

**GAZI UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM**

**EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS USED IN  
SEVENTH GRADES OF STATE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF  
LEARNER AUTONOMY**

**M.A. THESIS**

**by  
Tuğba ÇALIŞIR**

**Ankara**

**May, 2013**

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Tuğba Çalışır'ın Evaluation Of The English Textbooks Used In Seventh Grades Of State Schools in Terms Of Learner Autonomy başlıklı tezi ..... tarihinde jürimiz tarafından İngilizce Öğretmenliği Ana Bilim Dalında Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Adı Soyadı

İmza

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS USED IN SEVENTH GRADES OF STATE SCHOOLS IN TERMS OF LEARNER AUTONOMY**

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This study aims to show whether the English textbooks used in the seventh grades of state schools in Turkey for the last five years encourage learner autonomy or not. That is ,this study is designed in to order to find out if, and if so, how textbooks provide information and practice in the areas of whether textbooks materials give students opportunities to make their own choices about and how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus for learning styles and strategies and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness building .

The aspect of the data analysis of the study was course book evaluation. Although various approaches to research are available for researchers to design the most effective research models that cater for their needs, this study was conducted using content analysis method, which is within qualitative research paradigm. This study is about the evaluation of textbooks in secondary schools which consist of sixth, seventh and eighth grade learners in terms of learner autonomy by using a framework. However, analyzing all of them wouldn't be possible, so textbooks for 7th grade learners were chosen as sample. In order to be able to get reliable information and compare the books, the books for the same grades namely 7<sup>th</sup> grade were chosen as subject.

It was important to evaluate these books used in public schools of Ministry of National Education (MONE) because these books have been used for the last five years in 7<sup>th</sup> grades of public schools and they are indispensable parts of the lessons throughout the year. Weekly schedules are programmed mostly according to the course books in

question, which makes them a core element of learning English in these public schools. Even though learner autonomy has been one of the most disputed and popular subject, there are almost no studies that combine textbook evaluation and learner autonomy. This subject has been ignored by textbook writers , so far. This also makes this study more crucial.

In this study, the books chosen were evaluated with a framework developed by Reinders(2010). This framework includes eight stages of self-directed learning process. These stages are iterative. The books were scrutinized by the help of this framework. A distinction was made between the cases where the books provided information about self-directed learning and where they provided opportunities to put them into practice. After evaluating each unit of each book, if a book just mentioned the importance of learning strategies but didn't give any opportunities for controlled practice, this would be considered as an example of giving "information" only. If students were given the chance to practice these strategies by the help of different activities, this would be categorized as "practice". However, Results proved that such a focus on strategies or other elements of self-directed learning is not at all common in the four textbooks investigated. Out of the eight skills, none of them was covered in these books. These results put forward that teachers should be more careful while choosing a book for the lesson and the textbook writer shouldn't ignore the term "autonomy" in their books.

Key Words: English Language Teaching, Coursebook Evaluation, Learner autonomy, Materials adaptation, Language textbooks.

## ÖZET

### İLKÖĞRETİM DEVLET OKULLARININ YEDİNCİ SINIFLARINDA OKUTULAN İNGİLİZCE DERS KİTAPLARININ İNCELENMESİ

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Bu çalışma Türkiye’deki devlet okullarının yedinci sınıflarında son beş yıldır okutulan İngilizce ders kitaplarının öğrenci özerkliğine katkı sağlayıp sağlamadığını incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Kısaca, bu çalışma ders kitaplarının öğrenciye seçme şansı verip vermediğini, bunun öğrenciye öğretilip öğretilmeyeceğini, kitaplarda öğrenme stil ve yöntemlerine vurgu yapılıp yapılmadığı ve ayrıca öğrencinin yansıtıcı düşünme ve farkındalık kazanma yönünden geliştirilip geliştirilmediği incelenmektedir.

Ders kitabı inceleme yöntemi kullanarak veriler elde edilmiştir. Birçok araştırma yöntemi arasından nitel bir araştırma tekniği olan içerik analizi seçilerek çalışmanın daha güvenilir olması sağlanmıştır.

Bu çalışma ilköğretim okullarının altı, yedi ve sekizinci sınıflarını kapsamak üzere başlatılmış olup bütün bu seviyelerdeki kitapların incelenmesinin mümkün olmayacağı ve aynı seviyedeki kitapların incelenip daha geçerli ve güvenilir bilgiler elde edileceği düşünülerek yedinci sınıf kitaplarıyla sınırlandırılmıştır. Ayrıca kitaplar arasında karşılaştırma yapabilmek açısından kitapların aynı seviyeye ait olması kolaylık sağlamaktadır.

Milli eğitim bakanlığın bağlı devlet okullarına okutulan bu kitapların öğrenci özerkliği açısından incelenmesi önem taşımaktadır çünkü bu kitaplar son beş yıldır kullanılmakta olur yıl boyu işlenen derslerin haftalık planlarının hazırlanmasında temel kaynaklar olarak görülmektedir.

Son yıllarda öğrenci özerkliği her ne kadar en sık tartışılan konu haline gelmiş

olsa da öğrenci özerliğinin ders kitaplarda yeri konu neredeyse hiç ele alınmamıştır. Bu konuda sınırlı sayıda çalışma yapılmış olup bu konu kitap yazarları tarafında göz ardı edilmektedir. Seçilen kitaplar Reinders(2010) tarafından geliştirilen ve özerk öğrenmenin sekiz basamağı ele alınarak hazırlanmış bir çerçeve ile değerlendirilmiştir. Bu basamaklar birbirini destekleyerek ilerlemektedir. Seçilen kitaplar bütün basamaklar göz önüne alınarak ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Ayrıca kitaplar incelenirken bu sekiz basamaktan hangisinden sadece söz edildiği hangisi ile ilgili uygulama yapıldığı incelenmiştir. Ayrıntılı içerik analizi sonucunda, bu dört kitabın öğrencinin özerk öğrendiği bu sekiz basamaktan hiçbirini içermediği kanıtlanmıştır. Bu ise öğretmenlerin kitap seçiminde daha dikkatli olması ve ders kitabı yazarlarının bu konuyu göz ardı etmemesi gerçeğini ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar sözcükler: İngiliz Dili Eğitimi, Kitap inceleme Öğrenen özerkliği, materyal uyarlama, dil ders kitapları

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

MONE refers to Ministry of National Education.

EFL refers to “English as a Foreign Language” .

ESL refers to “English as a Second Language”.

ESP refers to “English for Specific Purposes.

EAP refers to “ English For Academic Puposes”.

SDL refers to “Self-directed Learning”.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Background to the study**

The development of learner autonomy has become one of the most important factors in many English language classrooms around the world. The idea that learners need to be able to take control over their own learning to be successful not just in class, but also to learn independently without a teacher outside the class, has become widely accepted in mainstream language teaching (Benson, 2001). Not only learning a new language but also developing learning skills is getting more and more important. Development of learner autonomy is another important issue and this can be achieved by many ways, and the textbooks used in the classes have an impact on it.

Fenner(2000) suggests that textbooks are collections of the texts and tasks structured by the author in a way he considers best for teaching and learning a foreign language and he believes that certain aspects of learner autonomy can be fostered with textbook as a useful tool. This means that we can promote learner autonomy by adhering to certain principles in texts and tasks. By the help of these, we can see the change of focus from teaching to learning that is from teacher to students. However, it is unclear how textbooks achieve this, or indeed, if they really do. There aren't many studies that deal with the analysis of autonomy in textbooks; therefore, this study sets out to investigate and compare the inclusion of a focus on autonomous learning skills in four of the English textbooks used in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade of state schools.

## **1.2.Problem of the Study**

The term “autonomy” is being more and more popular in the world. Especially in language teaching area, we are always faced with this concept. Holec(1981) describes autonomy as taking charge of one’s own learning.

The students who are able to learn by themselves and search necessary information are thought to be successful language learners and this makes the concept of learner autonomy more and more popular.

It is also an undeniable fact that textbooks are indispensable parts of English Language Teaching classes and they should have certain qualities. Not all the textbooks are suitable for all classrooms. Cunningsworth(1995) and Green (1926) suggest that the ever increasing number of textbook on the market makes formulating the right choice in textbook difficult. These textbooks are so important that they can even determine the failure or success of an ELT course. What is more, Fenner(2000) believes that certain aspects of learner autonomy can be fostered with textbook as a useful tool. This means that we can promote learner autonomy by adhering to certain principles in texts and tasks. The problem is that although textbooks are so important and they can be useful by promoting learner autonomy, this subject is generally ignored by the textbook writers. That is, there appears to be no attempt to draw learners’ attention to the learning process in a way that gradually gives them more responsibility for their own learning.

Another problem is that almost all the studies done on textbook evaluation focus on other aspects of the textbooks and they are generally about materials for adult learner. The primary and secondary school textbooks are generally ignored and the autonomy researches generally include adult learners.

## **1.3. Aims of the study**

This study aims to show whether the English textbooks used in the seventh grades of state schools for the last five years encourage learner autonomy or not. That is, this study is designed in order to find out if, and if so, how textbooks provide information and practice in the areas of whether textbooks materials give students

opportunities to make their own choices about and how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus for learning styles and strategies and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness building . This study has also some other aims and they can be given by explaining the research questions.

Do the textbooks allow the learners to identify their needs?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to set their goals?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to plan their learning?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to select resources?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to select learning strategies?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to practice what they have learned?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to monitor the process?

Do the textbooks allow the learners to assess and revise what they have learned?

That is, this study tries to find answers to these questions and they constitute the aims of the study.

#### **1.4. Importance of the study**

Learner autonomy which focuses on learner reflection and taking responsibility for one's own learning processes has become a subject of concern in the recent history of language teaching (Holec, 1981; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1988; Little, 1991; Dam, 1995; Smith, 2000; Benson, 2001; Palfreyman and Smith, 2003; Lamb and Reinders, 2006; Benson, 2007; Little, 2007; Lamb and Reinders, 2007; Barfield and Brown, 2007; Murphy, 2008; Burkert and Schwienhorst, 2008; Little, 2009)

When the textbooks are considered, they are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set concerning learner needs (Cunningsworth, 1995). They are really important in conveying the information to the learners. Cunningsworth(1995) also describes a textbook as a resource in presenting the

material, a source for learners to practice and do the activities. That is, they give the learners the chance of self-study. All these mean that a connection can be made between learner autonomy and textbooks. As mentioned before, Fenner(2000) believes that certain aspects of learner autonomy can be fostered with textbooks as useful tools. Bruner(1994) also suggests that even in traditional school contexts textbooks can function as a good tool in providing guidelines for students or scaffolding. He uses the term “scaffolding” while mentioning the support given by the adults to the learners. Then, he talks about a gradual removal of the supporting in order to make the learner get control over their own learning. This means that we can promote learner autonomy by adhering to certain principles in texts and tasks. Therefore, choosing the right books gains importance. Grant (1987) claims that perfect book does not exist, yet the aim is to be able to find out the best possible one that will fit and be appropriate to the particular learner group.

