higher frequency of use than the experimental class. Another item that is generally used by the two classes is item 8, whose frequency is in the range of 3.5 to 4.4. Based on the level of significance, the items which are statistically significant are items 2 and 3. Interestingly, the mean for both classes under this strategy are the same i.e., 3.13 indicating that mnemonic strategies are significant for both classes.

Table 4. 5: Cognitive strategies of the control class and experimental class.

B	Group	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
10	Control	15	4.06	.70	1.53	28	.136
	Experimental	15	3.66	.72			
11	Control	15	2.40	.82	0.77	28	.445
	Experimental	15	2.20	.56			
12	Control	15	2.40	.73	2.10	28	.045
	Experimental	15	2.00	.56			
13	Control	15	2.60	.82	-2.75	28	.010
	Experimental	15	3.33	.61			
14	Control	15	1.93	.70	0.00	28	1.00
	Experimental	15	1.93	.25			
15	Control	15	3.13	1.0	2.65	28	.013
	Experimental	15	2.33	.48			
16	Control	15	3.60	.91	0.23	28	.818
	Experimental	15	3.53	.63			
17	Control	15	2.14	.86	0.30	28	.767
	Experimental	15	2.06	.45			
18	Control	15	3.66	.89	0.00	28	1000
	Experimental	15	3.66	.72			
19	Control	15	2.73	.88	3.27	28	1.000
	Experimental	15	1.86	.51			
20	Control	15	3.55	.88	-.46	28	.100
	Experimental	15	3.45	.68			
21	Control	15	2.55	.72	1.42	28	.170
	Experimental	15	2.18	.40			
22	Control	15	3.22	.83	0.61	28	.542
	Experimental	15	3.09	.94			
23	Control	15	2.33	.70	0.30	28	.764
	Experimental	15	2.09	.30			

*p is significant at the level of 0.05(2-tailed)

Principally, we examine the p-values against the significance level of 0.05. If p value is less than 0.05, then there is statistical difference between the two groups. From the table, it is evident that most of the items have a p-value which is greater than 0.05, implying that there is no statistical difference among the two groups. This includes items 23, 22, 21,20,19,18,17,16,14, 11 and 10. However, items 15, 12, and 13 have a

p-value which is less than 0.05. This implies that there is a statistical difference between the groups. Notably, only 3 items indicate that there is a difference between the two groups. Since many of the items have their p-value larger than 0.05, it is deduced that there is no significant difference between the two groups in the use of cognitive strategies. Next, we compare the t-value with the computed t-values in the table. It is observed that if the t-value is larger than t-calculated then, there is a difference. From the table, it is deduced that items 22, 21,and 19 have a t- tabulated greater than the t-calculated. This implies that the two are not different for most of the items. The t- values for most of the items is less than the t- computed implying that there is no much difference between the two groups. Checking on the means for the two classes, we obtain 2.87 and 2.67 which implies that there is a difference of only 0.2. This is quite a small difference. Comparing the means for the cognitive strategy and the mnemonic strategies, it is observed that both of them have a medium use although the former is used more frequently than the latter.

Table 4. 6: Compensation strategies of the control class and experimental class.

C	Group	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
24	Control	15	3.22	.66	0.00	28	1000
	Experimental	15	3.20	.63			
25	Control	15	2.33	.70	-1.70	28	.100
	Experimental	15	2.81	.87			
26	Control	15	2.44	.72	-1.44	28	.158
	Experimental	15	3.63	.67			
27	Control	15	3.11	.78	.88	28	.382
	Experimental	15	2.72	.78			
28	Control	15	2.66	.70	-.22	28	.828
	Experimental	15	2.18	.40			
29	Control	15	2.44	.52	-1.05	28	.292
	Experimental	15	2.72	.64			

*p is significant at the level of 0.05(2-tailed)

From a close examination of the p-value against the t-value 0.05, it is observed in table 4.6 that the p-values for all items in the compensation strategy are greater than 0.05. The implication here is that there is no difference in the use of compensation strategy between both groups. Next, a comparison is made between the t-calculated values in the table and the t-value. If the t-value is larger than t-calculated then, there is a difference. From the table, it is evident that the t- tabulated is greater than the t-computed for item 27. Hence, there is some difference. However, the t –tabulated for items 24, 25, 26, 28, and 29, are less than the t-calculated implying that there is no

much difference between the two groups. Only one item is likely to cause a very small difference. Checking on the means for the classes, it observed that they are 2.70 and 2.67 for the control and the experimental classes respectively. This implies that there is no much difference between the two groups in the use of compensation strategies.

Table 4. 7: Metacognition strategies of the control class and experimental class.

D	Group	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
30	Control	15	2.77	.66	-1.05	28	.299
	Experimental	15	3.00	.63			
31	Control	15	3.11	.60	1.28	28	.209
	Experimental	15	2.77	.64			
32	Control	15	3.77	.44	.96	28	.344
	Experimental	15	3.45	.52			
33	Control	15	3.55	.72	.92	28	.361
	Experimental	15	3.27	.46			
34	Control	15	3.55	.72	1.81	28	.080
	Experimental	15	3.00	.44			
35	Control	15	3.00	.70	0.00	28	1.00
	Experimental	15	2.63	.50			
36	Control	15	3.00	.50	1.42	28	.165
	Experimental	15	2.63	.30			
37	Control	15	3.33	.83	1.26	28	.216
	Experimental	15	3.09	.30			
38	Control	15	3.55	.52	-72	28	.473
	Experimental	15	3.36	.50			

*p is significant at the level of 0.05(2-tailed)

Examination of the p-values for the various items indicates that they are greater than 0.05. The implication here is that there is no difference in the use of the metacognition strategies for the two groups. Checking on the t-tabulated values for the various items on the table, items 32, 33, 34, and 37 are greater than the t-computed. The implication here is that there is no statistical difference between the two groups for these items. Moreover, only items 30, 35, and 38 have their t-tabulated values less than t- computed, indicating that there is no meaningful difference in the use of metacognition strategies between the two groups. The mean for the items under the control group is 3.29 while that of the experimental group is 3.022. The difference between the two means is only 0.3. This implies that there is no meaningful difference between the two classes.

Table 4. 8: Affective strategies of the control class and experimental class.

E	Group	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
39	Control	15	2.93	.70	-1.53	28	.135
	Experimental	15	3.26	.45			
40	Control	15	2.80	.77	-.52	28	.601
	Experimental	15	2.93	.59			
41	Control	15	2.86	.51	.00	28	1000
	Experimental	15	2.86	.51			
42	Control	15	3.13	.51	-.33	28	.737
	Experimental	15	3.20	.56			
43	Control	15	1.53	.51	-.64	28	.526
	Experimental	15	1.66	.61			
44	Control	15	2.53	.91	0.00	28	1.000
	Experimental	15	2.53	.51			

*p is significant at the level of 0.05(2-tailed)

Checking on the p-values of the various items of the two classes indicates that they are greater than 0.05. This means that there is no meaningful difference between the control class and the experimental class. The means for the control class is 2.63 while that of the experimental class is 2.74. The range for the two means in this case is 0.11, which indicates that there is no meaningful difference between the two groups. Thus, all items for the two items fall under the medium class. Additionally, it is deduced that the t-tabulated for all the items is smaller than the t-calculated. This provides further evidence that there is no difference between the two classes.

Table 4. 9: Social strategies of the control class and experimental class.

F	Group	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
45	Control	15	3.06	.88	-2.30	28	.030
	Experimental	15	3.66	.48			
46	Control	15	2.66	.61	-1.34	28	.190
	Experimental	15	2.93	.45			
47	Control	15	2.20	.56	1.42	28	.165
	Experimental	15	1.93	.45			
48	Control	15	3.13	.74	-.24	28	.812
	Experimental	15	3.20	.77			
49	Control	15	2.13	.74	-.59	28	.559
	Experimental	15	2.26	.45			
50	Control	15	2.40	.73	0.00	28	1.000
	Experimental	15	2.40	.50			

*p is significant at the level of 0.05(2-tailed)

First, an analysis of the p-values of all items for the two groups indicates that the p-value is greater than 0.05. Thus, there is no statistical difference between the control group and the experimental group. Comparing the values of t-calculated and t-tabulated for all the items, it is ascertained that the t – values are smaller than the t-calculated values. The implication therefore is that there is no statistical difference between the two groups. Moreover, the mean for the control group is found to be 2.596 while that of the experimental group is computed to be 2.73. The range of the two means is found to be 0.134. The difference here is very small indicating that there is no meaningful difference.

Table 4. 10: The results classification of strategies of research and control groups of SILL.

Mnemonic Strategies(A)	N	Mean	Sd
Controlling Class	15	3.13	0.90
Experimental Class	15	3.81	0.57
Total Gr.	30	3.12	0.71
Cognitive Strategies(B)			
Controlling Class	15	3.32	0.88
Experimental Class	15	2.66	0.51
Total Gr.	30	2.77	0.72
Compensation Strategies(C)			
Controlling Class	15	2.70	0.68
Experimental Class	15	2.67	0.66
Total Gr.	30	2.78	0.76
Metacognition Strategies(D)			
Controlling Class	15	3.37	0.63
Experimental Class	15	3.04	0.47
Total Gr.	30	3.35	0.65
Affective Strategies(E)			
Controlling Class.	15	2.63	0.65
Experimental Class	15	2.74	0.47
Total Gr.	30	2.68	0.60
Social Strategies(F)			
Controlling Class	15	2.59	0.67
Experimental Class	15	2.73	0.51
Total Gr.	30	2.89	0.63

Accordingly, the level of participants was found medium for the category of memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Based on the fact that the mean frequency of the use of various

strategies discussed above lie in the range of 2.5 to 3.4, for both classes, it is clear that there is not much difference. However, the usage of the various strategies can be

1. Meta-cognition strategies
2. Mnemonic strategies
3. Social strategies
4. Compensation Strategies
5. Cognitive strategies
6. Affective strategies.

ranked based on the means as shown below:

It is also observed that the mean standard deviation for the mnemonic strategy is 0.71. This is a small deviation implying that there no much difference in the application of the strategy by either of the two classes. Under the compensation strategy it is deduced that the mean standard deviation is 0.76, which is also a greater deviation. This indicates that there is more difference among the two groups given that participants use this strategy. The strategies that have the least mean standard deviation include metacognition strategies, affective strategies, and the social strategies. The small deviations between the classes based on these strategies indicate that there is no much difference. The co-efficient of variation for the mnemonic strategy is computed to be 22.76% while that of the cognitive strategies is found to be 25.99%. On the other hand, the co-efficient of variation of the affective strategies, compensation strategies, social strategies and the metacognitive strategies are found to be 22.388%, 27.33%, 21.80%, and 15.46% respectively. The implication here is that the level of variation among the two groups is narrower for strategies such as the metacognitive and social strategies. However, a greater variation in the two groups is observed in the compensation strategies and the cognitive strategies.

4.6 The analysis of the correlation of six categories of SILL (LearningStrategy Inventory for Language Learners Survey)

The interpretation and discussion of the strength of the correlation is done using Cohen (1988) criteria (Table 4.11).

Table 4. 11: The Classification suggested by Cohen, J (1988).

	Level of strength	**Amount of**	**strength**
	Low	r = .10 to .29	
	Medium	r = .30 to .49	
	Strong	r = .50 to 1	

The correlation showing comparison between scores of the adopted version of SILL is presented in table 4.11.

Table 4. 12: The summary of the correlation among the six categories of the total participants of the groups adapted version of SILL (total participants).

	Memory	Cognitive	Compensation	Meta-cognitive	Affective	Social
Memory	1	0.686**	0.533**	0.524	0.261	0.416*
Cognitive	0.686**	1	0.584**	0.707**	0.176	0.622**
Compensation	0.533**	0.584**	1	0.682**	0.331	0.318
Meta-cognitive	0.524**	0.707**	0.682**	1	0.374	0.443
Affective	0.261	0.176	0.331	0.374	1	0.300
Social	0.416*	0.622**	0.318	0.443*	0.300	1
** = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) * = Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)						

The level of correlation between the category of memory strategies, and cognitive and social strategies is high. In meta- strategies, it is medium but in affective strategies, it is low –Table 4.13.

Based on Table 4.13, the level of correlation between the category of cognitive strategies and the compensation, meta-cognitive and social strategies is strong but it is low for the affective strategies. The level of correlation between the category of compensation strategies and the meta-strategies is strong, but it is low for affective and social strategies.

Table 4.13 further demonstrates that the level of correlation between the category of meta-strategies and the affective and social strategies is medium. However, the level of correlation between affective and social strategies is low. Table 4.13 reflects high correlation between social strategies, and memory, cognitive, meta-cognitive and social strategies but it is low between compensation and affective strategies.

Table 4. 13: The summary of the correlation among the six categories of the adapted version of SILL (Control group).

	Memory strategies	Cognitive strategies	Compensation strategies	Meta-cognitive strategies	Affective strategies	Social strategies
Memory	1	0.748**	0.557*	0.510	0.188	0.446
Cognitive	0.748**	1	0.790**	0.732**	0.196	0.694**
Compensation	0.557*	0.790**	1	0.787**	0.116	0.572*
Meta-cognitive	0.510	0.732**	0.787**	1	0.317	0.690**
Affective	0.188	0.196	0.116	0.317	1	0.300
Social	0.446	0.694**	0.572*	0.690**	0.300	1
**=Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) *= Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)						

Table 4. 14: The summary of the correlation among the six categories of the adapted version of SILL (Experimental group).

	Memory strategies	Cognitive strategies	Compensation strategies	Meta-cognitive strategies	Affective strategies	Social strategies
Memory	1	0.472	0.558*	0.669**	0.478	0.327
Cognitive	0.472	1	0.282	0.750**	0.306	0.600*
Compensation	0.558*	0.282	1	0.625*	0.593*	0.200
Meta-cognitive	0.669**	0.750**	0.625*	1	0.583*	0.177
Affective	0.478	0.306	0.593*	0.583*	1	0.200
Social	0.327	0.600*	0.200	0.177	0.200	1
**=Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) *= Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed)						

As table 4.14 indicates, the level of correlation between the memory strategies and the compensation and cognitive strategies is strong. For the meta-cognition, it is medium but it is low for the affective and social strategies in control group. On the other hand, table 4.15 indicates that the level of correlation between the category of memory strategies, and the meta-cognitive and compensation strategies is strong. It is medium for the cognitive and affective strategies but it is low for the social strategies in the experimental group.

Based on Table 4.14, there is a strong correlation between the category of cognitive strategies, and the compensation, meta-cognitive and social strategies but the correlation is low for the affective strategies in control group. On the other hand, table 4.15 indicates that there is a positive strong correlation between the category of

cognitive strategies, and the meta-cognitive and social strategies but the correlation is low for the compensation and affective strategies in the experimental group.

In the control group, the category of compensation strategies, has a strong correlation with the meta-cognitive and the social strategies. However, there is a low correlation with the affective strategies. On the other hand, in the experimental group, in the category of compensation strategies, there is high correlation with the meta-cognitive and affective strategies but there is a low correlation with the social strategies.

In the control group, there is a strong correlation between the meta-cognitive and the social strategies but there is a low correlation with the affective strategies. On the other hand; in the experimental group, there is a high correlation with the meta-cognition and social affective strategies but there is a low correlation with the affective strategies. In experimental group, there is a strong correlation between the meta-cognition and affective strategies but low correlation between social strategies. In both groups, there is a low correlation between affective and social strategies.

Table 4. 15: Internal consistency reliability coefficient for the whole and six sub-categories of the adapted version of SILL.

Sub- category	Alpha	Number of items
Memory strategies	0.72	9
Cognitive strategies	0.83	13
Compensation strategies	0.73	6
Metacognitive strategies	0.85	9
Affective strategies	0.50	6
Social strategies	0.52	6
SILL (Whole scale)	0.92	49

The categories of the version of SILL are shown in Table 4.16. From table 4.15, the reliability coefficient for the SILL is 0.92.

4.7 Strategies based on the statistical results of the questionnaire of the SILL

From the Strategy Inventory for Language Learners Survey, there are six main strategies which include metacognition strategies, social strategies, mnemonic strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and affective strategies (Bannert, Reimann & Sonnenberg 2013). Based on the statistical analysis, it is deduced that the preferable strategy is the metacognition strategy which had a mean of 3.35. In this case, most learners demonstrate that they have plans for their learning

process schedule and they would like to activate their plans in order to become better learners of English.

Metacognition entails setting goals, self-assessment, monitoring as well as more regulation especially during the writing and thinking processes. Next in the rank are the mnemonic strategies, in which case, all the participants apply all the learning strategies in order to remember what they have learned (Lucas, Ribeiro& Moreira 2012). This approach is important in learning and comprehension of vocabulary. Interestingly, the students are more likely to learn vocabulary through remembrance of their location, may be on the street, board or on a page.

Social strategy come in third and it focuses on the improvement of language through interaction with other people (Bannert, Reimann & Sonnenberg 2013). It is observed that when people do not comprehend what other people are saying in English, it is important that they ask them to speak slowly or seek their pardon. However, when they are faced with challenges, they need to ask questions in English in order to increase their proficiency. It is also important that they set their time to practice with those that speak English fluently.

Compensation strategy occupy the fourth position and it involves students comprehending words which are not familiar and making guesses (Abbasian & Hartoonian 2014). Additionally, this strategy requires that when students are reading English and they come across new words, they do not have to use a dictionary. Instead, they ought to take the opportunity to sensitize the meaning of the word by themselves before making any reference to a dictionary. Cognitive strategies occupy the fifth position in the rank of the six methodologies in the SILL. Students using this approach engage in repetition to enhance language. In addition, they like skimming before they can analyze a given passage (Maier & Richter 2014). Moreover, students using this strategy have a high preference for writing and reading English but not speaking it. Last in the rank is the affective strategy which require that, when learners become demotivated, it is important they are motivated by their teachers.

4.8 Analysis of Language Learners Histories

The main features of the learners' histories are:

1. 5+3+3 education system: There were no English lessons in primary schools. There were four hours of English lessons in secondary and high schools and two or three hours in the first year of the University.
2. Graduate students who studied at the state schools learnt English there. In primary schools, they took three-hour lesson each week in 4^{th}, 5^{th}, 6^{th}, 7^{th}, and 8^{th} years. In secondary school, it was the same as primary school but the lesson lasted three years. In high school, there were two hours of English lesson but only in one year and it was two or three hours in the first year of the university. (In 8+4 education system)
3. Some of the students graduated from Anatolian high school so they attended the preparatory school.
4. Some of the students took beginner/intermediate level of English course in prep school.

The learners' language histories show us that they are in three levels. Beginner, Intermediate and upper intermediate or advanced level. The difficulties they face in English are vocabulary, grammar, reading, and paragraph analysis.

4.9 The results of the sample YDS exams of language course

In the language course, 15 sample YDS tests were administered to the participants of the two groups, every two weeks. The results of the sample (YDS) proficiency exam tests for the control and experimental classes are shown in Table 4.16, columns 1, 2, 3, and 4.

4.10 Analysis of English proficiency course results

4.10.1 Descriptive analysis

Table 4. 16: Gender descriptive analysis at the beginning and end of the semester and final score of the sample tests.

Gender	1) First YDS Sample Test Score	2) Prior Exam Score	3) First Term Sample Test Score	4) Final Sample Test Score	5) Final YDS Scores
Male	39.50	39.57	43.50	45.80	48.83
N	15	15	15	15	15
Std. deviation	9.02	9.34	8.90	9.73	10.08
Female	36.40	36.60	40.80	42.40	45.25
N	15	15	15	15	15
Std. deviation	7.60	8.34	8.13	8.04	9.04
TOTAL	38.46	38.58	42.60	44.66	47.64
N	30	30	30	30	30
Std. deviation	8.57	8.99	8.60	9.20	9.74

The first important observation from the statistical analysis is that male candidates scored more than female candidates. In the first YDS sample test, the mean for males is 39.5 while that of females is 36.4. The score of the second item, prior YDS exam scores, is close to that of the first sample test scores. The mean of males score is 39.5 while the mean of females score is 36.6. The first term sample test score is 43.5 for males but 40.8 for females. In the final test score, the mean score of male candidates is 45.8 while that of females is 42.4. For the formal YDS exam, the mean score of males is 48.8 and that of female is 45.25.

Table 4. 17: Complete Group Statistics of all results of the sample YDS test scores.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Dev.**	**df**	**t**	**p**
1. First YDS Sample T. S						
Experimental Group	15	38.06	9.07	28	-0.45	0.65
Control Group	15	38.86	8.34			
2. Prior Exam Scores						
Experimental Group	15	37.83	9.34	28	-.251	.803
Control Group	15	39.33	8.88			
3)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	37.93	9.03	28	-.251	.803
Control Group	15	38.73	7.93			
4) Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	38.86	8.374	28	-.218	.829
Control Group	15	39.53	8.339			
5)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	39.86	8.927	28	-.729	.472
Control Group	15	42.06	7.535			
6)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	41.00	9.063	28	-.1.18	.248
Control Group	15	44.46	6.885			
7)Sample Test						

Experimental Group	15	41.73	8.639	28	-.432	.163
Control Group	15	45,86	7,099			
8)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	41.73	9.230	28	-.920	.366
Control Group	15	44.60	7.780			
9)(Mid-term) Sample T						
Experimental Group	15	42.06	9.654	28	-.334	.741
Control Group	15	43.13	7.726			
10)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	42.26	9.572	28	-.902	.375
Control Group	15	45.26	8.614			
11)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	42.80	10.303	28	-.861	.397
Control Group	15	45.86	9.171			
12)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	43.60	10.854	28	-.863	.395
Control Group	15	46.66	8.457			
13)Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	44. 66	11.049	28	-.527	.602
Control Group	15	46.60	8.918			
14)Sample Test						

Table 4. 18: (Continuation) Complete Group Statistics of all results of the sample YDS test scores.

Experimental Group	15	45.26	11.485	28	-.614	.544
Control Group	15	47.53	8.517			
15) Final Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	44.46	10.868	28	-.117	.908
Control Group	15	44.86	7.576			
16)YDS Exam						
Experimental Group	15	47.25	11.065	28	-.217	.830
Control Group	15	48.03	8.594			

If common group statistics are taken into consideration from the table 4.17, it is seen that the first YDS sample scores of experimental and control groups are close to each other. The mean of the experimental group is 38, 06 and the mean of the control group is 38, 86 which is very close to each other. As for the first YDS sample test score, the means of the control group and the experimental group are slightly different. The mean of the control group (39.33) is slightly higher than the experimental group. (37.83). There are six sample tests employed until the mid-term exam. The results are shown in the table above. The means of the experimental group and the control groups in the first three months are shown in table 2 and table 3.

At the beginning of the course, the mean of the first sample YDS score of the experimental group is 38.06 and 38.86 for the control group. The mean of the mid-term sample YDS score of the experimental group is 42.06 and 43.13 for the control group. It is observed that the means of some scores have moved from 38.46 to 42 and 60. The mean of the last formal YDS exam of the experimental group is 47.25 and the mean of the control group is 48.03.

Table 4. 19: The first sample, mid-term and the last YDS scores.

Groups	**Number**	**Mean**	**Std. deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
1)First YDS Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	38.06	9.074	28	-0.65	0.65
Control Group	15	38.86	8.348			
9) (Mid-term) Sample Test						
Experimental Group	15	42.06	9.654	28	-.334	.741
Control Group	15	43.13	7.726			
16) YDS Exam						
Experimental Group	15	47.25	11.065	28	-.217	.830
Control Group	15	48.03	8.594			

It is clearly seen in table 4.18 that the means of the experimental group are 38.06 for the first sample test, 42.06 for the mid-term sample test and 47.25 for the formal YDS. Conversely, the means of the instructed group are 38.86 for the first sample test, 43.13 for the mid-term sample test, and 48.03 for the formal YDS. The only difference in proficiency development between the instructed and non-instructed EFL is that the latter has a higher mean score and standard deviation than the non-instructed. However, the difference in the mean is very small as it ranges from 0.1 to 2.0. For instance, the scores of the first sample test for both the control group and the experimental group were 38. Moreover, the results of the end of first term test for the control group and the experimental group were 39 and 37 respectively.

1. The first YDS exam scores of graduate students before the treatment:

Table 4. 20: The first YDS exam scores of graduate students before the treatment.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation.**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	37.83	9.34	28	-0.45	.656
Control Group	15	39.33	8.88	28		

The level of significance for the experimental group and the control group are the same. The mean of the control group is higher than the experimental group by 1.5.

2. The first sample YDS exam scores of graduate students before the course:

Table 4. 21: Sample YDS exam scores of graduate students before the course.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	38.06	9.07	28	-0.45	.803
Control Group	15	38.86	8.34	28		

The level of significance for both groups is equal. However, the mean score for each group has dropped significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.8, implying that they are not so much different.

3. The first sample YDS exam for the graduate students during the course:

Table 4. 22: The first sample YDS exam for the graduate students during the course.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	37.93	9.03	28	-.251	.799

Control Group	15	38.73	7.93			

The level of significance for both groups is equally the same. However, the mean score for each group has dropped significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 1.1 indicating that there is much difference between the groups.

4. The second sample YDS exam for the graduate students during the course:

Table 4. 23: The second sample YDS exam for the graduate students during the course.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	38.86	8.37	28	-.251	.829
Control Group	15	39.53	7.3			

The level of significance for both groups is the same and has greatly improved. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.67. This indicates that there is no much difference.

5. The third sample YDS exam for the graduate students during the course:

Table 4. 24: The third sample YDS exam for the graduate students during the course.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	39.86	8.92	28	-.729	.472
Control Group	15	42.06	7.53			

The level of significance for both groups is the same and has drastically dropped. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 2.2. This indicates that there is much difference between the two groups.

6. The fourth sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 25: The fourth sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	41.00	9.06	28	-.1.180	.248
Control Group	15	44.46	6.88			

The level of significance for both groups is quite different and has greatly reduced. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 3.46. This indicates that there is much difference between the two groups.

7. The fifth sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 26: The fifth sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	41.73	8.63	28	-.1.432	.163
Control Group	15	45.86	7.09			

The level of significance for both groups is quite different and has greatly reduced. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 4.13. This indicates that there is great difference between the two groups in their performance during the fifth sample YDS exam and the fourth YDS exam.

8. The sixth sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 27: The sixth sample YDS exam for the graduate students**.**

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	41.73	9.23	28	-1.180	.366
Control Group	15	44.60	7.78			

The level of significance for both groups is the same and has drastically dropped. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 2.87. This indicates that there is much difference between the two groups.

9. The midterm sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 28: The mid-term sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	42.06	9.65	28	-1.180	.741
Control Group	15	43.13	7.72			

The level of significance for both groups is equally the same and has drastically improved. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 1.07. This indicates that there is no much different among the two groups as it is the case of the fifth sample YDS exam.

10. The seventh sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 29: The seventh sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	42.26	9.57	28	-.902	.375
Control Group	15	45.26	8.61			

The level of significance for both groups is equal and has drastically dropped. The mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 3.0. This indicates that there is much difference between the two groups unlike the case of the sixth sample YDS exam.

11. The eight sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 30: The eight sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	42.80	10.30	28	-.861	.397
Control Group	15	45.86	9.17			

The level of significance for both groups is the same and has drastically improved. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 3.06. This indicates that there is an improvement from the previous sample YDS exam.

12. The ninth sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Table 4. 31: The ninth sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	43.60	10.85	28	-.863	.395
Control Group	15	46.66	8.45			

The level of significance for both groups is the same and has drastically improved. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of

the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 3.6. This indicates that there is a lot of improvement based on the eighth sample YDS exam.

13. The tenth sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 32: The tenth sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	N	Mean	Std Deviation	df	t	p
Experimental Group	15	44.66	11.04	28	-.527	.602
Control Group	15	46.60	8.91			

The level of significance for both groups is equally the same and has drastically increased. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 1.94. This indicates that there is a drop in the students' performance.

14. The eleventh sample YDS exam for the graduate students:

Table 4. 33: The eleventh sample YDS exam for the graduate students.

Groups	N	Mean	Std Deviation	df	t	p
Experimental Group	15	45.26	11.48	28	-.614	.544
Control Group	15	47.53	8.51			

The level of significance for both groups is different and has drastically dropped. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 2.27. This indicates that there is some improvement from the previous sample YDS exam.

15. The final sample YDS exam for the graduate students at the end of the course:

Table 4. 34: The final sample YDS exam for the graduate students at the end of the course.

Groups	N	Mean	Std Deviation	df	t	p
Experimental Group	15	44.46	10.86	28	-.117	.908
Control Group	15	44.86	7.57			

Table 4.33 shows that there is not any significant difference in the final sample YDS scores between the experimental and the control groups. The level of significance for both groups is the same and has drastically improved. The mean score for each group

has dropped significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.4. This indicates that there is no much difference between the two groups.