By the help of these, we can see the change of focus from teaching to learning; that is, from teacher to students. Even though it is important that textbooks promote learner autonomy, this subject is generally ignored and there is almost no previous study in this area. Balcikanli and Reinders (2011) confirm this idea by saying that there are almost no previous studies that have paid particular attention to the place of autonomy in textbooks. As a result, this study is important to get attention to this subject and to fill the gaps about learner autonomy in textbooks.

### **1.5. Assumptions of the Study**

This study involves English textbooks used in seventh grades of state schools. The evaluation of these books in terms of learner autonomy is important in that they determine the flow of the lessons and even they are seen as weekly schedule by most of the teachers. This puts them in the center of the lessons.

The term learner autonomy, which is defined by Holec(1981) as taking responsibility for one’s own learning, is getting more and more popular. Therefore, researching this quality in textbooks will be useful in making the learner more motivated to search for new information by themselves. What is more, the technology developing day by day leads learners to gain autonomy in the early ages but this fact is

generally ignored in most of the studies and they generally focus on adult learners. Therefore, this study will lead to new researches focusing on the autonomy of young learners.

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

One limitation of this study is the number of textbooks that are inspected in it. That is, the number of the textbooks is limited since it would be impossible to dissect an unlimited number of books in terms of their presentation of learner autonomy since it would be fruitless.

What is more, Winch (2006) points out that autonomy, for example, includes a more political aspect relating to an individual's freedom to make their own choices about their education, as well as a more philosophical view relating to "the ability for individuals to choose and follow their own conception of a life that they deem to be suitable for themselves. Another limitation is that these elements of autonomy are really important but they are less easily identifiable from materials. However, this limitation is eliminated by the help of a framework prepared by Reinders (2010) and developed by using self directed-learning processes. Balcikanli and Reinders (2011) suggest that by emphasizing the observable skills, a mechanical view of learner autonomy can be gained. Therefore, the framework is adapted to focus on the more practical skills involved in the development of autonomy. This helped the study.

### **1.7. Definitions of the Terms**

**Learner autonomy:** Holec (1981) defines learner autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning.

**Young learners:** In this study, this term is used for the students of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade learners. Their ages are between 12 and 15.

**Adult learners:** This term in this study is used for the students of high school students and this includes the ages of 15 and above it.

**In-house materials:** Set of materials designed locally to accommodate the needs of particular learners with specific purposes.

**Self-directed Learning:** Knowles (1975) describes Self-Directed Learning (SDL) broadly as “a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of other, to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes.

## **Chapter II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.0.Introduction**

In this chapter, the literature on Autonomy will be discussed by taking various aspects into account. First, the origins of autonomy will be mentioned briefly. Second, dominant philosophies underlying autonomy will be introduced by dividing it into three main headings. “autonomy and humanism”, “autonomy and constructivism” and lastly “autonomy and experiential learning” .Third step will be to analyze learner autonomy in the field of English language teaching(ELT). In the next step, definition of autonomy, necessity of autonomy in EFL classes, roles of students and teachers and evaluation will be presented under the title of “Learner Autonomy in ELT Situation”. Some approaches to foster learner autonomy and language learning strategies will be discussed in the light of information gathered. In the subsequent step, under the heading of “Curriculum, Syllabus and Learner Autonomy” some information will take place. This part will be mentioned in detail as it has a direct connection with the thesis subject. Lastly, how autonomy is viewed in Turkey will be discussed by considering examples given by the researchers.

#### **2.1.The Origins of Autonomy**

Autonomy is not a superficial subject that is only limited to some areas like education. This means that for centuries many great thinkers such as Galileo, Rousseau, Dewey, Kilpatrick, Freire, Illich and Rodgers have worked on his subjects by explaining it from different perspectives. All of them proved that autonomy is a crucial area that has connections with varying fields.

Galileo reflected his belief in autonomy by saying “You cannot teach anything. You can only help him find it within himself (Benson, 2001)”. Many followed him in this idea. Rousseau is another person coming into our minds when we think about

“autonomy”. He believed that people are intrinsically good. This idea was reflected on his thoughts. Benson(2001) suggests that although he is seldom cited as a source, the germs of modern idea in learning are to be found in his thoughts. This shows the importance of his contribution to the field of autonomy. According to Rousseau’s model, teacher is a permissive individual who supports learner and learns with them; moreover, learners are responsible for their own actions and learn by enjoying or suffering their consequences. In Benson (2001) Rousseau mentions capacity for autonomy. He thinks that it is innate in human beings but suppressed by institutional learning. He believes that under the influence of natural education learners act according to their own authority rather than the authority of the others. Dewey, both a philosopher and educator, had some different perspective for education, which was a precursor of view that informed Council of Europe on autonomy especially in language learning area. His contribution was in three areas: the relationship between education and social participation, education as problem solving and classroom organization. Benson (2001) reflects Dewey’s ideas on education by mentioning it as an adaptive process. According to him, this process is about the interaction with environment and problems arising from this interaction. Kilpatrick, who shared many of the philosophical assumptions of Rousseau, had a distinctive contribution to autonomy. He suggested “project method” in which students are expected to plan and execute their own learning projects. Like Dewey he also focused on the social participation of the learners. Another important thinker who contributed autonomy is Ivan Illich. Illich (1971) suggest that learning happens casually. He believes that schooling reduces learning to prefabricated products of subject matters. It doesn’t give the students opportunity of learning. Benson (2001) puts emphasis on Carl Rodgers’ ideas which are derived from his work in the field of humanistic psychology. Rodgers is best known as psychologist and founder of client-centered therapy. According to Benson(2001) his ideas of teaching and learning are based on facilitation. He believes that the teacher should be a facilitator and should give the chance of self-education, which is very important for him. All these have led the subject “autonomy” come into existence. As can be seen openly, autonomy has been inserted in the field of education with every passing year.

### 2.1.1. Origins of Learner Autonomy in EFL

There is an appreciable increase in foreign or second language learning and this is because of the world-wide social relations and connections between nation states, their economies and cultures. It is a fact that second language acquisition predates institutionalized learning by many centuries and even in modern world millions of individuals continue to learn second and foreign languages without the benefit of formal instruction (Benson, 2001).

Learner autonomy which focuses on learner reflection and taking responsibility for one's own learning processes has become a subject of concern in the recent history of language teaching (Holec, 1981; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1988; Little, 1991; Dam, 1995; Smith, 2000; Benson, 2001; Palfreyman and Smith, 2003; Lamb and Reinders, 2006; Benson, 2007; Little, 2007; Lamb and Reinders, 2007; Barfield and Brown, 2007; Murphy, 2008; Burkert and Schwienhorst, 2008; Little, 2009). Benson(2001) says even it has a history of approximately three decades. Gremmo and Riley(1995) declares that early interest in the concept of autonomy within the field of language education was in part a response to ideals and expectations aroused by the political turmoil in Europe and in the late 1960s.

In fact, looking at the Holec's report can make it clear how learner autonomy entered language teaching area. Holec (1981 as cited in Benson, 2001) wrote a report to the council of Europe with a description of social and ideological context within which ideas of autonomy in learning emerged. In his report, he talks about the roots of autonomy in language teaching:

The concept of autonomy first entered the field of language teaching through the council of Europe's Modern Languages Project, established in 1971. One of the outcome of this project was the establishment of the Centre de Recherches et d'Application sen Langue(CRAPEL) at the university of Nancy, France, which rapidly became a focal point for research and practice in the field. Yues Chalon, the founder of CRAPEL, is considered by many to be the father of autonomy in language learning. After Chalon died at the early age in 1972, the leadership of CRAPEL was passed to Henri Holec, a prominent figure within the field of autonomy today. According to Benson(2001) Holec's project report to the council of Europe is a key early document on autonomy in language learning.

Another point mentioned is “Journal Meloges Pe’ dogoques, published at CRAPEL, which has also played an important role in the dissemination of the research on the autonomy from 1970 to the present day. Pemberton, Toogod and Barield(2009) suggested that since the mid-1970 and in particular since the turn of 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been a remarkable growth of interest in autonomy in language teaching and learning across the globe.

As it can be clear from the rapport, the concept of learner autonomy first entered the field of language teaching through Council of Europe. Moreover, Holec was the prominent figure within the field of autonomy, especially in the area of language teaching. Wenden(1991) puts forward that the idea of autonomy in language learning originated in the late 1960s. He also adds that in the late 1960s and 1970s there was an innovational shift from behaviorist assumptions to the communicative approaches. In Behaviorist approaches, students were not so active in the classroom environment, which made them teacher-bounded. However, since the early 1970s, language teaching practices have become increasingly learner-centered. According to Wenden(1991), after these developments, classroom teachers and language teaching methodologists influenced by insights from humanist and cognitive psychology have looked at how the tasks they set for their students and the materials they ask them to use can be improved or changed. By the help of this quest, there emerged an increased agreement on the importance of the learner as an active individual who brings previous experiences, beliefs and preferences to the classroom. Stevick (1980; as cited in Reinders, 2010) explains this situation like that “Rather than seeing the learners as passive containers to be filled with the teachers’ ideas, the humanist approaches considered the learners as someone who actively shapes his or her learning experiences with the purpose of self development and fulfillment.” All these views led to many changes including the role of teachers and learners in language learning environment. Dubin and Olstein (1986 as cited in Wenden, 1991) explains that language teaching objectives that draw on humanist views on learning will encompass the following and these objectives show the transition to autonomous learning clearly:

- 1-Emphasize meaningful communication.
- 2- Place high respect and value on the learner.

- 3- View learning as a form of self-realization.
- 4-Give learners considerable say in decision-making process.
- 5- Place teachers in the role of facilitators whose task is to develop and maintain a supportive class atmosphere.
- 6- Stress the role of other learners as a support group.

All these show the change in the roles and other aspects of the language education step by step. In other words, learner autonomy has given different roles to the students and teachers with its own principles.

## **2.2. Dominant Philosophies underlying Autonomy**

Learner autonomy has become a crucial area in the recent years and today's world requires citizens who can think and act freely and decide on what to do for learning new things. All these lead to taking some educational measures. This has made autonomy more related to other significant disciplines. In this part of the study, some dominant philosophies underlying learner autonomy will be discussed.

### **2.2.1. Autonomy and Humanism**

There are three dominant philosophies which are highly related to learner autonomy. They are "humanism, constructivism and experiential learning". The first one that will be taken into account is humanism. Humanism and education are two different subjects that are interconnected. Therefore, nowadays we can see these two terms together. Humanism is a philosophy in which there can be diversity in thinking. Moreover, humanism gives people the chance of developing different ideas under different cultural, social and political conditions

If we look at this subject in terms of language education, before early 1970s everything was different and the teacher was seen as an authority who gave information to the students directly. There was a spoon-feeding process while teaching a language; that is,

students used to take what was given to them in a ready manner. Since early 1970s, many changes have occurred and humanist psychology which puts emphasis on the importance of qualities such as personal assumptions of responsibility, self-concept and affective factors in learning has become more and more popular. In humanism, human beings are thought to be very important. Moreover, its assumptions are based on whole person learning which emphasize both cognitive and affective sides of the learners. In addition, Dubin and Olstein (1986; as cited in Wenden, 1991) have shown the relationship between Humanism and learner autonomy by saying that some objects of humanistic approach are highly concerned with the key factors of learner autonomy. “Placing high respect and value on the learner, viewing learning as a way of self realization, giving learners considerable say in decision making and giving teachers the role of facilitator” are some of them. That is, humanistic approach lets the learners be autonomous. They can monitor their own learning and they can get the chance of learning how to learn.

### **2.2.2. Autonomy and Constructivism**

The second philosophy underlying autonomy is constructivism. Constructivism is an old concept which has roots in philosophy and which has been applied to sociology, anthropology as well as cognitive psychology and education. Piaget and Dewey were the first major contemporaries to develop a clear idea of constructivism as applied to classrooms and childhood development. According to Piaget (1973, as cited in Wang, 2011) learning is discovery. Even he uses these sentences: “ To understand is to discover or reconstruct by rediscovery and such conditions must be compiled with if in the future individuals are to be formed who are capable of production and creativity and not simply repetition.” Wang(2011)suggests that constructivist teaching and learning led by constructivism encourage learner autonomy. Moreover, Gray (1997) puts forward that constructivism is a view of learning based on the belief that knowledge isn’t a thing that can be simply given at the front of the room in their desks. By saying this, he implies that knowledge is constructed by learners through an active participation. In this process students are builders and the creators of meaning and

knowledge. Therefore, in a constructivist classroom environment, students are at the center and teachers facilitate learning.

Benson and Voller(1997) address this issue from language education. They propose constructivism is a process of helping learners to construct their own version of language. This means that they begin to learn taking responsibility for their own learning. Thanasolas(2000) also suggests that rather than internalizing or discovering objective knowledge, individuals recognize and reconstruct their experience. They are in the active zone of education. Candy(1991:270) defends this idea and says that constructivism leads directly to the proposition that knowledge cannot be taught, but only learned;that is, constructed because knowledge is something built up by the learner.(Von Glasersfeld &Smark, 1974;as cited in Candy, 1991). Because of all these views, this philosophy is highly relevant to learner autonomy principles.

### **2.2.3. Experiential learning**

The last philosophy taken into account is experiential learning which generally means “learning by doing”. Recent approaches for education especially in language teaching area emphasize the significance of the students’ own contributions to their learning. This is done through active participation. Especially in language teaching area experiences of language, communication, culture and personal learning processes are essential. Kohonen(2007) suggests that experiential learning is an educational orientation which aims at integrating theoretical and practical elements of learning for whole person approach, emphasizing the significance of experience for learning. Experiential learning includes a rich variety of interactive practices. Preparing portfolios, reflective personal essays, role plays, drama activities etc. are very important elements in experiential learning. All of these are crucial for learners to be autonomous because they engage learners in process as whole persons; both intellectually and emotionally.

By the help of these, participants have opportunities to learn from their own experiences. Kohonen(2007 ) adds that it involves observing the phenomenon and doing something meaningful with it through an active participation. Moreover, experiential

learning emphasizes education in which learner is directly in touch with the phenomenon being studied rather than just watching it, reading, hearing, talking about it( Kolb, 1984; Kohonen, 2001) In addition to these, Woolfe(1992) proposes four components of experiential learning. The first one is about students. According to this, the students are aware of the processes which are taking place, and which are enabling learning to occur. The second suggests that the students are involved in a reflective experience which enables them to relate current learning to past, present and future, even if these relationships are felt rather than thought. The third component is about experience and content. They are personally significant: what is being learned and how it is being learned have a special importance for the person. The last one is that there is an involvement of the whole self: body, thoughts, feelings and actions, not just of the mind; in other words, the student is engaged as a whole person.

Traditional teacher-directed approaches use structured lesson and lecture formats and decisions are teacher initiated. This means that students remain passive during the learning process. This situation is not the same in experiential learning which suggests that students become the active participants of classroom environment and even students learn to take charge of their own learning.

### **2.3. Definition of Learner Autonomy**

The term “autonomy” is being more and more popular in the world. Especially in language teaching area, we are always faced with this concept. If so, what we mean by “autonomy” is really important for us.

Although there are some important definitions of “learner autonomy”, Little (1990,as cited in Benson, 2001) argues that autonomy is not a single, easily describable behavior. However, he is of the opinion that it is important to describe it and he has got two crucial reasons for it. Firstly, he believes in the importance of “construct” validity which is a precondition for effective research. In order for a construct such as autonomy to be reachable, it must be describable in terms of observable behaviors. Secondly, programmes or innovations designed to foster autonomy are likely to be more effective if they are based on a clear of the behavioral changes they aim to foster.

One of the first people coming into our minds while defining autonomy is “Holec”. “Taking charge of one’s own learning” is his well known definition for autonomy. Holec (1981, as cited in Defai, 2007) suggests that “ability to take charge of one’s own learning” is to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e.:

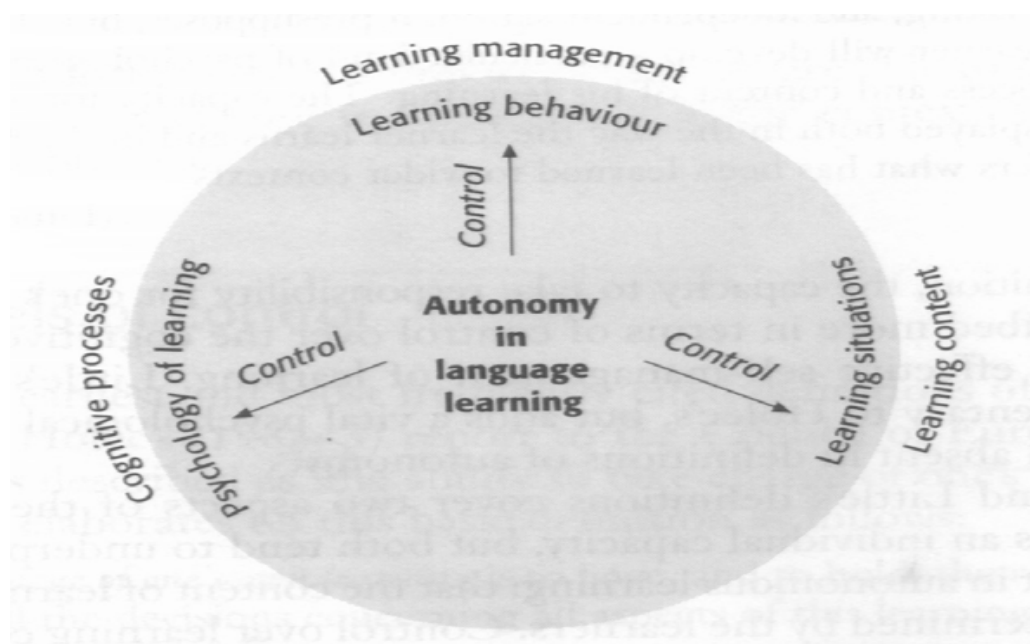
- determining the objectives;
- defining the contents and progressions;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.)
- evaluating what has been acquired.

In his definition, Holec uses the term “ability” and he suggests that it is not inborn but must be acquired either by natural means or by formal learning. As mentioned above, Holec (1981) defines learner autonomy as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning.” In fact, this definition is problematic in that it describes the decision making abilities involved in autonomous learning in largely technical terms, leaving open the nature of cognitive capacities underlying effective self-management of learning. Benson(2001) claims that although Holec knows the cognitive factors involved in the development of learner autonomy, he doesn’t explicitly give them. In contrast to the views of Holec, Little (1991) argues that “autonomy is not exclusively or even primarily a matter of how learning is organized. Little(1991, as cited in Benson, 2001) explains this term with these sentences:

Essentially, autonomy is a capacity- for detachment, critical reflection decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts.

Benson (2001) prefers to describe autonomy as the capacity to take control of one’s own learning, largely because the construct of ‘control’ appears to be more open to investigation than the constructs of ‘charge or responsibility’.

Little(1990, as cited in Benson,2001) suggests that learners take their first step towards autonomy when they recognize that they are responsible for their own learning. All these show the differences in the definition of autonomy; that is, students' responsibility for their own learning. In addition, Little (2000) describes autonomy in terms of language learning like this: "Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action; autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes."Although the definitions for autonomy vary (Boud, 1988; Little 1991; Kohonen, 1992; Dickinson 1993; Benson and Voller 1997), what is common with all these definitions is that they all entail the responsibility that the learners take for their own learning process. It may be useful to share some definitions to make this concept clearer. Benson(2001) suggests that it should be emphasized that any definition of autonomy that attempts to cover every potential aspect of control over learning risks becoming too long or practical use. He goes on saying that an adequate description of autonomy in language learning should at least recognize the importance of three levels at which learner control may be exercised: learning management, cognitive processes and learning content.



**Figure 1: The capacity to take over learning (Benson, 2001: 50)**

As there are some misconceptions on autonomy, we can make a better understanding of the definition by looking at Little's (1990) useful statement on what autonomy is not:

- Autonomy is **not** a synonym for self-instruction; in other words, autonomy is **not** limited to learning without a teacher.
- In the classroom context, autonomy does **not** entail an abdication of responsibility on the part of the teacher; it is **not** a matter of letting the learners get on with things as best they can.
- On the other hand, autonomy is **not** something that teachers do to learners; that is, it is **not** another teaching method.
- Autonomy is **not** a single, easily described behavior.
- Autonomy is **not** a steady state achieved by learners.

As a result of the diversity of the terms mentioned above, it isn't surprising to face with some misconceptions. Although there are some problems and misconceptions about the definition of autonomy we can define the term "learner autonomy" with a holistic view of the learner that requires us to engage with the cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and social dimensions of language learning and to worry about how they interact with one another.