16. The formal final YDS exam for the graduate students at the end of the course:

Table 4. 35: The formal final YDS exam for the graduate students at the end of the course.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**St Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	47.25	11.06	28	-.217	.830
Control Group	15	48.03	8.59			

Table 4.34 shows that there is not significant difference in the formal final test scores between the experimental and the control groups. The level of significance for both groups is equally the same and has drastically dropped. Additionally, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.78. This indicates that there is not much difference between the two groups.

17. The results of the first sample YDS exam scores;

Table 4. 36: The results of the first sample YDS exam scores.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**St Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	38.06	9.07	28	-0.45	.803
Control Group	15	38.86	8.34	28		

Table 4.35 shows there is not significant distinction in the first YDS exam scores between the experimental and the control groups. The level of significance for both groups is equally the same and has drastically dropped. Moreover, the mean score for each group has decreased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.8. This indicates that there is not much difference between the two groups.

18. The results of the sample midterm exam:

Table 4. 37: The results of the midterm sample exam.

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**St Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	42.06	9.65	28	-.1.180	.741
Control Group	15	43.13	7.72	28		

*p>0.05

Table 4.36 shows that there is not statistically meaningful difference in the sample midterm exam scores between the experimental and the control groups. The level of significance for both groups is equally the same and has drastically dropped. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.8. This indicates that there is no much difference between the two groups.

19. The result of formal proficiency exam (YDS):

Table 4. 38: The results of formal proficiency exam (YDS).

Groups	**N**	**Mean**	**St Deviation**	**df**	**t**	**p**
Experimental Group	15	47.25	11.06	28	-.217	.830
Control Group	15	48.03	8.59			

***p>0.05**

Table 4.37 shows that there is no considerable difference in the formal proficiency scores between the experimental and the control groups. The level of significance for both groups is equally the same and has drastically increased. Moreover, the mean score for each group has increased significantly. The mean of the control group is higher than that of the experimental group by 0.78. This indicates that there is no much difference between the two groups.

Interestingly, it is ascertained that the sample final test score for both groups is 44. The implication here is that there is no much difference between the two classes. Notably, the ultimate YDS (The formal Proficiency Exam) score for the experimental class and the control class is 47 and 48 respectively which are almost the same. Therefore, it should be noted that though there is a difference between the two groups at some point in terms of their mean score, it is quite negligible (Abbasian &Hartoonian 2014).

Based on the analysis of various results of the YDS exams, it is ascertained that the level of significance for both groups is equal and thus there is no difference between the two groups. Likewise, the two-tailed significance levels for both groups are greater than 0.05 which provides further evidence that the two groups have no meaningful difference. Since the means are almost the same for both groups throughout the administration of the YDS sample exams, it is deduced that the noted difference has no correlation with the graduates students YDS results and responses of participants who passed YDS exam.

4.10.2 The responses of control and experimental groups who passed the proficiency exam

Table 4. 39: Comparison of the responses of participants who passed the proficiency exam

Group	N	Total		Total		Total	
		X	St.d	X	St.d	X	St.d
Control	6	111.8	13.31	59.8	11.14	52.0	2.68
Experimental	5	102.2	10.80	54.4	7.23	47.8	4.65

From table 4.38, it can be seen that the number of participants in the control group who passed was 6, while that of the experimental group was 5. This gives a difference of 1, implying that there is no much difference. The range of the control group is found to be 59.8 while that of the experimental group is 54.4. The means of the values of X and the standard deviation in the control group are found to be 74.53 and 9.043 respectively. Therefore, the co–efficient of variation is 0.12133. On the other hand, the means for the values of X and the standard deviation for the experimental group are found to be 68.13 and 7.56 respectively. Hence, the co-efficient of variation is 0.110. It is observed that the variation between the control class and the experimental class is just 0.01 which is equivalent to 1%. Therefore, there is no much difference between the two groups. However, the ranges for the values of X are very high indicating that there is much dispersion. For instance, the first column for the values of X gives a range of 9.6, while the second column gives a range of 5.4. The third column gives a value of 4.2. The ranges are getting narrower as one move across the rows. This is an implication that the variations are decreasing with time and thus meaningful differences decreases.

4.11 Analysis of questionnaires of participants of control group who passed YDS exam

All the participants who passed the YDS exam in the control group have awareness in learning language. The majority of the participants have self-effort in learning English and they use English out of the class and take part in activities requiring use of English confidently. Some practice English out of the class and use audio-visual materials for speaking skill. Mostly, they do not practice orally. Each sample YDS test revealed their strengths and weaknesses and they considered their weaknesses to be improved. Most participants use references for revising lessons and seek reference books. However, they have less self-motivation. Sometimes they reward themselves by buying new things and celebrating in parties. All the participants use the internet and computers to study English. The interview results also support this. Participants think that they should use much self-study materials to learn English in addition to the English course materials. They agree that students have to evaluate themselves to learn better. They also agree that students should study what has been mentioned under the course. All the participants are dependent on a teacher and they think that a lot of learning cannot be done without a teacher. Learning can only be done under a teacher's authority. However, they disagree that the failure of the students is directly related to the teachers' success.

The analysis of the questionnaire administered to the participants of the control group shows that the participant experienced problems in terms of learning missing subjects, reviewing the subjects, improving vocabulary and reading. The participants took many sample YDS exams, and this helped them to improve their English because they stated that self-study and self-instruction were effective for their improvement. Meanwhile, they did a lot of grammar exercises, studied reading texts and learned a lot of vocabulary items.

One student said that the course system had a very tight schedule. Therefore, he made a study plan for studying the English language and followed it strictly.

4.12 Analysis of questionnaires of participants of experimental group who passed the YDS exam

The participants who passed YDS exam from the experimental group have the ability to learn English well and make decisions and set goals for their learning. They think that they make good use of their free time to study English. They think that they take notes and summaries and speak English with their friends outside the class. They studied on their own autonomously. The participants usually do not participate in practicing English and do not use the library much. The participants always note their strengths and weaknesses in learning English. The participants often used reference materials and always read extra materials besides the textbooks. When the participants make progress in learning, they sometimes reward themselves by buying new things, or celebrating their success. The participants often use the internet and computers to study English. They stated that they reached many available sources and materials on the internet. The participants have a clear vision on their learning and learners have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English using self-study materials and evaluating themselves to learn better. However, they disagree with the participants who posit that they should mostly study what has been mentioned under the course. The participants think that a lot of learning can be done without a teacher. And they do not believe that the failure of the learners is directly related to the teacher' success. The analysis of the responses of the participants of the experimental group shows that the participants found the following very important:

a. Making a study plan,
b. Sticking to plan in a discipline,
c. Using internet sources,
d. Doing many sample YDS exams and embracing self-study and self-instruction

A majority of them stated that they followed syllabus and used internet effectively. The analysis also shows that they all relied on their teacher to succeed in the YDS exam, however; a small number of the participants stated that they took responsibility of their learning activities and they know their weak points but cannot overcome the difficulties they faced without the help of a teacher. The personal schedule involved evening study using extra materials and internet sources. One

student who participated in self-study developed a plan to solve problems in the test to improve his weak points. Furthermore, other students used the internet sources to access extra materials with the aim of improving their grammar and vocabulary in order to pass the YDS exam.

4.13 Questionnaire about language course administered on the control group participants

1. What are your ideas about proficiency language course? What has been effective in passing the YDS exam?

STUDENT 1

In general, it was useful for me. I had some missing subjects such as noun, adjective, adverbial clauses and tenses and modals. In addition to this, I improved my vocabulary. Above all, everything was programmed, each topic was covered by the English lecturer so that I completed my missing subjects and areas. The most effective things that helped me pass the YDS exam were topics, reviews, sample YDS exams and self-study.

STUDENT 2

There are two important points for me that helped improved my vocabulary. I developed my weak sides of grammar. I could not study well on my own but the course put me in a discipline order. I studied and read more materials. Class lessons and studying sample YDS exams effectively helped me to pass the YDS exam.

STUDENT 3

Before the course, I could not improve my weak sides. I wanted to study but I could not. My study habit was not consistent depending on the mood and situation but with the help of this course, I developed a consistent study habit. I improved my reading especially paragraph studies and vocabulary development. The course contents, sample YDS practice tests and self- study were so effective for me and they helped pass the YDS exam.

STUDENT 4

Before the course, YDS preparation was complicated for me because I wanted to study but I did not know how to study. I practiced three mock YDS tests but the results were the same. During the course, I learnt that I had many missing topics. The pre-test and the final test gave me a chance to see my weak sides. Sample YDS tests raised my score. Self–study was effective, as well.

STUDENT 5

There are three important steps for me: 1. Finding details of the subjects in the course was easy for me. 2. I studied in a disciplined order. 3. The sample YDS exams showed me my weak points. Self- study at home was also important. Self-study, especially self-instruction in addition to the course activities and sample YDS exams were very important.

4.14 Questionnaire about language course employed on the experimental group participants

1. What are your ideas about autonomous language learning? What has been effective in passing the YDS exam?

STUDENT 1

Because of my lectures and work, I could not follow the active class education language course. I made a study plan and strictly followed it. In the evenings, I studied the subjects and read extra materials. Online materials and internet sources supported my programme. The sample YDS exams showed my weak points. In addition to my study plan, I spent more time in self-study.

STUDENT 2

Apart from my study plan, internet gave me a lot of resources such as books, news and so on. I prepared myself not only via test subjects but also through extra English readings. They developed my reading and vocabulary. Self- study was important for me especially following daily news. It developed my vocabulary.

STUDENT 3

I wanted to follow a regular course but my work did not allow it. Because of my work, I joined the autonomous group. At the beginning, I did not believe that I was

going to be successful. Later, I made a plan and each week I took sample YDS exams. I always followed my programme and I used internet to access extra materials.

STUDENT 4

I made a plan and each week and I solved 300 test questions and I focused on my weak points. Studying the questions helped me to improve my weak points. Using internet, practising more sample tests, and reviewing the topics were very useful.

STUDENT 5

Planned self-study helped me to pass the YDS exam.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction:

English is an integral subject in schools across the globe. Universities and colleges have established platforms for training teachers so that objectivity in the learning process can be upheld. It is a concept whereby teachers are equipped with adequate skills to facilitate adequate understanding of English among the students. Unlike other subjects, researchers suggest that it is quite difficult to teach languages. Notably, English is widely accepted as the international language. Most speeches in international functions are made in English. Studies have revealed that most of the companies use English to interview employees. The argument depicts how important it is to learn English in schools. Evidently, teachers should ensure that students understand so that learning can be effective (Musa, Koo and Azman, 2012). Teachers should have a strong psychological understanding to determine the primary factors which undermine comprehension among students. It is a suggestion that teachers should provide recommendations towards the factors that undermine language learning process. Additionally, there are potential reasons that attract people to learn English. Most of the exams are set in English and as such, students should be conversant with the language to succeed in such examinations. The study proclaims that English acts as a key function in the global economy because most economic information is conveyed in English.

The demand has forced schools, colleges and universities to incorporate potential strategies for teaching English so that the students can understand the language. English unveils a suitable mechanism for informing students about their culture as well as the culture of other communities. Further, English undertakes a purposeful task in the political platform (Murray, 2010, p. 630). Leaders across the globe use English as the primary language for passing a message. Based on the argument, learning English is an imperative activity in schools. Additionally, students learn English so that they can fulfil their communication needs.

Some nations across the globe are native English speakers. Learning English makes it easy for the students to interact with the others in the nations. Importantly, learning has changed its dimension in the modern society. The traditional system for learning contains the conveyance of knowledge from the teacher to the student. In modern learning system, the teacher is a member of the learning process. The learners have become active. It is a concept where the teacher's involvement in the learning process entail the provision of a guideline to the students so that they can uphold objectivity. Sources suggest that the students have taken a role in decision-making in learning and teaching (Musa, Koo and Azman, 2012). Students can determine a good schedule that they can adhere to, to meet their goals.

Teachers and the learners work together as a team during the learning process. The theory of autonomy asserts that the learner constructs knowledge from experience. Thus, autonomous learning is more effective in the learning process especially in the world of technology. Statistics reveal that most of the autonomous learners in the Western nations have turned to technology. The practice involves the use of the Internet to seek information on their areas of study. Significantly, the adult students in colleges and universities employ the platform because they do not have adequate time to access classes (Khamkhien, 2010). Research reveals that such students are excellent in class than those who invest their full time with teachers. This study analytically defines the influence of autonomous learning on learners' proficiency level in foreign language learning.

The researcher analysed data collected using various techniques, stated in the previous chapter. The categories include Autonomous Learning Questionnaire (Zhang and Li, 2004); PLSPQ (J. Reid, 1987) and SILL (R. Oxford, 1989) among others. The data gathered was aimed at answering the following research questions.

1. What are graduate students' learning styles and strategies?
2. To what degree are graduate students autonomous in their foreign language proficiency development?
3. Can leaners improve their language proficiency through autonomous learning?
4. What is the difference between instructed and non-instructed FL proficiency development and does this have any correlation with the graduate students' YDS results?

5.2 Questionnaires:

For this study, two questionnaires were administered to the graduate students who enrolled in Social, Science and Health institutes of Balıkesir University. After the questionnaires, the advanced proficiency test was employed in order to determine their language proficiency levels. After the results were announced, 30 participants were selected according to their level and separated into two groups, - control group (15) and experimental group (15). In November 2015, the English course started with the permission of Balıkesir University. At the beginning of the course, a questionnaire (SILL, Oxford) was administered. The course ended in April 2015. During the duration of the course, 16 sample tests were administered to the participants. The results of these tests were presented in the following stages.

5.2.1 The autonomy questionnaire:

This questionnaire was administered to 504 graduate students; 236 were from Social institute, 249 from Science institute, and 19 from Health institute. When the institutes were compared, a significance difference was not found between them. However, it was found that male participants were more successful than female participants in the proficiency test.

The autonomy questionnaire consisted of 18 Likert-scale items addressing the 7 constructs below:

1. Learners awareness
2. Self-efforts
3. Autonomous activities
4. Self-esteem
5. Use of reference materials
6. Motivation
7. Use of technology in learning

The following are the results of learners' awareness in language learning, as obtained using the responses from graduate students;

1: I think I have the ability to learn English well.

31.5% often + 36.7% always= 68.2% (Total)

2: I make decisions and set goals of my learning.

48% often+29.6% always= 75.6 % (Total)

3: I make good use of my free time in studying English.

21.4% often+1.0% always= 22.4 % (Total)

The second important result of the survey is about graduate students' self-efforts in learning English;

4: I preview before the class (i.e. see summary, lessons etc.).