## 2.4. Why autonomy in EFL classes

Nowadays, the term "learning to learn" is getting more and more popular in EFL classrooms. There are some reasons for this situation. In Benson(2001) the first reason is "reported success of numerous projects" associated with learner autonomy and the second is "the efforts of those who advocate autonomy as a goal of education to promote their ideas". He also gives importance to some social and economic factors. Gremmo and Riley(1995; cited in Benson, 2001) suggest that the rise of autonomy in language learning corresponded to an ideological shift away from consumerism and materialism towards an emphasis on the meaning and value of personal experience, quality of life, personal freedom, minority rights.

Benson(2001) suggests that the basic ideas of autonomy have come into harmony with major innovations in language teaching theory and methodology over the last 30 years. During this period, it is clear that language teaching and learning processes have undergone some important changes. At the very beginning, some behaviorist approaches such as “audio-lingualism” and “language laboratories” were very popular; however, there is a great shift from these ideas to more “communicative approaches”. With the development of communicative approaches, communicative competence has gained a lot of importance communicative . The development of this idea brought a lot of changes with it. For example, Yalden (1983; as cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001) discusses six Communicative Language Teaching design alternatives, ranging from a model in which communicative exercises are grafted onto an existing structural syllabus, to a learner-centered view of syllabus design. This means that students will be able to take part in the learning process actively. This creates a real connection with learner autonomy principles and language learning, which makes learner autonomy more and more important.

In addition to all these, information explosion, growing student numbers, the commercialization of education and developments in educational technology have had a particular impact on language teaching (Benson, 2001). According to Benson (2001) information explosion has both increased the quantity of learning that is expected of students and altered its quality. Furthermore, the rapid increase in the number of people attending educational institutions and the growth of the adult education have forced the educational authorities to search for alternative means of providing education to individuals with diverse needs, opportunities and preferences. Private sector language teaching institutions has led the developments in innovations associated with autonomy such as self-access learning and learning training. We cannot ignore the increase in the use of technological devices in language teaching, which have led to “autonomy of the learners.

In this sense, the current value of the concept of autonomy to language educators may well lie in its usefulness as an organizing principle for the broader possibilities contained within a framework of communicative and learner-centered pedagogies (Benson, 2001).

Lastly in the light of all these information, the students who are able to learn by themselves and search necessary information are thought to be successful language learners and this makes the concept of learner autonomy more and more popular.

## **2.5. Teacher and Learner Roles in Autonomous Learning**

Nunan (1995, as cited in Benson, 2001) argues that the principal reason for the mismatch between teachers and learners , which gives rise to a disparity between what is taught and what is learned, is that there is a mismatch between the pedagogical agenda of the teacher and that of the learner. While the teacher is busily teaching one thing, the learner is very often focusing on something else. In order not to have these kinds of problems, knowing the roles of teachers and students is really crucial. If the teacher and the students know each others' roles they can achieve their goals more easily because in the lessons student may seem to get what the teacher teaches; however, this is not always the case. What is more, it is undeniable that there is a change in the roles of teachers and the students. However, Scharle and Szabo(2000) suggests that the changes in the role of the teachers and the students can be or perhaps should be gradual, rather than abrupt and dramatic. They have some reasons for this explanation. They think that the school where you teach, the community of the teachers, the parents of the students and the students themselves will have expectations about what roles a teacher is supposed to perform. Below, changes in teacher and student roles in autonomous learning will be discussed.

### **2.5.1. Teacher Roles In Autonomous Learning**

Whether working independently of the teacher or not, learners need to develop autonomy in this internal sense; indeed it can be argued that learners “need to be autonomous in order to be able to learn independently (Lamb and Reinders 2005: 226). However, it is clear that teachers have a big role in making the students autonomous. Scharle and Szabo(2000) alleges that developing responsible attitudes in the learner

entails some deviation from traditional teacher roles as well. As students begin to take charge of their learning, the teacher needs to take on the role of facilitator or counselor in an increasing number and type of classroom situation. Therefore, the role of the teacher in the development of such learner autonomy has become an important area of research in this field. Nedesky (1989; as cited in Zhuang, 2010) observes that autonomy is an ability existing under the condition of certain social surroundings and dependent on social relations. Thus, negotiation and cooperation between teacher and student have a very strong influence on the way of autonomous learning. This means that there is a dynamic relationship between the teacher and students and this has a great effect on the process of autonomous learning. As mentioned before, Holec has a definition which suggests that “autonomy” means students take responsibility for their own learning. Smith(2008) accepts the idea that learners have the power and right to learn for themselves and this notion is seen as an essential aspect for learner autonomy. This brings the result that if students are given the chance of being involved in making decision about their own learning, the development of the learner autonomy will be inevitable. However, this doesn’t mean that teachers give up organizing and directing the class. According to Zhuang (2010) in comparison with traditional teaching method, autonomy does not deprive teachers of their responsibility, but redistributes the decision-making rights between teachers and students in the learning process. Accordingly, teachers do not control the whole learning procedure like a commander, but take many other roles like directors or advisors. This means that teacher should take care of the choice of the students.

Another point that should be taken into account is that teachers should also be autonomous in order to direct a classroom that is full of students who are ready to take responsibility for their own learning. De Vries and Kohlberg (1987:380 ) gives a picture of what an autonomous teacher looks like.

The autonomous constructivist teacher knows not only what to do, but why. She has a solid network of convictions that are both practical and theoretical. The autonomous teacher can think about how children are thinking and at the same time think about how to intervene to promote the constructive culture. Autonomous teachers do not just accept uncritically what curriculum specialists give them. They think about whether they agree with what is suggested. They take responsibility for the education they are offering children

This means that without a teacher who is aware of the importance of the autonomy, it is really difficult to reach learner autonomy. Little (1995:175) supports this idea by giving two reasonable reasons. According to him it isn't reasonable to expect teachers to foster learner autonomy if they don't know what it is to be an autonomous learner. Secondly, teachers must be able to apply to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning. It is clear that for a teacher to be able to foster learner autonomy, it is important that teachers also know about it.

Another important categorization can be seen in the Wright (1987) and Voller (1997). They categorize the teachers along the continuum between two extremes: transmission teachers and interpretation teachers. Wright (1987) puts forward that transmission teachers believe in subject disciplines and boundaries between them and their role is to evaluate and correct learners' performance. Interpretation teachers believe that knowledge is the ability to organize thought, interpret and act on facts and that the learners are intrinsically interested and naturally inclined to explore their worlds. They also emphasize not only the learning styles and learning strategies but also negotiation between the teachers and the students.

As a result, in learner autonomy situations, teacher is the person who provides both psychosocial and technical support. And all these give the learners the chance of developing in any field.

### **2.5.2. Learner Roles in Autonomous Learning**

In today's' language teaching and learning processes, the way we look at our students is different. There is a shift from teaching to learning. Furthermore, teaching and learning processes are based more on communicative approaches.

It is also an undeniable fact that learners are different and they learn in different ways. Therefore, it is impossible for a teacher to fit the lesson according to the needs of all students in the class, so Tholin(2009) suggests that the learners must be jointly responsible in the process of planning, carrying out and evaluating the teaching.

Dubin and Olstein(1987) summarize this situation by saying that students are expected to have an active part in the learning process. They are put into situations in which they must share responsibilities, make decisions, evaluate their own progress, and develop

individual preferences and so on. This means that they are becoming more and more autonomous and they begin to learn how to learn. This shows that there occurs a change in the role of the students. In the past, they used to be passive and all processes of the lessons were under the control of the teacher. Students were the passive takers of the information and there was a spoon-feeding process. With the deviation from traditional teacher roles, students begin to take charge of their own learning.

There are many who try to explain the characteristics of an autonomous learner. In Gardner&Miller (1999), Dam(1990:102) defines one as ‘an active participant in social processes of classroom learning and active interpreter of new information in terms of what she or he already and uniquely knows. That is, he describes autonomous learners as people who know how to learn and who can use knowledge in any learning situation s/he may encounter at any stage in her/his life. Gardner and Miller (1996) define autonomous language learners as those who initiate the planning and implementation of their own learning. Learner autonomy approaches try to promote less assisted and unassisted learning situations where the learners have more freedom .

## **2.6. Fostering Learner Autonomy with Different Approaches**

As mentioned above, autonomy is defined as the capacity to take control over one’s own learning and it is crucial to develop this capacity. Benson (2001) suggests that the capacity for control over learning has various aspects and autonomy can take various forms. Fostering autonomy doesn’t, therefore, imply any particular approach to practice. In order to support the goals of autonomy there should be some practices. Raya and Fernandez(2002) support this idea and suggest that fostering learner autonomy calls for a continuous effort to help students process information in meaningful ways and become independent learners by developing effective strategies, transferring skills, as well as a greater sense of responsibility .In short, there should be some approaches that lead us to foster learner autonomy. Benson(2001) discusses six approaches and he also alleges that classification of the approaches is done by considering the matter of focus, but they are combined and sometimes they work in eclectic ways. Below they will be taken into account under six broad headings.

### **2.6.1. Resource-based Approach**

Resource-based Approach emphasizes independent interaction with learning materials. It offers learners the opportunity to exercise control over learning plans, the selection of learning materials and evaluation of learning (Benson, 2001). It also emphasizes the learners' relationship with the learning material.

Brown and Smith (1996) put emphasis on the idea that the students who actively tend to develop learning techniques which enable them to become lifelong learners are able to choose their own modes of study, pace themselves and evaluate their effectiveness. They show that resources that can be used by the learners independently can be beneficial in helping students to take responsibility for their own learning needs.

All these clearly show that self-access is basic to resource-based learning and it has a direct connection with learner autonomy. Sheerin(1991) defines self-access as a way of describing materials that are designed and organized in such a way that students can select and work on tasks on their own.

Gardner and Miller(1999) suggest that self-access is probably the most widely used and recognized term for an approach to encourage autonomy. They also emphasize that self access learning is an approach to language learning, not an approach to teaching language. That is, they believe in the importance of direct involvement of the students to language learning process.

Self-access centers realize what self-access wants to achieve. These centers possess audio, video and computer workstations, audiotapes and computer software, and a variety of printed materials. The advantages of a self-access resource centre are manifold because they provide for rich and varied input for acquisition in a non-normative environment (Esch, 1996). This shows that they have the goal of promoting autonomy through their systems. Benson (2001) puts forward that one approach to the design of access systems to support the development of autonomy is to examine how the learners can best be supported at each phase of the process of self-managed learning. Sheerin(1997, as cited in Benson, 2001)identifies the following phases: analyzing needs, planning a programme of work, choosing materials and activities, working unsupervised and evaluating process. That is, for the students there is an opportunity to choose in the every phase of the language learning process .With self-access centers, the focus for the development of autonomy is placed upon the learner's independent interaction with learning resources (Benson,2001).In addition, this approach puts

emphasis on the teachers, also because teachers must be well equipped to cope with the technicalities of self-access and with underlying assumptions about the relationship between self-access and autonomy.

### **2.6.2. Technology-based learning**

Technology-based learning is a directly related area to the resource-based learning. Benson (2001) explains technology-based approaches to the development of autonomy are similar in many respects to other resource-based approaches, but differ from them in their focus on the technologies used to access resources. Benson and Voller(1997:6) accept this idea and put forward that autonomy and independence have become linked to the growing role of technology in education. Motteram(1997, as cited Benson, 2001) talks about the relationship between educational technology and learner autonomy.

Since much of the attention of educational technology falls upon computers and the internet, researching the effect of these materials on autonomy is really crucial. Technology based approaches may include student-produced video, computer-enhanced interactive video, electronic writing environments, concordance, informal CD-ROMs, E-mail language advising, and computer simulations. There has long been a perceived relationship between Computer Based Materials in general, and multimedia-based materials in particular, with self-study and learner autonomy and there are good reasons for this.(Figura and Jarvis 2007:449) All these increase the studies on “Computer-assisted Language Learning” and internet.

In short, Technology-based learning provides the learners with opportunities to self-direct their own learning.

### **2.6.3. Learner-based Approach**

In contrast to resource-based and technology-based approaches to autonomy which focus on providing opportunities for learner control, learner-based approaches focus directly on the production of behavioral and psychological changes that will enable learners to take greater control over their own learning (Benson, 2001).

Wenden (1991, as cited in Benson, 2001) has some important views on learner development and autonomy. Wenden suggests that ‘successful’, ‘expert’ or ‘intelligent’

learners have learned how to learn. They have acquired the learning strategies, the knowledge about learning, and the attitudes that enable them to use these skills and knowledge confidently, flexibly, appropriately and independently of a teacher. Therefore, they are autonomous. All these approaches aim “learner development” and they are all useful to make the students better language learners. Benson(2001) divides the approaches to learner development into six headings.

- In the first approach, there is direct advice on how to learn languages independently. They are often self study books, textbooks or manuals designed for individuals working abroad.
- The second is training based on “good language learner” research .They try to share observation of strategies used by “successful” language learners.
- The third is about learners. They are expected to experiment with strategies and choose the ones that suit them best.
- The forth is “Synthetic” approaches drawing on a wide range of sources.
- “Integrated” approaches that train and teach learners at a time is the fifth.
- The last one suggests that with the help of self-access resources and counseling, learners are encouraged to train themselves on self-directed learning.

All these prove that if the students’ needs and interests are taken into account students will be able to take more control over their learning.

#### **2.6.4.Classroom-based Approach**

According to Benson(2001) classroom-based approaches emphasize learner control over the planning and evaluation of classroom learning. That is, students make decisions regarding their learning within collaborative and supportive environment. Benson(2001) also adds that several experimental programmes suggest that learner control over the planning of classroom activities can produce positive results in terms of both autonomy and language learning.

It is clear that students feel that they are under the control of the teacher in teacher-led classroom environments and they aren’t free. However, in classes where students have more independence they feel the freedom even while they are talking.

Up to now, many experiments have been done on classroom-based approaches and learner autonomy. Benson(2001) alleges that results of these experiments in which

learners are asked to set their own goals and plan activities within the classroom suggest that increased learner control is beneficial to language learning in the short term. That is, if students take control over their own learning they will have more chance to be autonomous while learning a language and they will have reached their goals.

As a result, it is clear that classroom-based approaches attempt to foster autonomy by involving learners in decision making processes concerned with day to day management of their learning.

### **2.6.5. Curriculum-based Approach**

Curriculum is defined as a term which is used to describe the broadest contexts in which planning for language instruction takes place, either on the national level or for a community's school in Dubin and Olstein(1987). Therefore, it holds great importance in many ways. Curriculum-based approaches extend the idea of learner control to the curriculum as a whole. Benson(2001) suggests that the principle of learner control over the curriculum has been formalized in the idea of process syllabus. In this type of syllabus, teachers and the students determine the content and the procedures of learning in collaboration with their teachers.

In 1980s, the idea of communicative language teaching and task-based learning was very popular and they influenced the syllabus. The term "communicative syllabus" came out and this types of syllabi weren't predefined but selected or organized with communicative processes that take place in the classroom. According to Benson(2001), there are two types of process syllabus. The first one is the weaker one. This involves the project work in which learners determine the content, methods of inquiry and the outcomes of real-world research. The second is a stronger one and it doesn't presuppose any particular content or approach to learning because these are to be negotiated and renegotiated throughout the course. All these are the proof for showing how students actively take part in preparing a syllabus and they show the autonomy of the learners clearly.

### **2.6.6. Teacher-based Approach**

The relationship between teachers and students has always been a matter of concern. “What the role of the teacher was, what it is now and what it will be” is always a disputed area. Moreover, the subjects “to what extent a teacher should be autonomous and where the teachers should be in terms of autonomy” directs us to the “teacher-based approaches.” Benson (2001) puts forward that teacher-based approaches emphasize the role of teacher and teacher education in the practice of fostering autonomy among learners. He also mentions the role of the teacher within autonomous learning. The terms “facilitator, helper, coordinator, counselor, consultant, adviser, knower and resource” are used for the teachers. Voller (1997 as cited in Benson, 2001) reduces these roles into three: facilitator, counselor and resource. “Teacher as a facilitator” means the teacher makes things easy for the students. With the role of counselor, the teacher becomes a guide and there occurs a one-to-one interaction between the teachers and the learners. When the teacher acts in the role of a resource, he or she is seen as the source of information. Voller (1997, as cited in Benson, 2001) thinks that there are two kinds of teacher support to the students: technical and psycho-social support. He explains them like that:

The key features of technical support are:

1. helping learners to plan and carry out their independent language learning by means of needs analysis (both learning and language needs), objective setting (both short and longer term, achievable), work-planning, selecting materials, and organizing interactions;
2. helping learners evaluate themselves (assessing initial proficiency, monitoring progress, and self and peer-assessment)
3. helping learners to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to implement the above (by raising their awareness of language and learning, by providing learner training to help them identify learning styles and appropriate strategies.)

The key features of psycho-social are:

1. the personal qualities of the facilitator (being caring, supportive, patient, tolerant, emphatic, open, non-judgment)

2. a capacity for motivating learners (encouraging, commitment, dispersing uncertainty, helping learners to overcome obstacles, being prepared to enter into a dialog with learners, avoiding manipulating, objectifying or interfering with, in other words, controlling them)
3. an ability to raise learners' awareness (to "de-condition" them from preconceptions, about learner and teacher roles, to help them perceive the utility of, or necessity for independent learning)

As a result, to be effective in teacher-based approaches, teachers must be free and they should be able to assert that freedom while teaching. Thavenius(1999) argues that autonomy puts much more on the teachers' shoulders than we can think and he suggests that achieving learner autonomy means more than changing the teaching techniques, it also means changing teacher personality.

All these show that there are different approaches that can foster autonomy and a combination of them can be more useful in this area. Benson (2001) explains this by saying that "there is no unique technique or method to promote autonomy."

## **2.7.Learner Autonomy and Language Learning Strategies**

Understanding the relationship between the learner autonomy and learning strategies is really important for making our students successful language learners. However, there isn't a consensus on what a strategy is. According to Wenden(1991), in literature strategies are referred to as "techniques", "tactics", "potentially conscious plans", "consciously employed operations", "learning skills, basic skills, functional skills", "cognitive abilities", "problem solving procedures" and "language learning behaviors". Wenden(1991) also asserts that learning strategies are mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so.

We can make a connection between learner strategies and learner autonomy because learning strategies are one type of learner training content that should be included in plans to promote learner autonomy. Three kinds of strategies will be mentioned below and they are distinguished on the basis of their function.

### **2.7.1.Cognitive Strategies**

Wenden (1991) defines cognitive strategies as mental steps or operations that learners use to process both linguistic and sociolinguistic content. After giving the definition of the cognitive strategies, Wenden goes on saying that there are four steps in human learning. The first one is ‘selecting information from incoming data’, another ‘comprehending it’, the third is ‘storing it’ and the last one is ‘retrieving it for use.

### **2.7.2.Metacognitive Strategies**

Meta-cognitive knowledge about language learning is another way to develop learner autonomy. Meta-cognitive knowledge includes all facts learners acquire about their own cognitive processes. According to Flavell ( as cited in Wenden, 1991) there are three kinds of meta-cognitive knowledge. The first one is person knowledge. It is general knowledge that learners may have about human learning.

The second one is “strategic knowledge.”It is the stored knowledge that learners have about strategies. In fact, these are the strategies that can be used effectively in the accomplishment of specific language learning tasks. The last type of meta-cognitive knowledge is “task knowledge”. For this type of knowledge, students are given tasks such as “doing a cloze”, “reading and finding the main idea”. It refers to what learners need to know about the procedures that constitute these tasks to accomplish them successfully. All these skills can be helpful for learners to gain autonomy for learning. They can think about the process in which they learn the language. Even they can develop new ways of learning that are suitable for them.

### **2.7.3. Social and Affective Strategies**

The affective factors like emotion, attitude, motivation, and values influence learning in an important way and social strategies are also as important as them because language is used in communication and communication occurs between people. Good language learners can communicate and cooperate with the others and they can learn how to learn. What is more, with the help of these strategies, students will have the chance of taking more responsibility and this will make them autonomous learners. Moreover, affective strategies will create a motivating atmosphere which is helpful in

making the learners more motivated to search for the new information not only in the classroom environment but also out of the classroom.