24.4% often +13.7% always= 38.1 % (Total)

5: In the class, I try to use every opportunity to take part in the activities where and when I can speak in English.

31.7% often+4.2% always= 35.9 % (Total)

6: I speak confidently in front of the people.

18.3% often+15.9% always= 34.2 % (Total)

7: I make notes and summaries of my lessons.

25% often+21.9% always= 46.9 % (Total)

8: I talk to the teachers and friends outside the class in English.

6% often+0.6% always= 6.6 % (Total)

The third important result is about learners' independent activities outside the class;

9: I practice English outside the class also such as: record my own voice; speak to other people in English.

4.2% often+5.2% always= 9.4 % (Total)

10: I use library to improve my English.

0.8% often+15.1% always= 15.9 % (Total)

11: I use audio-visual materials to develop my speech such as: listen to BBC, watch English movies, read English newspapers etc.

19.4% often+13.5% always= 32.9 % (Total)

12: I attend different seminars, training courses, conferences to improve my English.

23.4% often+7.3% always= 30.7 % (Total)

13: I take risk in learning the English language.

17.3% often+7.7 % always= 25 % (Total)

The following result is the 'self-esteem' of the learners:

14: I note my strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.

48.4% often+15.5 % always= 63.9 % (Total)

The majority of the students perceive their strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.

The following results show the learners' use of references materials:

15: I revise lessons and seek the reference books.

21% often+16.1 % always= 37.1 % (Total)

16: Besides the contents prescribed in the course, I read extra materials in advance.

19.4% often+4.8 % always= 24.2 % (Total)

17: When I make progress in learning, I reward myself such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.

7.1% often +11.5% always = 18.6 % (Total)

One another following result is about internet and using technology:

18: I use internet and computers to study and improve English

45% often+20.2% always= 65.2 %(Total)

5.2.1.1 What are graduate students' learning styles and strategies?

There are many strategies and learning styles that students apply in order to master the subject matter. Some of the strategies include taking notes and making summaries during lessons, practicing English, using the library, attending seminars, and using audio-visual materials. The mostly used strategy among all is making notes and summary of the lessons. From the findings, 21.9% always use this strategy, 25 often, 36 sometimes, 10.2 rarely and 6.4 never take notes and make summaries. Effective note taking is very important in enabling students to memorize facts (Piaget 1977). Thus, when learning the English language, learners perform better when they take notes and make summaries.

This research shows that 26% of students do not engage teachers or friends in conversations using the English language. However, 0.6 % always, 6% often, 41.1 sometimes and 26.4 rarely talks to friends and students in English. The use of conversations not only develops social relationships but also enhances creativity and confidence among ESL students. However, 25% of the students never record their voices. Another strategy is the use of library sources to enhance linguistic skills. Only 15.1% always use the library, 0.8 often, 10.5 sometimes, 42.3 rarely and 31.3 never use the library. Libraries have a lot of reading materials that can improve the linguistic skills of an individual. Yet, most respondents in the study do not use it. Others listen to audio visual presentations via television such as the BBC, watching movies as well as reading newspapers. The strategy is used by 13.5 percent of the respondents. 19.4% often use this strategy, 45.2% use it sometimes and 9.1% never use it. The strategy can be effective since audio-visuals are enjoyable and motivating. Furthermore, the language used on BBC programs is varied and authentic such that the vocabulary utilized is correct. Watching films enables students to grasp the natural flow of conversations and ways of expression. In addition, 7.3% of the respondents always attend seminars, 23.4 often, 30.8 sometimes, 24 rarely and 14.5 never attend seminars. That implies that a higher percentage of the students value autonomous learning where they do not rely primarily on the teacher. Autonomous learning strategies employed by the students are individually chosen and used by students.

Graduate students apply various mechanisms to become independent learners of the English language. A higher percentage of graduate students revise lessons and books independently without the help of a tutor. In addition to that, others note their strong sides and imperfections and work on how to develop their linguistic skills. Although most of them are willing to learn English as a second language, very few students read extra materials in advance. Furthermore, some students motivate themselves by celebrating or buying new items when they succeed in English lessons. The study shows that only 16.1 percent of the graduate students never reward themselves. To strengthen their mastery of subject matter in the English language, most graduate students use the internet to practice English except 0.8 percent.

Students have a very vivid and clear vision as to why they indulge in studying the foreign language. 68.2% of the participants believe and acknowledge that they have

what it takes to learn and master foreign language. 65.2% prefer to use internet thus largely depend on technology as a guiding and helping tool. The students focus their energy to just passing exams thus prefer lessons that are more exam oriented.

Students prefer the help of a tutor or a teacher to learn foreign language. They believe that the teacher has a lot of influence in their understanding of language. The students entrust the teacher with the right to correct and identify the mistakes associated with learning. When learning foreign language, many students lack confidence in using their ideas and made up materials to study. Moreover, they are not contented with the teacher's guidelines and materials.

Many students prefer to use their standards and diagnostic approach to solve the challenges they face when learning foreign language. Self-belief and trust enhance growth and development of an individual (Gloor, 2011). Students believe in personal growth attributed to their effort and self-reflection. As evidenced by huge scores in the data, students understand that foreign language is better understood after identifying one's weaknesses and strength. They analyze and evaluate themselves but have opted for a more relaxed approach of studying.

It is clear that for students to learn English language and improve in it, various learning styles and strategies are employed. Essentially, the learning styles and strategies revolve around learner awareness, self – efforts, motivation, self –esteem, broader autonomous activities, use of reference materials, and the use of technology. Under learners' awareness, it is important that the learners first take their time to check their ability to learn English (Duroc 2012). In most cases, students are observed to demonstrate a high ability to study English. After students have recognized that they have the capability of studying the language, they make decisions and set goals for learning. Interestingly, those that have demonstrated a high ability to study are the ones who come up with goals and engage in decision making prior to learning.

Self-efforts, on the other hand, entails the student's endeavors to improve in English. These include strategies such talking to teachers and students outside class in English, making notes and summaries before classes or lessons, participation in class activities that involve the use of English, speaking confidently in front of people, and making previews before classes. Additionally, motivation is a learning

strategy that entails rewarding of oneself after attainment of a given goal. This encompasses buying a new thing or celebrating in a party. Moreover, students can use technology to improve in a language. In this case, they may integrate computers and the internet as tools through which they can improve in language (Duroc 2012). The use of reference materials is another crucial strategy in learning. Students either revise lessons or seek the references given by the teachers or access extra study material to enhance language.

Similarly, self–esteem can be created by critically assessing strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improving on them. Concisely, activities such as the use of library as well as attending seminars, training sessions, and conferences, and the use of audio-visual to develop speech are strategies of learning and improving in English (Einhellig, Hummel & Gryskiewicz 2014). Although there are various styles and strategies of learning English, two core methodologies are used by the students. These include making decisions and setting goals for learning and the use of reference materials to improve the level of English.

Goal setting is of great importance since it aids the students to remain focused on what they need to do in order to enhance their language. The goals make the students more ambitious and confident while they are learning the language (Thompson & Lee 2013). Secondly, the objectives that they set are essential in language study since they enable students to think critically and come up with ideas on how to solve problems that relate to learning English. Goal setting and decision making motivate the students to examine their weaknesses and strengths as well as find various ways to improve on them.

Additionally, setting goals in studying English is essential since it makes the students to be highly motivated. Therefore, when students set goals, they are at a better position to post a positive performance in English. In addition, with the use of reference materials, students are able to enhance language (Duroc 2012). Reference materials enable students to carry out a detailed study of English language, thus enabling them to have more information. Once they apply the knowledge gained, they are able to demonstrate higher performance in language. The use of different reference materials has diverse benefits when studying language. As a result, students can easily take advantage of the most suitable refernce to ensure that they improve their language level (Maier & Richter 2014).

5.2.1.2 Graduate students' attitudes on autonomous learning

The findings of this research indicate that most students have not fully changed their attitudes towards autonomous learning. The results show that student's believe the teacher should be active for them to grasp the ability to learn proper pronunciation in English. Only 36.7 percent of the respondents believe that they have the ability to learn by themselves. Additionally, the results indicate that the attitudes are gradually changing. Students will eventually approve the use of autonomous learning. That is because 29.6 percent of the respondents can make decisions and set goals for themselves while learning as opposed to the 0.8 percent that require teacher's guidance to make decisions. Students have realized the effects of autonomous learning as well as the best strategies on learning success. Autonomous learning involves minimal or no participation of the teacher, as students learn by themselves (Lee 2011:95). In such a class, the teacher participates in learning by offering guidance as opposed to passing knowledge to the students.

The study also revealed that most students do not study English during their free time. However, the students preview the content learned in the previous class in order to remind themselves. Only 11.5 percent of the students do not review the previous lesson. The aspect of reviewing the previous class or making summary helps the students retain the background knowledge of the study topic. In addition to that, summary or lesson previewing enables students to link the current topic with the previous one effectively. Students who do not preview the previous lessons may find themselves unable to comprehensively construct English sentences using the various concepts learned (Piaget 1977). Furthermore, the link between the previous and the current lesson is achieved through actively participating in class.

The findings also indicate that only 10.3% of the students never participate in class while 4.2 percent always participate. 24.4% often participate, 36.3% sometimes participate, and 13.9 rarely participate. That is an implication that they have problems in English. It is only 11.5% of students that need to work hard on the aspect of participating in class discussions. Additionally, the number of students participating in class discussions is linked to confidence and oral communication skills. Students who do not participate actively in English classes lack confidence and do not have good oral communication skills. The research unveiled that only 7.9 percent of the total population lack the confidence to speak in front of people. 15.9%

are always confident, 18.3% are often confident, 39.3% sometimes and 18.3% are rarely confident.

5.3 Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles:

The second questionnaire had 13 Likert-scale items consists of the 2 items below:

1. The role of the learner:

19: Learners have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English.

29.6% agree + 15.7 % strongly agree = 31.3 % (Total)

20: Students should use much self- study materials to learn English.

22.2 % agree +12.1% strongly agree= 34.3 % (Total)

21: Learners have to evaluate themselves to learn better.

21.4% agree +43.1% strongly agree = 64.5 % (Total)

22: Students should mostly study what has been mentioned under the course because studying English course is actually for exam purpose.

47.2% agree + 36.5 % strongly agree = 83.7 % (Total)

23: Learners should build clear vision of their learning before learning English.

65.7% agree +13.3% strongly agree =79% (total)

2. The role of the teacher:

As for the results of teacher's role:

24: A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.

10.5 %agree + 15.1% strongly agree = 25.6% (Total)

25: Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English.

58.3 %agree + 18.8% strongly agree = 77.1% (Total)

26: Teachers should point out the students' errors.

46.6% agree + 50.8% strongly agree = 97.4% (Total)

27: Teachers not only have to teach 'what' but should also teach 'how' of English.

50.6% agree + 39.9% strongly agree = 90.5% (Total)

28: Teachers have to provide exam oriented notes and materials.

60.9% agree + 28.8% strongly agree = 89.7% (Total)

29: The failure of the students is directly related to the teachers' classroom employment.

22.4% agree + 2.8% strongly agree = 25.2% (Total)

5.3.1 To what degree are graduate students autonomous in their foreign language proficiency development?

While enhancing their foreign language proficiency development, graduate students are 25.6% autonomous. This is the percentage of participants or students who consented that a lot can be done without a teacher. However, they are 45.3% autonomous in finding their own ways of practicing English. In addition, the students have the responsibility to use a lot of self-study material in order to enhance English. Nonetheless, the level of autonomy, in this case, is 34.3%. Moreover, students ought to evaluate themselves in order to learn better. From the research findings, 64.5%.of the respondents do so. Apart from evaluating themselves, students are obliged to mostly study what has been mentioned under the course because studying English course is actually for exam purpose (Duroc 2012). Since what the students are studying in this case has been mentioned or taught by the teacher at some point, it is presumed that students are 16.3% autonomous. Students are also 79% autonomous in building a clear vision for learning before they can study English. Based on the various degrees of autonomy discussed above, it is deduced that students are most autonomous in developing a clear vision for learning before they can study English.

The results show that the participants are not fully autonomous learners. It is clearly seen that the participants are dependent on teacher. Only 25% of the students believe that a lot of learning can be carried out without a teacher. This result reflects the fact that the graduate students cannot pass their proficiency test without the help of the teacher and as such, they are not autonomous learners. The last part of the questionnaire is about teachers' role and the majority of the participants think that learning cannot be done without a teacher. The participants do not believe in self-evaluation. A good majority think that the teacher should mark their errors. Another important result is that they believe the teacher should provide exam oriented materials for them. This is another point of teacher dependence.

The research tools also gave the students the chance to give their opinions on autonomous learning aspects. 38.3% strongly disagreed with the statement that learning can take place without a teacher. Only 15.1 strongly agreed, and 10.5 agreed. That is an implication that most students prefer the teacher-centred approach and do not believe they can learn from each other. To add on, the students also supported the fact that teachers must be responsible for the understanding of English language. In independent learning, the teacher can be present as a guide but not the source of knowledge. Students in both the control and experimental group require a teacher to give guidelines. 50.8% and 46.6% strongly disagree and agree respectively with the suggestion that teachers should highlight errors and mistakes. Students have diverse opinion on whether to use new strategies and methods as an enhancing proficiency tool in the study of language. There are less number of students approximately 12.1% who 'strongly agree' to use their study material. A huge percentage of participants, 56.3% to be exact, have no idea of whether to rely on self-study materials. This implies that the language proficiency depends majorly on the teacher. The tutor should understand that the students have solely imposed the duty of understanding and trust towards them (Echevarría & Graves, 2003).

The primary objective of studying a language is to pass exams as evidenced by 83.7% of the graduate students. However, students critically value the importance of self-evaluation in learning the language and articulating vivid vision as to why they indulge in the study of foreign language. Having clear reasons and distinctive thought is the ultimate way of achieving success (Riding & Rayner, 2001).

Teachers contribute a huge part in making sure that the students' proficiency in a language is greatly enhanced. Huge success of a student is majorly influenced by the attributes and the impact imposed by the teachers (Freppon, 2001). It is the sole role of the teacher to ensure that the notes and information relayed to the students are exam oriented. However, the teacher should make sure that there are continuous assessment tests to ensure a wide and compressive understanding of the language. Furthermore, teachers should critically identify students' errors and point of weaknesses.