## **2.8. Curriculum, syllabus and learner autonomy**

Over the last years, autonomy has been a topic of wide spread discussion. As mentioned in the earlier parts, Holec(1981), one of the advocates of autonomy in language learning, has defined it as the ability to take charge of one's own learning. Therefore, fostering learner autonomy has become an important and appropriate goal in language course design. By that way, there will be a transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the learner. All these cause a change in view of curriculum. They have begun to be prepared to foster learner autonomy. Therefore, knowing what curriculum means is getting more and more important. Dubin and Olstein(1987) define curriculum as the broadest contexts in which planning for language instruction takes place on the national level or for a community's schools. A syllabus is a more circumscribed document, usually one which has been prepared for a particular group of learner. Dubin and Olstein uses the terms curriculum and program interchangeably. If so, how curricula have come into existence. According to Richards(2005) the development of the curriculum starts with the notion of syllabus design. A syllabus can be described as the specification of the content of a course of institution and lists what will be taught and tested." Richard (2005) also suggests that curriculum development in language teaching began in late 1960s; however, issues of syllabus design emerged as a major factor in language teaching much earlier. There has been a lot of changes in the approaches to language teaching and they have affected the syllabus design. Many methods have been used in the last 100 years in pursuit of the best method. The following chronology shows the dominant methods in particular periods:

Grammar translation method (1800-1900)

Direct Method (1980-1930)

Structural Method( 1930-1960)

Reading Method(1920-1950)

Audio-lingual Method(1950-1970)

Communicative Approach (1970-present)

As it can be clear from the chronology, there have been great changes in the view of teaching techniques and approaches, as a result of this, curricula have also been affected by this situation. Modern education places great value on the development of the learners' humanistic qualities and "humanistic education is based on the belief that learners should have a say in what they should be learning and how they should learn it, and reflects the notion that education should be concerned with the development of autonomy in the learner" (Nunan, 1988:20). This shows the change in perspective of language learners from just information takers to the learners searching for information. All these make learner autonomy a widely accepted area that needs special attention. In addition, developing from moves towards communicative language teaching, recent innovations in classroom practice have emphasized the value of collaborative learning, learner-centeredness, and autonomy and shared decision-making in the classroom. These ideas can be explained with one sentence "One corollary of learner-centeredness is that individualization will assume greater importance, as will the recognition that the autonomy of the learner is our ultimate goal"(Brookes & Grundy, 1988:1).

### **2.8.1.Materials and Learner Autonomy**

Teaching materials are crucial factors in language learning. According to Richards (2005),materials provide ideas on how to plan and teach lessons. These materials may take the form of printed materials such as books, workbooks, worksheets or readers and non-print materials such as cassette or audio materials, videos, or computer-based material; materials that comprise both print and non-print sources such as self-access materials and materials on the internet.

Language materials have many roles in learning process and Cunningsworth(1995, as cited in Richards, 2005) summarizes the roles of materials (particularly textbooks) in language teaching as,

- A resource for presentation materials (spoken and written).
- A source of activities for learner practice and communicative interaction.
- A reference source for learners on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and so on.

- A source of stimulation and ideas for classroom activities.
- A syllabus (where they reflect learning objectives that have really been determined).
- A support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence.

As it can be clear from Cunningsworth's ideas, there are many benefits of materials used in lessons. However, it is undeniable that in different terms all these materials go into changes. That is, there is a dominant mode of thinking in each decade. All these have also great effect in the standpoint of materials, too.

Gardner and Miller (1999) clarify that 1970s are best remembered for the interest in functional/notional ideas. There was a shift from structure based syllabus to communicative ones. With the communicative ideas becoming popular, learner-centeredness also comes to light, even it has become our ultimate goal. With difference in the ideas of the term, changes in the materials were inevitable.

All these make us ponder over the materials used in language learning classes or their effect on the self-directed learning. Dickinson (1987) makes it clear that there are three sources of materials for self instruction: authentic texts used directly by the learner, commercially available courses and other materials used after their changes or adaptation. The reasons why they are valid materials for the promotion of learner autonomy in a language learning context are that authentic texts not only enable the learners to be able to cover the realistic features of that language and make the learners be involved in this setting but also help learners to acquire easily whatever they are in need of without obstacles.

The materials which will be used in the autonomous classroom atmosphere is of great importance due to the fact that by the help of these materials students can develop a capacity for identifying what kind of materials are effective in reaching their learning goals more properly. All these have brought the discussion of finding the most effective material that can foster learner autonomy.

Lee (1996) puts emphasis on the criteria which effective self-access learning materials have to meet. According to Lee, firstly, they must be highly interesting and motivating. Secondly, they have to be well-structured, systematic and accompanied with clear and simple instructions. Thirdly, they should be good-quality materials chosen or designed by teachers. Lastly, they ought to include the qualities of learning materials.

Little(1990) also defends these ideas and he adds that autonomous learners must be able to range freely in their choice of learning materials and tasks. This means that there is a consensus among the defenders of autonomous learning about language learning materials. Little (1991) also pinpoints the individual needs and interest of the learners. He believes that students should be encouraged to use learning materials according to their needs and they should be provided with a wide range of materials ranging from written and audio-visual data, reference books, including dictionaries and grammars, newspapers and magazines to learner-designed material.

In other words, the main objective is selecting the right material which can foster the autonomy of the learner. Dam(1995) explains this like that “ The primary concern for both teachers and learners is to select materials that can give rise to learners’ individual processes. This requires mutual approval of the teachers and the students while selecting materials in the classroom.

## **2.9.Textbooks in ELT and learner autonomy**

Fenner(2000) suggests that textbooks are collections of the texts and tasks structured by the author in a way he considers best for teaching and learning a foreign language and in addition, most textbooks define the progression of such learning. They are best seen as a resource in achieving aims and objectives that have already been set concerning learner needs (Cunningsworth, 1995). They are really important in conveying the information to the learners. Cunningsworth (1995) also describes a textbook as a resource in presenting the material, a source for learners to practice and do the activities. That is, they give the learners the chance of self-study.

Richards(2001) states that textbooks act as a key component in most language programs. They give the learners necessary input and language practice.

In his book, Grant(1990) shows what teachers think about textbooks. Most teachers believe that they can follow what is to be taught and in which order to be taught and learned. In these terms, they can guide the teachers in a good way.

Ur (1996) also puts forward that a textbook provides a clear framework. It demonstrates the teacher and the students what is coming next and where they are going. What is more , Ur(1996) concludes that a textbook can provide the learner with

some degree of autonomy. She suggests that a learner without a textbook becomes more teacher-dependent. This subject makes us think about learner autonomy and its relationship with textbooks with a different point of view.

It is an undeniable fact that learners are different and they should be seen as individuals and it shouldn't be forgotten that they have different needs and backgrounds. Therefore, they will react differently to the knowledge presented to them either by teachers or textbooks. All these cause the question of what the role of textbook in such a learning situation can be. There are different and crucial views that show the importance of textbooks in English teaching environment. As it can also be seen in the earlier parts, autonomy is a term based on the idea that all learning is individual. Holec's definition of autonomy leads us to think about learning rather than teaching. Textbooks are good tools that provide students with effective conditions for learning but how effective they are in making the learner autonomous is a popular subject nowadays.

Fenner(2000) believes that certain aspects of learner autonomy can be fostered with textbook as a useful tool. This means that we can promote learner autonomy by adhering to certain principles in texts and tasks. By the help of these, we can see the change of focus from teaching to learning that is from teacher to students.

Bruner(1994) also suggests that even in traditional school contexts, textbooks can function as good tool in providing guidelines for students or scaffolding. He uses the term "scaffolding" while mentioning the support given by the adults to the learners. This is about the autonomy learners gain during learning process. He talks about a gradual removal of the supporting in order to make the learner get control over their own learning.

Fenner (2000) not only discusses the relationship between autonomy and textbooks but also in what ways they can be useful. He emphasizes that autonomy with the help of course book can be achieved through tasks and exercises. He believes that when the learner is given the opportunity to take charge of the learning situation, all the material provided by the textbook is equally important because he thinks that in an autonomous learning environment the learner may take charge of all kinds of material and use it to further his own learning. All these show that there must be a room for the individual and group of learners. How the authors can achieve this goal is also

explained by Fenner (2000). He gives some examples of what he sees as some of the options of the learners such as choice of subject matter, choice of different types of texts, choice of levels, choice of approaches to a text, choice of tasks, choice of approach to tasks and choice of progression. He also suggests that there is no need for all learners in a group to concentrate on the same text at the same time. If there is a wish for learners of diverse ability to concentrate on a particular content, it can be the task of the author to provide for this ability. That is, the learner can see the adapted or simplified versions of texts. Then, the learners can choose which version they want to read. It is admitted that with regard to learners 'choice of content, there is a limited number of options but there should be sufficient material for the learner to choose both subject matter and genres. This will help learners go beyond the textbook and search more materials.

Tasks in textbooks can also encourage diversification and personalization of the students. Different tasks mean that learners will become more aware of different methods and techniques that can further their language learning. What is more, Fenner (2000) suggests that learners should be provided with sufficient scope for personal interpretation by open-ended tasks. By this way, learners can develop an individual awareness of learning. He also puts forward that authentic texts in textbooks are also important parts for the textbooks to promote autonomous learning. These texts can be difficult and give the learners chance of interacting with the text and thinking differently about it. Trebbi(1996) says that with the help of authentic texts teachers don't try to transfer knowledge, but make their own knowledge available to the learners and they assist the students in various learning projects.

Little (1991) believes that the learner generates his own purpose for learning; in pursuit of those purposes he determines not only the content of learning but the way in which the learning will take place. This is in relation with what Holec calls "learner autonomy";that is, giving the learner choices. It can be understood from these lines that learners' needs and experiences become more and more important and they lead the learners' choice. Fenner (2000) also adds that a textbook can open up a variety of new ways to approach the learning material. That is, he suggests that if the textbooks contain

a rich variety of methods in the form of suggestions and options, the learner will be able to choose more and be autonomous while learning something.

As it can be clear from the subjects before, autonomous learning develops awareness of language and learning. Not only awareness of language and learning but also reflection is an important point for an autonomous learner. Dam (1996) explains this by saying that “It is essential that an autonomous learner is stimulated to evolve an awareness of the aims and processes of learning and capable of critical reflection”. That is, learners can evaluate and criticize themselves.

Textbooks doubtlessly play an important role in language teaching and provide a useful resource for both teachers and learners. The role of the textbook in the language classroom is undeniable. Textbooks are invaluable tools that can let the students be autonomous language learners. In order to achieve this goal, they should have certain qualities and textbook authors should give more space to the learner to be free and to interact with each other while learning.

## **2.10. Materials evaluation for learner autonomy**

Evaluation has an important role in education and it is important not only for the teachers but also for the students. It can inform the teacher about the future ongoing of the classroom practice, the management of learning tasks and lastly planning of the courses. Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1994) suggest that evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. They believe in the necessity of the evaluation and they state that there is a need to evaluate language teaching methods, materials and effectiveness as teachers and also how materials are presented to the learners, the types of learning tasks used and the way the courses are designed.

Tomlinson (1998) defines materials evaluation as the systematic judgment of the value of materials in relation to the aims of the materials and the learners who are using them. In addition, he suggests that evaluation can be pre-use focusing on predictions of potential value. It can also be while-use which focuses on awareness and description of what the learners are doing with the materials and it can be after-use in order to find out what happened as a result of using the instructional materials.

Ellis (1997) talks about two types of materials evaluation, namely, predictive evaluation and retrospective evaluation. A predictive evaluation is designed to make a decision regarding what materials to use. In this type of evaluation teachers determine which materials are best suited to their purposes by using checklists and guidelines. He also suggests that there are two principles ways in which teachers can carry out predictive evaluation. Teachers can either rely on the evaluations carried out by the expert reviewers or carry out their own predictive evaluations by making use of various checklists and guidelines available in the literature. After the materials have been used, in order to decide on whether the materials have worked out for them another evaluation can be performed. This type of evaluation is called retrospective evaluation.

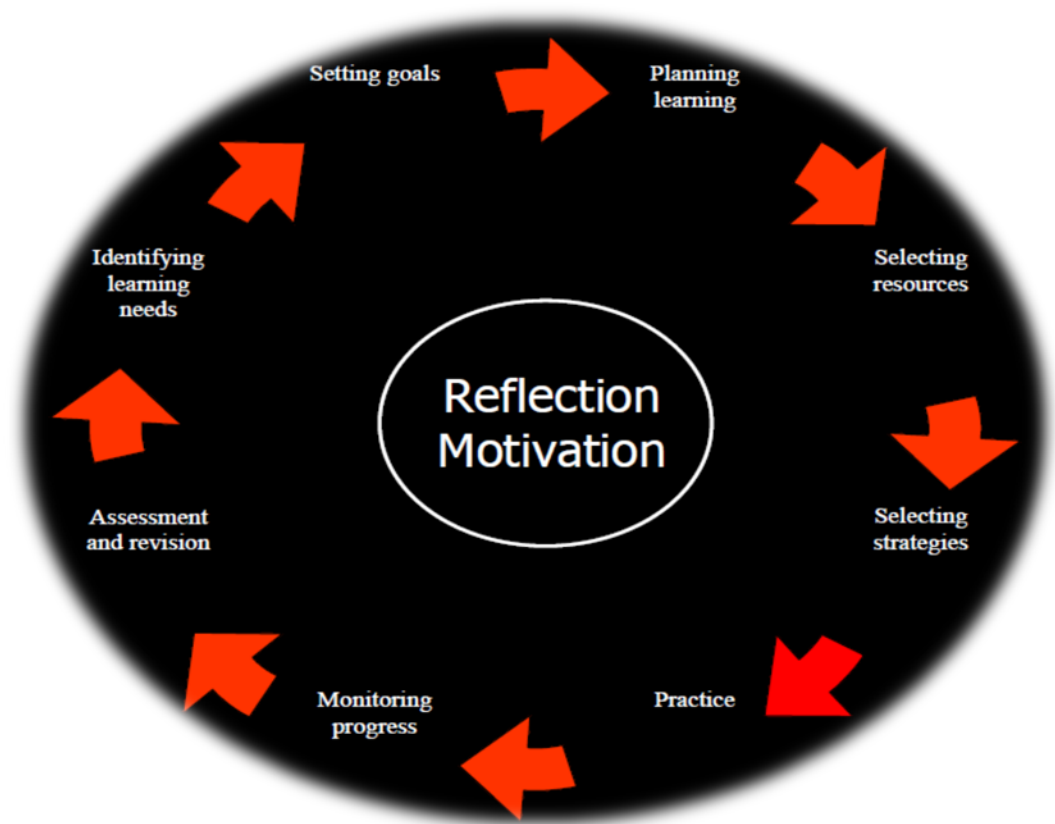
According to Cunningsworth (1995) there are two types of evaluation. He suggest that evaluation can take place in three stages : before a course book is used, during its use and after use depending on the purposes for which the evaluation is being undertaken. If future or potential performance of the course book is important, pre-use evaluation can be done. If the evaluation which is carried out while the material is in-use, it is called in-use evaluation. post- use evaluation provides retrospective assessment of a coursebook's performance as mentioned in Ellis (1997).

Textbooks and selection of them are one of the most important things for teachers because they can help the teachers shape the content and nature of teaching.

“The selection process can be greatly facilitated by the use of systematic *materials evaluation procedures* which help ensure that materials are consistent with the needs and interests of the learners they are intended to serve, as well as being in harmony with institutional ideologies on the nature of language and learning.” (Nunan 1991: 209)

The same things are valid while evaluating course books for learner autonomy. Balcikanli and Reinders (2011) point out that there are almost no previous studies that have paid particular attention to the place of autonomy in textbooks. They also suggest that evaluating textbooks for learner autonomy can be done at each of these three stages mentioned before. What is more, Reinders (2010) developed a framework

in order to find out if, and if so, how textbooks provide information and practice in the areas of whether textbooks materials give students opportunities to make their own choices about and how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus for learning styles and strategies and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness building. It shows eight stages in self-directed learning process. As these stages form a cycle that repeats and builds on itself, this process is iterative.



**Figure 2: Iterative self-directed learning process**

These stages are an expansion and adaptation of five-step model developed by Knowles(1975). His five-step model of self-directed learning consists of:

1. Diagnosing learning needs
2. Formulating learning goals
3. Identifying human and material resources for learning

4. Choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategy
5. Evaluation learning outcome (Merriam and Caffarella, 1991: 46)

Reinders (2010) describes his stages as key skills learners need to be able to self-direct their learning. The stages are shown below in the Table 1.

**Table 1**

**The eight stages in the self-directed process**

| LEARNING STAGE                       | TEACHER-DIRECTED                                                    | LEARNER DIRECTED                                        |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Identifying Needs</b>             | Placement tests, teacher feedback.                                  | Learner experiences/ difficulties in using the language |
| <b>Setting Goals</b>                 | Determined by the course, relatively fixed.                         | Contextually determined, relatively flexible.           |
| <b>Planning Learning</b>             | Determined by the teacher.<br>Somewhat flexible                     | Contextually determined.<br>Very flexible               |
| <b>Selecting resources</b>           | Provided by teacher.                                                | Self-selection by learners                              |
| <b>Selecting learning strategies</b> | Teacher models and instructions.                                    | Self-selection by learners.                             |
| <b>Practice</b>                      | Exercises and activities provided by teacher                        | Implementation (language use) and experimentation       |
| <b>Monitoring progress</b>           | Regular classroom feedback and<br>comments on assignments and tasks | Self-monitoring, peer-feedback                          |
| <b>Assessment and revision</b>       | Tests, curriculum changes                                           | Self-assessment, reflection                             |

It is crucial that self-directed learning and learner autonomy are not interchangeable terms. Winch (2006) points out that autonomy, for example, includes a more political aspect relating to an individual's freedom to make their own choices about their education, as well as a more philosophical view relating to "the ability for individuals to choose and follow their own conception of a life that they deem to be suitable for themselves. These elements of autonomy are really important but they are less easily

identifiable from materials . Therefore, the framework is adapted to focus on the more practical skills involved in the development of autonomy.

Balcikanli and Reinders( 2011) suggest that by emphasizing the observable skills, a mechanical view of learner autonomy can be gained. By taking these stages into consideration, textbooks can be evaluated in terms of learner autonomy.

### **2.11.Some Studies on textbooks and learner Autonomy**

There are many studies done on textbooks; however, each of them has different purposes. Kesen(2010) suggests that as many other countries where English is taught as a foreign language, language textbook evaluation has been important component of research in the field of foreign language teaching and most of the studies have focused on the contribution of the textbooks on teaching and learning.

Ayman(1997) made a materials evaluation study. This evaluation was for the in-house textbook in relation to the perceptions of instructors and students on overall effectiveness of the textbook. The aim was to see how the students and instructors evaluate a textbook which was based on English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Kanik (2002) also carried out a materials evaluation study .The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of in-house ESP reading materials for English for Law Courses at the English Language School of Baskent University. The results of evaluations showed that the materials were effective with regard to the majority of the criteria developed, namely, the development of the reading skills, and suitability of content, selection and organization of tasks/activities, level clarity of instructions and physical appearance of the materials. However, evaluation also indicated that the materials failed to consider the learning style differences and were found weak in the development of learner autonomy.

Yakhontova (2001) evaluated an EAP textbook called Academic Writing for Graduate Students by Swales and Feak in the Ukrainian University classroom. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the intellectual and emotional reactions of the students toward a new kind of textbook by the help of a questionnaire. Result of the

study showed how certain cultural and historical characteristics of the Ukrainian intellectual context affected learner's answers to the textbook.

Hong Xu (2004) carried out an evaluation study and the aim of the study was to develop a list of criteria for selecting ESL textbooks for high school students in Alberta, Canada and to identify issues that local ESL teachers face in textbook use. There were four certain results. Firstly, it was clear that there was a need for detailed textbook evaluation tool, secondly it promoted the awareness of selecting ESL textbooks. Third result was that many more questions needed to be asked and answered before matters surrounding textbook use could be understood. Lastly, such qualities as use of standard English and quality of language used in the textbook and good editing, and attractive design and layout were found important by the teachers.

Another study was done by Arıkan(2008). He tried to find out what kind of topics was included in fifteen EFL textbooks used in Turkey. He employed not only quantitative but also qualitative techniques and he came up with the result that the topics in the textbooks didn't reflect real life. In 2009, Arıkan also collected the opinions of the future teachers of English in order to find to what happened in Turkish EFL classes. He used qualitative research design and analyzed reports made by 12 volunteering practicum students. The result was that they were content with the quality of the textbooks but the problem was associated with the teachers using them.

Kesen (2010) did a research and investigated EFL learners' perceptions about the concept of foreign language course books and she wanted them to explain their opinions by means of metaphors. Data were analyzed by using the content analysis and this study revealed that for most of the learners, language course books are perceived as a planet, foreign country, secret garden, and space, which indicates uncertainty and enigma experienced by the learners.

As it can be clear from the studies, textbook evaluation in foreign language education in Turkey was studied by many researchers (Kayapınar, 2009; Tekir and Arıkan, 2007; Arıkan, 2004, Onay, 1998; Aydemir, 2002; Erentürk, 1999, Alptekin, 1993).

Nevertheless, Reinder and Balcıkanlı(2011) suggest that none of those, to the best of their knowledge, paid a particular attention to the place of autonomy in textbooks. However, they suggest that there are, however, studies that have investigated how self-access materials (i.e. materials used in a self-access centre by students learning

independently), and the extent to which they support the development of learner autonomy.

Reinders & Lewis (2005, 2006) investigated 25 randomly selected materials. They were advertised as 'suitable for self-access', from their University's self-access centre. An evaluative framework was applied to the self-study materials. They came up with the result that many of the materials did not include those elements needed for successful self-study.

Moreover, another study about autonomy belonged to Fenner (2000) His study was about the importance of identifying whether textbook materials give students opportunities to make their own choices about what or how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus on learning styles and strategies, and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness-building.