The extent to which graduate students are autonomous in their foreign language proficiency development is examined in the context of what the students can do on their own without the involvement of a teacher (Einhellig, Hummel &Gryskiewicz

2014). Students have the obligation of finding various ways of practicing English in order to enhance their learning. In this case, they may involve the use of the internet as well as audio-visual approaches to enhancement of language. However, it is observed that students are likely to be 45.3% autonomous in finding new methodologies of ensuring proficiency in the development of foreign language (Duroc, 2012). Another measure of autonomy involves the assessment of the ability of students to use self –study materials while they are studying. The self-study material, in this case, entails the use of revision books and other relevant material which are likely to increase proficiency in the language.

However, it is noted that the learners are 34.3% autonomous in deploying personal study materials to enhance proficiency. The extent of autonomy of the students can be critically analyzed by checking on their ability to evaluate themselves to learn better. Given that the students carry out self –evaluation, they are at a better position of identifying their major areas of weakness (Bannert, Reimann&Sonnenberg 2013). Nevertheless, individuals who are autonomous in this part comprised only 43.1%. Furthermore, the students are obliged to study only the aspects that they have been learning in class since the major goal of studying English is to excel in exams. In this case, the degree of autonomy is 83.7%.

Self –evaluation is an important element that students ought to engage in to enhance their performance and proficiency in language development. Nonetheless, the degree to which the students can evaluate themselves is 64.5%. Therefore, most of the students are presented to have a higher autonomy for self-evaluation compared to other areas such as the deployment of self–study materials discussed above (Einhellig, Hummel &Gryskiewicz 2014). Students have to exercise autonomy; this is a case where they have to build clear vision before learning English. The degree of autonomy, in this case, is 79% which is an indicator that students have a greater responsibility of developing clear goals and vision than it is the case in other approaches that have been discussed above.

Although it has been ascertained that a lot can be done without a teacher, it is evident that teachers play a significant role in ensuring that language proficiency is enhanced. Regardless of the various efforts by the students to improve their language, it is observed that teachers have the role of ensuring that they comprehend what they have been taught. Essentially, this entails asking questions and employing

assessment tests (Bannert, Reimann&Sonnenberg 2013). The efficiency of answering questions as well as excellence in the assessment tests or exams are the basis of gauging a student's level of comprehension.

Besides, the teachers have the responsibility of pointing errors that they observe in the students' use of language. Teachers have a 97.4% responsibility of checking and pointing errors. Given that teachers point out these errors, it is evident that students are able to identify the areas of strengths and weakness and work on them (Wolochuk 2014). Apart from pointing out errors in their students, teachers are obliged to provide exam oriented notes and materials. This is essential in the sense that it aids the students to focused on the areas that they ought to major in.

In another school of thought, it is presumed that the importance of studying English is to excel in the exams and thus teachers need to provide relevant material to the student (Read 2013). More importantly, the students become less autonomous in the case where teachers have to devise various methods of ensuring that students improve in language. In this scenario, teachers are obliged to focus not only on the 'what' aspect of English but also on 'how' aspects of English. Therefore, in situations where the teachers aid in ensuring proficiency of the students in English language, the degree of students' autonomy becomes zero (Einhellig, Hummel &Gryskiewicz 2014).

5.4 What is the difference between instructed and non-instructed EFL proficiency development and does this have any correlation with the graduates' YDS results?

The instructed language proficiency development is the process by which students or learners learn via instructions given by the teacher in the class. Non –instructed EFL proficiency development entails students or leaners evaluating their performance in a bid to determining their level or degree of comprehending foreign language..

The only difference between the instructed and non-instructed EFL proficiency development is that the latter has a higher mean score and standard deviation than the non-instructed. However, the difference in the mean is very small and it ranges from 0.1 to 2.0. For instance, the scores of the first sample test for both the control group

and the experimental group were 38. Moreover, the results of the end of first term test for the control group and the experimental group were 39 and 37 respectively.

Markedly, the experimental group score is lower than the control group by only two points implying that they are not much different. Interestingly, it is ascertained that the sample final test score for both groups is 44. The implication here is that there is no much difference between the two classes. Further, the ultimate YDS (The formal Proficiency Exam) score for the experimental class and the control class is 47 and 48 respectively. The scores are almost equal. Therefore, it should be noted that though there is a difference between the two groups at some point in terms of their mean score, the difference is negligible (Abbasian &Hartoonian 2014).

The result of the case study of the research involved the YDS tests that measured the performance of the instructed and non-instructed groups to find out the differences. The study involved 15 sample YDS tests that were administered after every two weeks of instructions. The results indicate that the male graduate students from both groups performed better than the female learners. For instance, in the first test, the male graduate students scored 39.50 while the female students scored 36.40. In addition to that, a comparison of the experimental and the control groups shows that the control group performed better. Furthermore, the results indicate that the control group scored a mean of 38.86 while the experimental group had a mean score of 38.06 in the first result of the sample test. There is no meaningful difference between the control and experimental group. Throughout all tests, the experimental group only scores a few points less. The ultimate YDS (The formal Proficiency Exam) score was (control group = 48; experimental group =47), which is almost the same. In all the tests, the experimental group managed to trail from behind with less number of points. The difference of only or less than a point articulates that the scores almost similar hence lacks any significance.

Based on the analysis of various results of the YDS exams, it is ascertained that the level of significance for both groups is equal and thus there is no difference between the two groups. Likewise, the two-tailed significance levels for both groups are greater than 0.05 which provides further evidence that the two groups have no meaningful difference. Since the means are almost the same for both groups throughout the administration of the YDS sample exams, it is deduced that the noted difference has no correlation with the graduates students YDS results.

That implies that despite using different techniques during the instruction period, the students' performance is similar. There is no meaningful difference in the YDS test results between the two groups. That is probably because students use the same individual techniques to strengthen their language skills. Some of the techniques used by students include watching English language movies, reading newspapers, using the internet, making notes and studying on their own. Despite being on different instructional groups, the students demonstrated equal efforts in learning the language. There were no observable divergent methods and techniques for the experimental and instructional schedule. The mean scores of the different groups was almost similar hence the lack of major significant differences in test outcome between the instructed and non-instructed group. This is because both groups transformed their attitude and focused more on other factors such as the use of library and internet to enhance their learning skills and understanding. In addition, both classes did not complete the grammar and vocabulary section which might have increased deviation.

The control group comprised of individuals who have great awareness about learning the language. They also exercised self–efforts to learn English and tried to use English outside the classroom settings. They were also observed to use audio –visual materials to enhance their language. Additionally, the instructed group would always note the areas of weakness and improve on them. Furthermore, this group focuses on the use of reference materials and books in order to improve in language. However, they do not have an attitude of rewarding themselves after they have succeeded. Lastly, they are entirely dependent on the teacher (Lucas, Ribeiro& Moreira 2012).

On the contrary, the non-instructed group constitutes of students who do not depend on a teacher in order to enhance their language. They have the belief that a lot of studies can be done without a teacher (Abbasian & Hartoonian 2014). As a result, they employ a lot of self –study in order to improve their language. Since they are highly autonomous, they make more use of reference materials and books than the instructed group. Just like the instructed group, they always employ the internet and computers to study and improve their language. Besides, students under the experimental group have study schedules or plans which they use to enhance their goals and vision. Unlike the students in the control group who depend on the teacher

for evaluation, students in the experimental group are able to evaluate themselves and improve on their weak areas.

Notably, there is a high correlation between the groups' findings and the graduates YDS exam results. A clear examination of the results of the experimental group indicates that they have a mean of 47.25. On the other hand, control group have a mean of 48. This implies that individuals who are under control of a teacher are able to improve slightly more in English unlike those who entirely depend on self-study. Probably, through the involvement of teachers, they can find out the errors and improve. The exam oriented notes and materials are also a source of success for the control group (Lucas, Ribeiro & Moreira 2012). The teacher's role in making the students comprehend may also have been the backbone of the slightly higher success of the control group.

5.5 Can learners improve their language proficiency through autonomous learning?

It is evident that learners can improve their language proficiency through autonomous learning. Based on the first sample YDS exam it is observed that the mean score was 37.93. However, the second sample YDS test indicates that the mean has improved to 42.06. This indicates that the overall improvement of the learners during these two periods is 4.13 which is a substantial improvement. During the final sample YDS test, it is observed that the mean has also increased to 44.46. In this case, an increment of two points is realized from the mean score obtained in the second sample YDS exam. Moreover, in the YDS exam results, the mean score is 47.25 which is an increment of 2.79 in the mean score.

The standard deviation is also increasing indicating that there is an improvement in performance. The first sample test had a standard deviation of 9.035 but during the mid-term test, the standard deviation increased to 9.654. This resulted in an increment of 0.616. When the final sample test was administered, it is noted that the standard deviation further increases to 10.868. This implies that there is an increment of 1.214 from the mid-term sample test. The increase in the standard deviation, in this case, is an indicator that there is a large positive variation in the means during the first three periods of the exam. Ultimately, it is evident that learners can improve their language proficiency through autonomous learning.

The techniques amassed enormous and extreme significant impact on the students, especially in the non-instructed class. These students engaged in learning the foreign language by themselves and accrued confidence and self-esteem. 'Complete understanding and persistence come with sole effort and hunger to grow within a student' (Grishaf, 2006). The autonomy based learning techniques exposed the importance of the teacher towards the learners' understanding of language. The tutor ought to identify and properly correct the learners' errors. Although failing students refuse to shift the blame to the teachers, the teacher should demonstrate and thoroughly explain the technique of mastering the language to them. The best approach to learning a foreign language is the use of instructive technique and methodology as evidenced by the result of the final test.

Learners can easily improve their language proficiency through autonomous learning (Abbasian & Hartoonian 2014). Throughout the study, it is ascertained that there is no much difference between the experimental group and the non-experimental group. In the first sample test, the scores was 38 for each group. The scores of the test applied at the end of the first term were 39 and 37 for the control group and experimental group respectively. The experimental group score is only two points less than the control group. Both groups scored 44 in the sample final test. The ultimate YDS (The formal Proficiency Exam) score was 48 for the control group and 47 for the experimental group – the scores are almost the same. The mean for both groups during the first YDS exam is 1.282 while that of the ultimate YDS is 1.588. This shows an improvement of about 0.306.

5.6 The degree of graduate students autonomy in their foreign language proficiency development

Teaching is one of the complex activities in schools. It is even a more difficult task to teach students who do not have the self-motivation to study. It is important that teachers ensure that students are self-motivated and determined so that the learning process can be smooth. This can lead to learner autonomy and independence. Autonomous learning started in the 1970s. History asserts that the concept replaced the behaviourist approach which had dominated the learning process. The approach was criticized for lack of a suitable mechanism for nurturing self-determination and motivation among the students (Murray, 2010). Notably, autonomous learning has

been defined in different terms including self-controlled learning, self-regulated learning, and self-organized learning. The learning platform has enhanced the degree of student autonomy in foreign language proficiency development. Firstly, the autonomous learning of foreign language has enhanced long distance learning. It is a concept where the learners study from their residence through the use of study material such as books, dictionaries, and the internet.

In this approach, the teachers provide guidelines of the manner in which the students should learn. The learning platform is cheaper because the students do not encounter charges such as boarding fee. Importantly, the students and the teachers uphold a good relation where they provide feedback to one another. The practice spurs good performance in classes. Secondly, autonomous learning enhances language proficiency through the engagement of the students in creative activities (Murphy, 2010, p. 122). Some students engage in groups where they help each other. The concept allows them to discuss some of the complex issues in foreign language. For instance, the students learn how to speak and pronounce words more effectively. They understand how they can speak fluently without mistakes. The students also enhance their writing skill in such groups. The platform establishes a ground for the students to correct one another; thus, enhancing their writing skills.

The enhancement of autonomous learning has contributed to the publishing of many books in the 21st century. It is an aspect where the students rely on the book to study on their own. Precisely, the authors have been forced to enhance the quality of the books. It is a concept where they consider producing more books with sufficient information to meet the students' needs. Statistics reveal that the universities take the lead in publishing books to enhance the quality of autonomous learning (Lee, 2010). Importantly, autonomous learning allows the students to take the lead in the learning process. The students engage in a question and answer method where they help one another to understand different points. They interact freely with one another and genuinely share ideas hence making it easy for them to understand. The concept empowers the students to be independent users of the language. They strive to know every word and its meaning. Such an aspect makes the students confident of their proficiency in the foreign language. It is a practice where the student does not doubt using a particular word to convey a certain message because s/he understands its

meaning. Further, the confidence allows the students to write effectively without errors.

Listening is highly promoted by autonomous learning. The concept allows the learners to rely on a variety of resources to enhance understanding of language. For instance, the students learn how to listen the language through television, radios, and YouTube among other sources of information. Such an aspect grows the students' knowledge because the resources convey relevant information in English. Autonomous learning creates awareness of the learning process in the learner. Thus, the learner can access a variety of learning resources easily. Autonomous learning invites the learner's concentration so that he or she can understand (Benson, 2010). For instance, the learner takes his time to study from the books. The aspect establishes awareness about other things that could not be taught by the teacher in class. Further, the student relies on notes from other students. The approach makes it easy for him to detect his mistakes and correct them. The learner realizes awareness in the pronunciation and writing skill through autonomous learning. The learner accesses a variety of books; thus, learning how different words should be written. Such a practice allows the learner to pronounce the words because the spelling provides a concise directive for pronunciation. Concisely, autonomous learning facilitates student awareness in writing, listening and pronunciation among other skills; thus, enhancing their language proficiency.

Additionally, autonomous learning makes the students enthusiastic and motivated to learn. It is a practice where the students participate in the learning process effectively. Studies reveal that autonomous learning makes the learner more secure (Gu, 2003, p. 17). The learner attains the skills to utilize words effectively. Firstly, the learner can construct sound sentences in writing and speaking. The approach secures him from wrong use of words during speech. On the other side, it makes it possible for a learner to express himself during exams; thus, spurring good scores. Further, autonomous learning improves a student's listening skill. When a student listens to information conveyed by the television or radio, s/he becomes more proficient. When the listening skill is enhanced, a learner responds to questions more effectively. Moreover, autonomous learning increases the learners' responsibility in the learning process. The students participate in the formulation of learning goals. Notably, the practice allows transparency because the students can define

problematic area so that the class can invest more time on those areas. Further, autonomous learning allows the students to execute activities more effectively. A concise schedule is laid down; thus, making it possible for them to study more effectively.

Precisely, autonomous learning plays a critical role in the modern learning system. The practices have essentially helped in the development of the foreign language proficiency in the Middle East and Asian countries (Huang, 2010, p. 37). The learning process among students in these countries is becoming more effective. The learners establish potential strategies that allow them to engage in the learning process effectively. However, the strategy should have insight, positive attitude and learning reflection. It is critical for the learners to undertake self-appraisal so that they can learn the demanding topics so that their foreign language proficiency can be developed.

5.7 Strategy adoption

A strategy is a mechanism that is adopted by a learner while studying inside and outside the classroom. Different sources define strategy as the thoughts and behaviours that a learner uses to understand something. The establishment of an effective strategy invites a psychological task where the student should learn effectively. Statistics reveal that Western universities and colleges have come up with potential strategic approaches to teaching and learning literature. Schools in developing countries are applying the concepts to increase the quality of autonomous learning. The students can apply the cognitive strategy to enhance autonomous learning. The strategy operates directly on the incoming information (Mompean, 2010). Precisely, the strategy manipulates the information in ways that promote learning. The cognitive learning strategy involves several practices. In the first case, the students repeat new words until they memorize them. The approach facilitates the foreign language proficiency in the sense that the learner will properly understand the spelling of the particular words. The task establishes a ground for precise pronunciation. Notably, the practice helps the student to understand the new words and retain them.

The strategy invites a student to experiment personally through the aspect of conversation. The student memorizes the new words and engages in a conversation

with a colleague so that he or she may establish a good understanding of the words. This helps in enhancing the student's proficiency in communication. Additionally, the strategy invites the student to guess the meaning of unknown words. It is a practice where the student relies on the knowledge of the first language to determine the meaning of a new word. The strategy recommends that the students should consider exercising the foreign language more than other languages. Thus, the student should invest much of his time in studying the foreign language (Duff, 2010). The approach helps in enhancing proficiency in language. Further, the strategy incorporates the aspect of paraphrasing information. The point suggests that the learner should consider reading particular text and paraphrasing the text into a summary. The practice plays a significant role in the learning process because it measures the learner's understanding. Further, it examines one's ability to connect words and establish a sound summary. Conversely, the strategy directs that the learner should exercise speaking and pronouncing words. It is a practice where the learner should optimally use English when speaking to enhance the skill of pronouncing the foreign words.

Further, the strategy suggests that the learner should consider practicing to speak particular words in the foreign language. The learner should seek clarification on particular terms in the foreign language. The point suggests that the student should consider asking classmates about sophisticated foreign words. The practice establishes a good platform to enhance language understanding among the students. Notably, the strategy incorporates task-based activities. For instance, the student can use his background information to enhance learning in foreign language. The learner should consider connecting foreign words with his background knowledge of language to enhance understanding (Zhang and Kenny, 2010). In addition, the aspect of imagination is incorporated in the cognitive strategy to enhance the proficiency of the student in foreign language. In this case, a learner should imaginatively associate particular foreign words. Additionally, the strategy directs that the learner should engage the learning process through the consideration of organizational skills. The task entail observing the rules of letters, sounds, and graphics.

The students also learns through the deduction strategy. The strategy invites the learners to use familiar words to come up with new words so that they can understand the foreign language. The practice involves consideration of the mother

language to understand the foreign language. The strategy invites the students to use different learning materials such as dictionaries and internet to learn the foreign language. Besides metacognitive strategies are also used by students in autonomous learning (Lantolf, Thorne and Poehner, 2015). The learner sets out goals and strategizes how to achieve them. The planning stage involves arranging conditions and seeking opportunities for practice. The monitoring stage invites the learner to observe his language so that he can make potential corrections during the learning process. Finally, the strategy invites the learner to evaluate the outcomes of the learning process. Precisely, the strategies help the student to learn effectively and develop his foreign language capabilities.

The instructed language proficiency development entail a practice where students learn through the instructions provided by a teacher in class. The students undertake activity as instructed by the teacher so that they may understand. Such students perform well in their examination because they obey the teacher's directive. The task invites the teacher to organize instructions, curriculum, and assessment so that the students can understand the foreign language. The student practice listening, speaking and reading in the learning process. The learner adheres to every instruction that is provided by the teacher in the learning platform (Allen, 2010). The learning curriculum is formulated by the teachers to enhance language proficiency among the learners. Further, the teachers design activities which allow the students to exercise single modalities such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Importantly, the teachers establish a curriculum which facilitates the learning of grammar in the class. The instructed foreign language learning platform creates awareness among the learners. The point suggests that the teachers ensure that the literature covers every aspect of the community so that the students can get knowledge on the respective cultures. The learning process creates cultural awareness where the learners attain the ability to interact with other people in the community.

Finally, non-instructed language learning involves the aspect of assessment. It is a practice where the learners evaluate their performance so that they can determine their level of understanding of the foreign language. The non-instructed foreign language learning entails a system where the learner utilizes external resources to learn. Precisely, the learner does not access instructions from the teacher (Fewell, 2010). The learner plans his study platform by prioritizing the most demanding

topics in his studies so that he can succeed. Some of the resources include television, dictionary and the internet. Evidently, the learner is keen on the information conveyed by the tools so that he can enhance his understanding of foreign language learning. From this study, the use of instructed and non-instructed foreign language learning affects the students' results slightly differently. The point insinuates that students who employ the instructed learning platform attain slightly better result as compared to the students who employ the non-instructed learning platform.

5.7.1 The results of the questionnaire of SILL (Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners) questionnaire

The third questionnaire is SILL (Oxford, 1990). It concerns the strategy inventory for language learning. Strategies are divided (Oxford, 1990) into six categories namely memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social. Mnemonic strategies in language learning are transformational mechanisms that connect information learned with the keywords. The research findings indicate that graduate learners in both groups applied the mnemonic strategies to improve their vocabulary as well as to remember them effectively. All the participants attained an average mean of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.71. That implies that the use of mnemonic strategies was very high among the participants. The learners used to link newly learned words with things that they already know to enhance their remembrance. Others applied the newly learned concepts in sentences.

5.7.1.1 Cognitive strategies

The results show that the use of the cognitive strategies to improve vocabulary among the students is neither high nor low. Both groups attained an average of 3.19, and a standard deviation of 0.728. Five cognitive strategies were mostly used while the least preferred strategies were seven. The students admit that they never start conversations in English. However, most of them prefer reading a lot of materials in order to master the English language.

5.7.1.2 Compensation strategies

The compensation part of results show that the participants' level is not elementary. The average of 2.78 is close to the medium. In addition to that, the students prefer to understand all unfamiliar words or they make guesses. Others prefer not checking the new words in the dictionary while reading. The compensation strategies are

important since students learn gradually word by word then apply it to conversations or examinations. However, the most important thing is to pass the proficiency test.

5.7.1.3 Metacognitive strategies

The metacognitive strategies ranged from a medium level average of 3.35. Only four strategies were mostly preferred by the students. In the metacognition part, the study revealed that students use planned schedules to study English and avoid procrastination. Besides that, others look for people who are better in English to start conversations. Finally, a majority of the students have set clear aims for learning English because it not only helps them to pass exams but also to develop relationships.

5.7.1.4 Affective strategies

Finally, the affective part shows that students apply affective strategies very few times. This is because the learners are unmotivated to ask their friends to correct them during conversations. Others fear to ask the speaker to repeat if they did not grasp a certain word. However, using other strategies, the learners motivate themselves through reading and engaging in conversations on their own. In social settings, the students do not take enough time to practice English concepts and words.

In conclusion, the questionnaire (SILL) aimed at discovering the extent to which learners used strategies. The analysis of the results show that the participants did not use strategies in high level but they used then in the medium level.

The result of mnemonic strategies indicates that the non-instructed group used mnemonic strategies more often than the instructed group.

The finding of cognitive strategies demonstrates that the control group used cognitive strategies more than the experimental group.

The result of the compensation strategies shows that the control group used compensation strategies more than the experimental group

The outcomes of the metacognitive strategies shows that the control group used metacognitive strategies more than the experimental group.

The result of the affective strategies shows that the non-instructed group used affective strategies more than the instructed group.

In this regard, it can be concluded that the control group used cognitive, compensation and metacognition strategies more than the experimental group; however, the experimental group used mnemonic, affective and social skills more than the control group.

5.7.2 The result of the correlation of six categories of SILL (Learning Strategy Inventory for Language Learners Survey)

All the categories were positively correlated with one another at $p<0.01$ level. The correlation of the SILL strategies is gradually reducing from mnemonic, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and finally social strategies. The findings show that the correlation for mnemonic strategies at 1, cognitive is 0.748, compensation is 0.510, affective is 0.188 and social is 0.446. This means that the mnemonic strategies were used by numerous students in comparison with the others. The affective strategies are the least preferred by graduate students who participated in the research study. The students preferred to use the items depending on their applicability. The relationship shows that students prefer the mnemonic strategies more than either the affective or social mechanisms. Section 4.6 of this dissertation gives a more detailed summary of the correlation levels of the six strategies.

As per the results, several factors such as the use of library, self-esteem and personal evaluation hugely affects the performance and students' proficiency in foreign language. The student has to develop an all-around personality that accommodates these factors.The result suggests that the best approach to learning a foreign language is the use of instructive technique and methodology as evidenced by the result of the final test.

5.7.3 Analysis of why there is no meaningful difference between the two groups?

A close examination of the mean scores of the YDS exam for the two groups indicates the two groups have no major differences when it comes to performance. The means are almost the same only that there is a deviation in the range of 0.1 to 0.7. Moreover, the test of the p-values against the significance level of 0.05 indicates that the p-values are much less than 0.05 for both groups. Additionally, the t-tabulated values are less than the t-computed values and this further indicates that there is no much difference between the two groups. One of the factors that may

have contributed to the small disparity or deviation is the fact that most of the students in both groups understand their role as learners. It is observed that in both groups, all participants have a clear vision of their learning. All participants consent that students have to evaluate themselves to learn better. Additionally, they agree that students should use much self- study materials to learn English. Moreover, all the participants agree that students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English. Besides, the participants in the control group and the experimental group are demonstrated as individuals who think they have an ability to learn English. The range for those who demonstrate to learn and improve English is 80% -100%. Due to this self-awareness, participants in both groups use their free time to study English. Furthermore, there may be no meaningful difference among the two classes since all the participants demonstrate that they always use the internet and computers to improve their understanding of English. The experimental class and the control classes have to some extent some common understanding on what role a teacher plays and this helps them to define their efforts towards learning and improving in English. For instance, 100% of the participants in both classes consent that teachers have to provide exam oriented notes and materials. Likewise, all the participants in both groups agree that teachers ought to point out errors. This reflects the fact that the experimental class depends on the teacher though to some degree. Hence, the two classes do not have a meaningful difference because they share most of the learning styles and strategies.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Overall Concluding Remarks

The study reveals that graduate students do not use language learning strategies and styles extensively but only to some extent. Some of the strategies that graduate students use include taking notes and making summaries during the lessons, practicing English, using the library, attending seminars and using technologies. Both instructed and non-instructed students use these strategies to some extent.

From the findings, the control group scored a mean of 38.86 while the experimental group recorded 38.06 in the first result of the sample test. There was no meaningful difference between the control and experimental group. Throughout all tests, the experimental group scored a few points less than the control group. The trend went on until the ultimate YDS (The formal Proficiency Exam) where the control group had a mean score of 48 while the experimental group had a mean score of 47. The scores were almost the same. However, the autonomous (experimental) class improved its language proficiency more. Between the first sample test and the last YDS formal test, the experimental group recorded an improvement of 9.32 compared to 9.3 for the control group. It is clear that the difference in improvement is insignificant.

Autonomous learning has taken the lead in the learning process in the universities and colleges. In this approach, the students play a larger role in learning compared to the teachers. The study unveils that the teacher serves as a guide. Notably, autonomous learning has positively influenced the learning process especially with the introduction of technology platforms such as the internet. Further, autonomous learning has played a key function in the publishing of more books in the society. The aspect of self-regulated learning has necessitated the publishing of more books to enhance the learning process of the students. Thus, the approach has provided a platform for the enhancement of foreign language proficiency.

Autonomous learning has spurred independence and created awareness among students (Lee, 2011). This study reveals that the student-centred learning platform allows the students to accept responsibility. The study defines the cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies as the most effective in autonomy learning. In addition, this study reveals that the instructed foreign language approach is slightly more effective in developing language proficiency among the learners.

From the findings of this study, 97.4% of the participants were in agreement that teachers have a great role to play in enhancing the language proficiency of a learner. Regardless of the various efforts by the students to improve their language, it is observed that teachers have the role of ensuring that they comprehend what they have been taught. Essentially, this entails asking questions and employing assessment tests. The efficiency of answering questions as well as excellence in the assessment tests or exams are the basis of gauging a student's level of comprehension. This study further supports the idea that teachers play a role in ensuring that students know the 'what' and 'how' aspects of English. This research affirms claims by Maier & Richter (2014). In this study, a good majority (90.5%) of the participants concurred that teachers have the responsibility of providing the methodologies for learning English. Moreover, the study helps in understanding that teachers have the role of making students excel in their examination. In this study, 89.7% of the participants were in agreement that teachers have the role of providing materials and notes that reflect what is to be covered in the exam. Consequently, this study provides the assurance that students greatly depend on the teachers in order to improve in language. However, metacognitive and mnemonic strategies of the SILL, as applied in autonomous learning, are essential to student's improvement in language.

6.2 Recommendations for future study

Based on the results of this study, future studies could address the following areas;

First, the current study was conducted at the institutions of Balıkesir University. It may be worthwhile to conduct a research study of similar nature, and investigate the situations in other Turkish state and/or private universities to determine whether the findings presented here can be generalized to other Turkish graduate students.

Second, the current research was conducted to find out the impact of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level in foreign language learning. The data was gathered only from graduate students. A follow up research could be carried out to investigate different variables that might have a relation with autonomous learning; for instance, age, gender, economic situation and the learning environments. Moreover, further studies can be conducted as experimental studies to promote autonomy learning in undergraduate classes.

Third, in the current study, the participants were assigned to two groups - instructed (control group) and non-instructed (research group) on voluntary bases. The questionnaire administered after the formal proficiency exam showed that the participants who passed the formal (YDS) proficiency exam in both groups were inclined to the learning approach that they used. A further research can be conducted such that participants inclined to autonomous learning are assigned to the instructed group while participants inclined to teacher-centred learning are assigned to the non-instructed group.

Fourth, the current study did not completely unveil the effects of autonomous learning on graduate students' proficiency level in foreign language. There are some units that were not covered in both the control and experimental groups. Therefore, the aims and objectives of the study were not completely met. However, the data collected shows that there is an unexpected difference between the performances of both groups at the end of the programs. There is no meaningful difference between the control and the experimental group. Future studies could repeat the study with a more comprehensive program that can be implemented fully over a longer duration.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

(1)Part I: Personal Profile

Please give your personal information as asked.

Name: Age: Gender:

A= Never C= Sometimes E= Always

B= Rarely D= Often

This scale is meant to know about your own independent learning activities and plans that you adopt for learning English Language. Please give a tick (√) to the answers according to your true cases.

D	C	B	A	Autonomous Learning Activities and Plans	S. N.
				I think I have the ability to learn English well.	1.
				I make decisions and set goals of my learning.	2.
				I make good use of my free time in studying English.	3.
				I preview before the class (i.e. see summary, lessons etc.).	4.
				In the class, I try to use every opportunity to take part in the activities where and when I can speak in English.	5.
				I speak confidently in front of the people.	6.
				I make notes and summaries of my lessons.	7.
				I talk to the teachers and friends outside the class in English.	8.
				I practice English outside the class also such as: record my own voice; speak to other people in English.	9.
				I use library to improve my English.	10.
				I use audio-visual materials to develop my speech such as: listen to BBC, watch English movies, read English newspapers etc.	11.
				I attend different seminars, training courses, conferences to improve my English.	12.
				I take risk in learning the English language.	13.
				I note my strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them.	14.
				I revise lessons and seek the reference books.	15.
				Besides the contents prescribed in the course, I read extra materials in advance.	16.
				When I make progress in learning, I reward myself such as: buy new things, celebrate parties etc.	17.
				I use internet and computers to study and improve English.	18.

APPENDIX II

(2) **Part II: Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles**

This section requires your true perceptions about the role of a teacher and that you think of yourself in learning English. Please circle the answer that you think is the best.

1= Strongly Disagree 3= Undecided 5= Strongly Agree

2= Disagree 4= Agree

5	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**		**S.N.**
					Students have to be responsible for finding their own ways of practicing English.	**19.**
					Students should use much self- study materials to learn English.	**20.**
					Students have to evaluate themselves to learn better.	**21.**
					Students should mostly study what has been mentioned under the course because studying English course is actually for exam purpose.	**22.**
					Students should build clear vision of their learning before learning English.	**23.**
					A lot of learning can be done without a teacher.	**24.**
					Teachers have to be responsible for making students understand English.	**25.**
					Teachers should point out the students' errors.	**26.**
					Teachers not only have to teach 'what' but should also teach 'how' of English.	**27.**
					Teachers have to provide exam oriented notes and materials.	**28.**
					The failure of the students is directly related to the teachers' classroom employment.	**29.**
					Teachers need to use their authority in teaching/learning if needed.	**30.**
					The student-teacher relationship is that of raw-material and maker.	**31.**

APPENDIX III

Syllabus of (Face to face) and (Autonomous) English Learning For preparation of YDS Exam 2014-2015

15 December 2014	**17 OCTOBER 2014 (Morning = Class 316)**
Practice Exam 11	**Sample Exam**
Vocabulary (1)	
Reading	**17 OCTOBER 2014 (Afternoon=Class 316)**
19 December 2014	The English Verb Tenses(1)
Translation Studies	**Vocabulary – Reading**
Practice Exam 12	**20 OCTOBER 2014**
	The English Verb Tenses (2)
22 December 2014	**Vocabulary – Reading**
Paragraph Studies	**24 OCTOBER 2014**
Practice Exam 13	The English Verb Tenses (3)
	Practice Exam 1
26 January 2015	
YDS Question Types Translation (1) **Practice Exam 14**	**27 OCTOBER 2014**
	Modals and Similar Expressions (1)
30 January 2015	**Vocabulary – Reading**
YDS Question Types Vocabulary and Grammar **Practice Exam 15**	
	31 OCTOBER 2014
SEMESTER	Modals and Similar Expressions (2)
16 February 2015	**27 OCTOBER 2014**
General Revision of Grammar Through Multiple Choice Questions (4) **Practice Exam 16**	**Practice Exam 2**
23 February 2015	**31 OCTOBER 2014 (morning = Class 316)**
YDS Question Types Reading Passages **Practice Exam 17**	"If" and "Wish" Clauses **Vocabulary – Reading**
27 February 2015	**31 OCTOBER 2014**
YDS Question Types Vocabulary and Grammar	**Practice Exam 3**

Practice Exam 18	
	03 NOVEMBER 2014
02 March 2015	**Practice Exam 4**
YDS Question Types Paragraph Studies **Practice Exam 19**	
	07 NOVEMBER 2014
06 March 2015	Gerunds and Infinitives **Vocabulary – Reading**
YDS Question Types Translation Studies **Practice Exam 20**	
	10 NOVEMBER 2014
09 March 2015	Active-Passives **Practice Exam 5**
YDS Question Types Reading Passages **Practice Exam 21**	**10 NOVEMBER 2014**
	Relative Clauses **Vocabulary – Reading**
13 March 2015	
YDS Question Types Review of Grammar **Practice Exam 22**	**14 NOVEMBER 2014**
	Practice Exam 6
16 March 2015	
YDS Question Types Vocabulary **Practice Exam 23**	**14 NOVEMBER 2014**
	Adjectives and Adverbs **Vocabulary – Reading**
20 March 2015	**17 November 2014**
YDS Question Types Sentence completion and close tests **Practice Exam 24**	**Practice Exam 7**
23 March 2015 YDS Question Types Sentence completion and close tests **Practice Exam 25**	**21 November 2014**
	Articles, Determiners and Quantifiers

	Vocabulary – Reading
27 March 2015 YDS Question Types Sentence completion and close tests **Practice Exam 26**	
	24 November 2014
30 March 2015	**Practice Exam 8**
Practice Exam 27	
	28 November 2014
03 April 2015	Reported Speech **Vocabulary – Reading**
Practice Exam 28	**01 December 2014**
	Conjunctions and Transitions **Vocabulary – Reading**
05 April 2015	
YDS Exam	**05 December 2014**
	Practice Exam 9
	05 December 2014
	General Revision of Grammar Through Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases
	08 December2014
	Practice Exam 10
	12 December 2014
	Phrasal Verbs **Vocabulary – Reading**

APPENDIX IV

1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. Vocabulary	27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. Sentence Completion	43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. Paragraph	62. 63. 64. 65. 66. Dialogues
7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. Grammar	37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. Translation		67. 68. 69. 70. Close meaning 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. Paragraph completion
17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.CLOSE TEST			76. 77. 78. 79. 80. Irregular Sentence

APPENDIX V

Strategies Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL), from R. OXFORD (1990)

Please read each statement. On the separate Worksheet, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) that tells HOW TRUE OF YOU THE STATEMENT IS.

1- Never or almost never true of me

2- Usually not true of me

3- Somewhat true of me

4- Usually true of me

5- Always or almost always true of me

PART A

1. I think of relationships between when I already know and new things I learn in English.

2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.

3. I connect the sound of a new English word and an image or picture of a situation in which the word might be used.

4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.

5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.

6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.

7. I physically act out new English words.

8. I review English lessons often.

9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.

PART B

10. I say or write new English words several times.

11. I try to talk like native English speakers.

12. I practise the soundsof English.

13. I use the English words I know in different ways.

14. I start conversations in English.

15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.

16. I read for pleasure in English

17. I write notes,messages,letters,or reports in English.

18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.

19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.

20. I try to find patterns in English.

21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing into parts that I understand.

22. I try not to translate word-for-word.

23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.

PART C

24. To understand unfamiliar words,I make guesses.

25. When I can’t think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.

26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.

27. I read English without looking up every new word.

28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.

29. If I can’t think of an English word,I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.

PART D

30. I try to find as many ways asI can to use my English.

31. I notice my English mistakes and use thatinformation to helpme to do better.

32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.

33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.

34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.

35. I look for people I can talk to in English.

36. I look for opportunities to read asmuch as possible in English.

37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.

38. I think about my progress in learning English.

PART E

39. I try to relax whenever I feelafraid of using English.

40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.

41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.

42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.

43. I write down my feelings ina language learning diary.

44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.

PART F

45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again

46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.

47. I practise English with other students.

48. I ask for help from English speakers.

49. I ask questions in English.

50. I try to learn about culture of English speakers.

APPENDIX VI

THE RESULTS OF THE SAMPLE TESTS

Controlling Group

	NAME/SURNAME/INSTITUTION	**Sample YDS Scores**	**Pre-ÖSYM Scores**	**Sample Mid-Term Scores**	**Sample Final YDS Scores**	**Final ÖSYM YDS**
1	BB (Science Institution)	**51**	**52**	**53**	**54**	**55**
2	M A E(Science Institution)	**54**	**55**	**54**	**55**	**56**
3	GK (Science Institution)	**47**	**48**	**53**	**54**	**61**
4	FB (Social Institution)	**31**	**32**	**42**	**46**	**50**
5	GK(Science Institution)	**42**	**43**	**49**	**52**	**60**
6	İHK(SocialInstitution)	**39**	**38**	**40**	**41**	**42**
7	MK (Social Institution)	**28**	**28**	**36**	**41**	**45**
8	MA (Social Institution)	**41**	**40**	**42**	**43**	**45**
9	DU (Science Institution	**29**	**28**	**33**	**34**	**36**
10	ZOn (Science Institution)	**40**	**41**	**44**	**46**	**52,5**
11	SG(Social Institution)	**48**	**50**	**52**	**53**	**55**
12	HÇ(Social Institution)	**31**	**30**	**33**	**34**	**35**
13	P Ç(Science Institution)	**38**	**40**	**46**	**47**	**50**
14	EA (Social Institution)	**32**	**32**	**35**	**36**	**38**
15	TA (Health Institution)	**32**	**33**	**35**	**37**	**40**
	Total	**583/15**	**590/15**	**647/15**	**673/15**	**720/15**
	Average Mean	**38,86**	**39**	**43**	**44,86**	**48**

The results of the practice proficiency exams and formal YDS scores of control group All the results of the practice proficiency exams and formal YDS scores of control group

Research Group

	NAME/SURNAME/INSTITUTION	Sample YDS Scores	Pre-ÖSYM Scores	Sample Mid-Term Scores	Sample Final YDS Scores	Final ÖSYM YDS
1	A K(Science Institution)	**32**	**31**	**38**	**45**	**47**
2	A N(Social Institution)	**31**	**32**	**36**	**39**	**42**
3	A G(Science Institution)	**31**	**30**	**33**	**34**	**36**
4	AY(Social Institution)	**32**	**30**	**30**	**31**	**33**
5	E A (Social Institution)	**42**	**43**	**53**	**64**	**67**
6	S AO(Social Institution)	**40**	**41**	**43**	**43**	**45**
7	M G (Social Institution)	**41**	**40**	**42**	**43**	**45**
8	K A (Social Institution)	**35**	**35**	**39**	**40**	**42,5**
9	K E (Social Institution)	**49**	**50**	**55**	**59**	**63,75**
10	C B(Social Institution)	**29**	**27**	**33**	**34**	**37**
11	M F(Social Institution)	**30**	**27,5**	**33**	**34**	**36**
12	A Z Y (Social Institution)	**61**	**58**	**62**	**63**	**65**
13	H (Social Institution)	**48**	**50**	**53**	**54**	**55**
14	E E (Science Institution)	**39**	**41**	**45**	**47**	**52,5**
15	İ G (Social Institution)	**31**	**32**	**36**	**37**	**42**
	Total	**571/15**	**570**	**631**	**667**	**708/15**
	Average Mean	**38,06**	**38**	**42**	**44,46**	**47,25**

The results of the practice proficiency exams and formal YDS scores of research group

	N/S/I	Sa 1	Sa 2	Sa 3	Sa 4	Sa 5	Sa 6	Sa 7	Sa 8	Sa 9	Sa 10	Sa 11
1	B B (Sc I)	**50**	**51**	**53**	**54**	**55**	**54**	**55**	**58**	**56**	**56**	**55**
2	M A E(Sc I)	**53**	**54**	**53**	**55**	**55**	**54**	**56**	**55**	**56**	**55**	**56**
3	G K (Sc I)	**47**	**49**	**52**	**53**	**55**	**54**	**58**	**62**	**60**	**61**	**61**
4	F B (So I)	**31**	**32**	**34**	**44**	**45**	**46**	**45**	**46**	**47**	**47**	**51**
5	G K(So I)	**41**	**42**	**44**	**48**	**52**	**54**	**56**	**57**	**58**	**59**	**59**
6	İ H K(So I)	**38**	**39**	**42**	**40**	**42**	**41**	**40**	**39**	**40**	**42**	**42**
7	M K (So I)	**28**	**29**	**35**	**44**	**44**	**43**	**42**	**44**	**43**	**45**	**44**
8	M A(So I)	**40**	**41**	**42**	**43**	**44**	**43**	**42**	**43**	**44**	**42**	**44**
9	D U (Sc I)	**28**	**29**	**33**	**35**	**36**	**33**	**32**	**34**	**36**	**34**	**38**
10	Z O (Sc I)	**41**	**42**	**44**	**45**	**46**	**45**	**46**	**47**	**48**	**50**	**51**
11	S G (S I)	**47**	**49**	**51**	**52**	**55**	**52**	**53**	**52**	**54**	**53**	**55**
12	H Ç(S I)	**32**	**31**	**33**	**34**	**35**	**33**	**34**	**35**	**36**	**34**	**35**
13	P Ç(Sc I)	**39**	**39**	**44**	**45**	**46**	**45**	**46**	**44**	**47**	**46**	**46**
14	E A (So I)	**33**	**32**	**36**	**37**	**38**	**35**	**36**	**34**	**36**	**35**	**36**
15	T A (He I)	**33**	**34**	**35**	**38**	**40**	**37**	**38**	**38**	**39**	**40**	**40**
	Total											
	Average Mean											

Control Group

The results of the practice proficiency exams and formal YDS scores of control group.

Research Group

	N/S/I	Sa 1	Sa 2	Sa 3	Sa 4	Sa 5	Sa 6	Sa 7	Sa 8	Sa 9	Sa 10	Sa 11
1	A K (Sc I)	**32**	**34**	**34**	**36**	**40**	**41**	**42**	**43**	**46**	**46**	**47**
2	A N (So I)	**31**	**33**	**35**	**36**	**37**	**37**	**38**	**39**	**40**	**41**	**41**
3	A G (Sc I)	**31**	**33**	**31**	**32**	**33**	**34**	**32**	**33**	**32**	**34**	**35**
4	A Y (So I)	**30**	**31**	**32**	**32**	**33**	**32**	**31**	**33**	**30**	**33**	**32**
5	E A(So I)	**42**	**43**	**45**	**46**	**48**	**52**	**54**	**58**	**62**	**64**	**66**
6	S A(So I)	**40**	**41**	**40**	**42**	**43**	**42**	**40**	**41**	**42**	**44**	**45**
7	M G (So I)	**41**	**42**	**43**	**42**	**42**	**43**	**44**	**44**	**43**	**45**	**45**
8	K A(So I)	**35**	**36**	**37**	**38**	**40**	**41**	**42**	**43**	**42**	**42**	**43**
9	K E (So I)	**48**	**49**	**51**	**53**	**54**	**54**	**55**	**57**	**57**	**59**	**62**
10	C B (So I)	**30**	**31**	**32**	**33**	**32**	**34**	**36**	**35**	**36**	**35**	**36**
11	M F (So I)	**30**	**31**	**32**	**33**	**32**	**33**	**34**	**33**	**35**	**36**	**36**
12	A Z Y(So I)	**61**	**60**	**62**	**63**	**60**	**62**	**63**	**63**	**64**	**65**	**64**
13	H(So I)	**48**	**47**	**49**	**50**	**51**	**52**	**52**	**53**	**54**	**55**	**56**
14	E E (Sc I)	**39**	**40**	**42**	**45**	**46**	**35**	**36**	**34**	**36**	**35**	**36**
15	İ G (So I)	**31**	**32**	**33**	**34**	**35**	**34**	**35**	**33**	**35**	**36**	**35**
	Total											
	Average Mean											

The results of the practice proficiency exams and formal YDS scores of research group.

APPENDIXVII

LANGUAGE LEARNERS HISTORY

The Controlling Group:

1. **BB** (Science Institution)

   I have been learning English from primary to University education but not many hours. During university years, I joined a private English course. My level is intermediate. I have many missing grammar topics. Unfortunately, I could not pass the YDS exam. I got 52 from YDS exam. I want to study English but I do not know what I should do. I have been studying but my score have not changed so far. I should get 55 to enrolPhD programme.

2. **M E**(Social Institution)

   I took formal education. Primary, secondary and high school English lectures. These lectures did not support enough to pass YDS exam. I also took 6 month YDS preparation course but I could pass the exam. I got 55 from YDS exam. I want to raise my score. I am studying but in a disciplined and planned. But regular English course will help me more than my individual studying.

3. **G K**(Science Institution)

   My English is from State schools. I mean from primary, secondary and high school. In last year of my university, I decided to make Master of Arts and I took a foreign language proficiency test in my university. Unfortunately, I could not pass the exam. I got 48 from YDS exam. Fortunately, the Institutes removed the rules that proficiency score must be 55. I enrolled the Science İnstitute for Master of Arts. I took YDS exam but I could not pass. Now, I want to pass it because I want to enrol PhD programme.

4. **F B** (Social Institution)

   I have been learning English for many years but it is not an advanced level but intermediate level. I have vocabulary and reading and grammar problems. I also want to review all I learnt before. Normally, I enrolled master programme by removing the rule by the Institute. Before the institute decision, it was one another rule that graduate students must take

the score 55 from YDS exam. I took formal YDS exam and I got 32. It is so low. I want to make it improve.

5. **G K**(Science Institution)

   Generally, I remember most of the topics that I learnt in preparation class in Anatolian high school but I missed most of the words that's why I want to improve my vocabulary and paragraph studies. I got 43 from YDS exam. I want to get 55 in order to enrol for PhD.

6. **İ H K** (Social Institution)

   I got 38 from YDS exam. My English level intermediate. I learnt English in primary, secondary school and first year of my university years. I enrolled Master of Arts programme one year ago but the institute did not put foreign language proficiency score. I want to improve my proficiency score in order to enrol PhD programme.

7. **M K**(Social Institution)

   My English is very poor. Because I got 28 from YDS exam. I don't like studying English. But I have to work. I forgot all the knowledge that I learnt before. I cannot pass without joining a regular English course.

8. **M A**(Science Institution)

   All I studied English before is from primary and secondary and high school but six months I took an English course for YDS exam. I got 40 from YDS exam. I want to get more score at minimum 55 in order to enrol PhD programme. I am studying but I do not know how I study.

9. **D U**(Science Institution)

   My English is poor. I got 28 from YDS exam. I want to enrol PhD programme but my English does not support to enrol. I studied English in state schools such as primary, secondary and high school only to pass English not an advanced level. I want to develop my Grammar, Reading and vocabulary.

10. **Z O** (Science Institution)

    I took one year intermediate English course and I entered YDS exam and got 41. In order to take PhD programme I have to get 55. My weak side is English vocabulary and paragraph studies. I want to improve them. I can study alone but Ido not what I should do for the exam.

11. **S G**(Social Institution)

I believe I can be successful if I study more. I got 50 from my first YDS exam. My English is advanced level because I took one year preparatory class and that programme helped my English. I only need sample YDS exams and vocabulary development. If I study in a disciplined and planned study, I will pass the YDS exam.

12. **H Ç**(Social Institution)

I have learnt English in primary and secondary school and one year in the first year of my university. I forgot most of the rules that I learnt before. I can say that my English is poor. I got 30 from formal YDS exam. I want to improve my English because I want to enrol PhD programme. My weak sides are vocabulary grammar, reading comprehension.

13. **P Ç**(Science Institution)

I have been learning English since primary school, secondary and high school. I also joined an advanced English course but I could not pass the exam. I got 40 from the YDS exam. I need to improve my vocabulary and reading comprehension. I want to pass the exam because I want to enrol PhD programme.

14. **E A** (Social Institution)

My English is poor. I only took English lectures in primary and secondary school and one year in University. The first score of my YDS exam was 32. I want to get 55 point to enrol PhD programme. My English needs improving especially vocabulary, grammar and reading. Paragraph studies makes me crazy.

15. **T A** (Health Institution)

I learnt English many years ago and lost many of them. I am in beginner level. I got 32 point from YDS exam. I do not know what I should do. I must go an English course. I cannot learn English only myself because how can I learn by myself?

The Research Group:

1. **A K** (Science Institution)

I have learnt English since primary and secondary school, high school. My English is pre-intermediate level. I got 31 points from YDS exam. I want to improve my weak sides. Especially, I want to improve my English vocabulary and grammar and reading.

2. **A N** (Social Institution)

   I do not have deep knowledge about grammar and vocabulary. I took three times YDS exam but I got many times around 30, 31, 32. I have been studying but I could not pass. I need private tutor or chance my methodology. I took some courses before but it did not work. Perhaps my age or I have many missing topics to learn.

3. **A G**(Science Institution)

   I learnt English in primary, secondary, high school. I took three months English course. I took YDS exam. But I could not pass it. I got 30 points. I need new methodology and I want to improve my English.

4. **A Y**(Social Institution)

   I started studying English after many years later because I last remember from primary and secondary and high school and one year during university years. It was elementary level. But YDS exam is very high level. I got 30 points from YDS exam. I just wonder how I can pass it.

5. **EA**(Social Institution)

   I had primary, secondary, high school and also one year prep class. I studied many topics but I need them review. In the first YDS score was 41. I need a disciplined and planned study to improve my vocabulary and reading comprehension. I can study by myself but I only need suitable resources and a planned study.

6. **S A O**((Social Institution)

   My weak sides are vocabulary and grammar and reading. I took one year English course but I could not pass. I got 41 points from YDS exam. I want to make PhD in social institute. I bought a few books to study so I only need to make a plan.

7. **M G**(Social Institution)

   I have learnt English in state school but later I took an advanced level English course. I got 40 points from YDS exam. My weak sides are paragraph studies, vocabulary and reading. I can study myself but I need a professional advisor to pass the exam.

8. **K A**(Social Institution)

   I have been learning English since primary school, secondary, high school. I also take intermediate English course. I got 35 points from YDS

exam. I want to study by myself because I work and I don't have time to join a regular course. I want to improve my English because I want to enrol PhD programme.

9. **K E**(Social Institution)

I learnt English in primary, secondary and high school. I also participated two terms prep class. It supported my English. I got 50 points from YDS exam. I can study by myself. I only need self-instruction and sample exams.

10. **C B**(Social Institution)

My English foundation based in primary, secondary and high school. I need an English course to improve my English. My weak sides are vocabulary, grammar, and reading. I got 27 from YDS exam. I need more study to pass the exam. I want to enrol PhD programme.

11. **M F**(Social Institution)

I have been learning English for a long time since primary, secondary and high school. Unfortunately, I missed most of the topics. For that reason, I must study English. In order to enrol PhD programme, I must pass the exam. I got 27 points from YDS. I need 55 points. My weak sides are grammar, reading, and vocabulary.

12. **A Z Y**(Social Institution)

I have a good English background. I have been learning English since primary, secondary, Anatolian high school and one year preparatory school. During my university years, I attended one year prep class. That's why, I got 58 is from YDS exam. My aim is to get 65 from YDS exam. I can make self-study for this purpose. I only need more sample exams.

13. **H**(Social Institution)

I learnt English in primary, secondary and high school. I had one year prep class in the first year of my university. I got 50 points from YDS exam. I want to improve my English, especially, reading,vocabulary and grammar. I want solve more test questions. Self-instruction and self-study will be suitable because of my work.

14. **E E**(Science Institution)

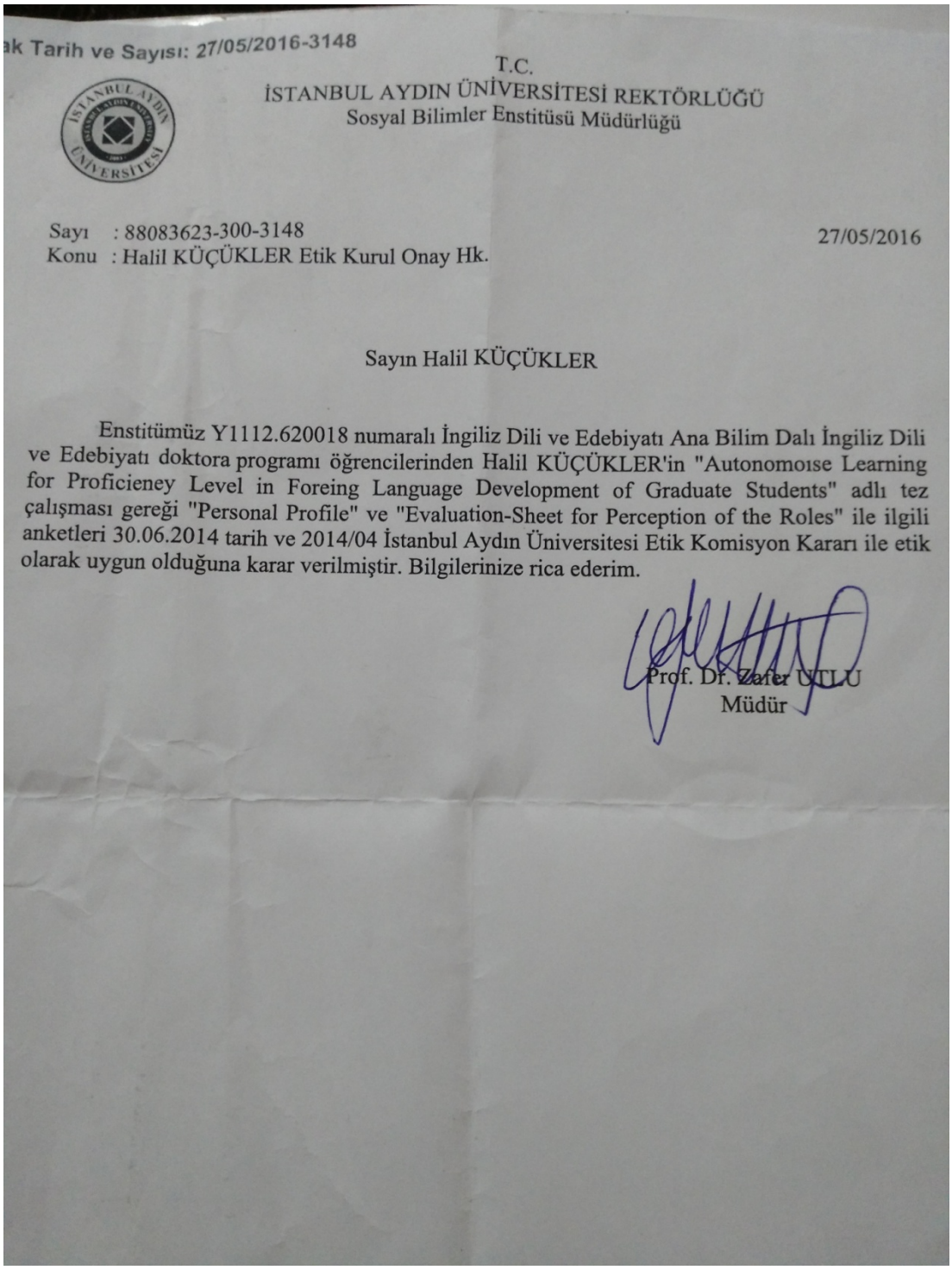
I learnt English in state schools. I also attended an English course for six months. I got 41 points from YDS exam. I want to get 55 in order to

attend PhD programme. I want to review most of the grammar topics and develop my vocabulary and reading comprehension.

15. **İ G**(Social Institution)

I need an English course because my YDS score is 31 points which is so low for me to enrol PhD programme. My English background is from state schools. I learnt English in primary, secondary and high school and took English lectures in the first year of my University. I am in pre-intermediate level.

APPENDIXVII



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27/05/2016

Sayın Halil KÜÇÜKLER

Enstitümüz Y1112.620018 numaralı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Ana Bilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı doktora programı öğrencilerinden Halil KÜÇÜKLER'in "Autonomoıse Learning for Proficieney Level in Foreing Language Development of Graduate Students" adlı tez çalışması gereği "Personal Profile" ve "Evaluation-Sheet for Perception of the Roles" ile ilgili anketleri 30.06.2014 tarih ve 2014/04 İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Etik Komisyon Kararı ile etik olarak uygun olduğuna karar verilmiştir. Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Prof. Dr. Zafer UTLU
Müdür

RESUME

HalilKüçükler is a lecturer in Balikesir University, Foreign Language School, Balikesir, Turkey. He graduated from English Department of KazımKarabekir Education Faculty of Atatürk University in 1993. He worked as a lecturer in English Literature Department at the faculty of Art and Science Faculty of Dumlupınar University for 8 years. He worked one year as an English Lecturer in Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland. He completed his master in 1999. He is working in Ahmet Yasevi University in Kazakhstan. His research interests include linguistics, autonomy learning, in particular teacher/learner satisfaction in linguistics.