In this regard, in order to investigate if, and if so, how textbooks books provide information and practice in the areas of whether textbook materials give students opportunities to make their own choices about what or how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus on learning styles and strategies, and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness-building, Reinders and Balcikanli(2011) drew on a framework for self-directed learning developed by one of the authors (Reinders, 2010). They investigated five popular textbooks used in schools by using the framework and they tried to find out whether the textbooks provided information about and practice for self directed learning. And they found that these books didn't explicitly encourage learner autonomy.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. Presentation**

This chapter includes the basic information on research design, the data collection instruments and procedure along with the details on the analysis of the data. Information gathered about the textbook evaluation through course book evaluation is also given in this part.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The aspect of the data analysis of the study was course book evaluation. Various approaches to research are available for researchers to design the most effective research models that cater for their needs. However, this study was conducted using content analysis method, which is within qualitative research paradigm. It is important to give a definition of content analysis here. Krippendorff(1980) defines it as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contents of their use. He also adds that when applying content analysis, a researcher can make inference and identify specific characteristics of messages. Under which circumstances and for what it can be used is the other subject to be dealt with. Neuman(1994) explains this by saying that some of the objectives of content analysis are to analyze information, or content, which may be any document written or oral. That is, content analysis can be applied to reading passages, grammar points, vocabulary and also the semantic aspect of a text.

In the light of these explanations, in this study, it is important to explain why it is necessary to evaluate the textbooks for seventh grade learners in terms of autonomy by using content analysis method. It is because analysis of content of textbooks can provide one source of data to help teachers to select textbooks for the learners which can be useful for making them autonomous. What is more, Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005)

pinpoint that “concepts and themes that aren’t noticeable using descriptive approach may be seen by using content analysis.

Another important point in the design of this study is to determine in which stage this evaluation process takes place. As it can be clear from the earlier parts of the study, evaluating language teaching materials can take place at different stages. According to Cunningsworth (1995) , evaluation can take place in three stages: before a course book is used, during its use and after its use depending on the purposes for which the evaluation is being undertaken. If future or potential performance of the course book is important, pre-use evaluation can be done. If the evaluation which is carried out while the material is in-use, it is called in-use evaluation. Post- use evaluation provides retrospective assessment of a course book’s performance as mentioned in Ellis (1997). He also talks about two types of materials evaluation, namely, predictive evaluation and retrospective evaluation. A predictive evaluation is designed to make a decision regarding what materials to use. He points out that predictive evaluation aims to determine appropriateness for a specific context.

Textbook evaluation for learner autonomy can be done in each of these three stages, but this study is limited by predictive evaluation because the aim is to determine the appropriateness for a specific context, which in this study means the extent to which the textbooks attempt to provide information about, and practice in, skills for autonomous language learning.

This study has also a qualitative research design. According to Dornyei(2007) qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods. The qualitative research design of this study has various purposes. In this study qualitative data are expected to produce trustworthy data on whether the textbooks allow the learners to identify their needs, set their goals, plan their learning, select resources, select learning strategies, do practice, monitor their own progress and lastly assess and revise their learning.

### **3.2. Universe and Samples**

The ever increasing number of textbooks on the market makes formulating the right choice in textbook difficult(Cunningsworth, 1995; Green, 1926).However, it is a fact that textbooks are indispensable part of the lesson and they play a crucial role in the classes. Green (1926) and Mukundan (2007) suggest that the quality of a textbook

might be so important that it can determine the success or failure of an ELT course. In the view of these thoughts, it is very crucial to evaluate textbooks in order to ensure they can facilitate the attainment of our teaching objectives.

As it can be clear from the information given above, choice of textbooks is really important, so this study is about the evaluation of textbooks in terms of learner autonomy by using a framework in primary schools which consist of fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade learners. There were thirty books for all these levels (MEB, 2010). However, analyzing all of them wouldn't be possible, so textbooks used for the last five years for 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners were chosen as sample. In order to be able to get reliable information and compare the books, the books for the same grade, namely 7<sup>th</sup> grade, were chosen as subjects. There are four books that have been used for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners for the last five years. All of them were included in the study. Textbooks for 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners refer to A2.1. according to Common European Framework (CEF). Purposive sampling is used in this study because there is a deliberate selection of sample units, which is done through some predetermined criteria.

It was important to evaluate these books used in public schools of Ministry of National Education (MONE) because these books have been used for the last five years in 7<sup>th</sup> grades of public schools and they are indispensable parts of the lessons throughout the year. Weekly schedules are programmed mostly according to the course books in question, which makes them a core element of learning English in these public schools. Moreover, as mentioned before, although learner autonomy has been one of the most disputed and popular subject, there are almost no studies that combine textbook evaluation and learner autonomy. This subject shouldn't be ignored by textbook writers.

### **3.3. Data Collection Techniques**

This study involves course book evaluation and there are four books to be evaluated. In order to investigate, if and if so, how the books provide information about learner autonomy, a frame work developed by Reinders(2010) was used. That is, ready-made framework is used in this study, which encourages the reliability of the study.

This framework includes eight stages of self-directed learning process. These stages are iterative. The frame work was chosen for this study because it includes the stages of self-directed learning. As mentioned before, although the terms self-directed

learning and learner autonomy aren't interchangeable, the element of learner autonomy is hardly identifiable from materials and this is beyond the scope of this study. Moreover, these stages are an expansion and adaptation of five-step model developed by Knowles(1975). His five-step model of self-directed learning consists of:

1. Diagnosing learning needs
2. Formulating learning goals
3. Identifying human and material resources for learning
4. Choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategy
5. Evaluation learning outcome (Merriam and Caffarella, 199: 46)

The framework included learning stages on the left and the number books in which each of learning stages was included is shown in the middle. Final column shows the number of the books that gave information about the learning stage and the number of the books which included activities for students to put into practice.

The stages in the framework will be discussed below. The first stage in the framework is "identifying needs". It is clear from the studies done up to now. Barcelos (2008) says that many learners have little idea of their learning needs. That is, they even don't know their learning needs. Reinders(2010:46) criticizes the classroom atmosphere by saying that in many class learners are simply given scores that indicate their general levels, but not always individualized profiles of their strengths and weaknesses, including their learning needs. The framework will help analyze whether the textbooks identify learner needs.

"Setting goals" is the second stage of the framework. It is important to note that setting goals is as crucial as needs analysis to help students to be autonomous. Nunan(1999) explains this situation by saying that 'learners who have reached a point where they are able to define their own goals and create their own learning opportunities have, by definition, become autonomous. What is more Reinders(2010) says that the only way to move toward a learner-centeredness, then, is for the students to have some say over what they are taught. With this part of the framework, whether the textbooks allow the learners to set their goals will be.

The third stage is planning learning. Reinders(2010) offers that setting goals and planning learning are different sides of the same coin and he goes on by saying that

one's goals help to specify one's destination, planning is like finding the best road to get it. Moreover, he suggests that some classrooms prescribe the 'what', 'when' and 'how' of the learners' actions. This stage will determine whether the selected textbook encourage learners to plan their learning.

The fourth stage involves "selecting resources". This is generally done by the teachers; however, in order to help students to gain autonomy, some experiments have been done by many (Aston, 1993; Benson, 1994). Textbooks will be analyzed in terms of giving students the necessary room for selecting resources.

The fifth stage of the framework is "selecting learning strategies". Reinders (2010) proposes many learners are content to leave the teacher to decide how activities are to be completed, but will still need to develop the ability to use a wide range of strategies and to choose strategies appropriate to the task, if they are to take full responsibility for their learning. This stage will determine whether the selected textbooks give the students the chance of selecting learning strategies.

The sixth stage of the framework is "practice". In general sense, teachers are expected to provide the practice about what has been learned. Materials used in the classrooms should also give chance to the learners. Reinders(2010) suggests that many of these materials do not offer students any choice in which aspect of the new knowledge they have learned they will practise. Nor does it give them any choice in how they will use or implement their new knowledge. As it is important for the learners to do practice, this part will evaluate the textbooks in terms of giving the opportunity to the learners about this subject.

The seventh stage of the framework is "monitoring progress". Reinders (2010) suggests that for the development of autonomy learner will need to develop the ability to monitor their own progress and revise their learning plans accordingly. He also gives an example of learning diaries that can be useful in this process. This stage is also important for the textbooks used in the classes also. They should encourage students to record their successes and identify the reasons for them. This stage will look for this feature of the textbooks.

The last stage of the framework is "assessment and revision". This part is about letting students assess their own learning by using some alternative assessment such as portfolios. This framework developed by Reinders(2010) lastly evaluates the books in terms of making learners assess and revise what they have learned.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Four English textbooks for 7th grade learners were identified in this study. The criteria for the inclusion were that the books teach English to the students in seventh grade and have been used by the public school for five years. Selecting the books for the same level of the textbooks makes the study more reliable because the same levels of books can give the opportunity to compare them. It is important to note that the schedules are programmed mostly according to these course books in question. This makes them core elements of the lessons for 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners. All of them consist of 16 units and they have the same titles in the contents page, but they have different publishers and items in them. The books selected are in the Table 2 below.

**Table 2**

*The books selected for the study*

| Name of the books | Grade of the learners | Publisher |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Spot on English   | 7                     | MEB       |
| A step to English | 7                     | Bilge     |
| Spring            | 7                     | Özgün     |
| Texture           | 7                     | Doku      |

The names of the books, the level of the students and the name of the publishers can be seen in the table. As can be seen in the table, the level of the books is the same. This will make the evaluation process more reliable as it gives the opportunity to compare the same levels with the same criteria.

This study produced qualitative data through an evaluative framework. The framework has eight stages in order to evaluate four course books of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. Each item of the framework is conducted on each unit of four books in detail. The

evaluation was made unit by unit, for it would give the opportunity to look into each unit in minute detail and it would be much more practical than an evaluation of the book with a general look. In order to see whether these books provide information or practice for each stage, these books were analyzed by taking notes and highlighting some parts in the books after each unit was scrutinized. Moreover, guidance from the experts in this area was also used to make this study more reliable.

Data collected through framework were transcribed. What is more, by the help of the framework, content of the textbooks was analyzed and grouped according to eight criteria used in this study for evaluation of these books.

Moreover, a distinction was made between the cases where the books provided information about self-directed learning and where they provided opportunities to put them into practice. After evaluating each unit of each book, if a book just mentioned the importance of learning strategies but didn't give any opportunities for controlled practice, this would be considered as an example of giving "information" only. If students were given the chance to practice these strategies by the help of different activities, this would be categorized as "practice". If the items in the framework were included, ticks (✓) can be seen near them. If they weren't included crosses (X) can be put.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.0.Introduction**

This section of the study provides the analysis of the research carried out. After the evaluation of the textbooks, results are revealed and discussed step by step. This section is outlined on the basis of research questions of the study, so bringing them back to foreground seems to be a proof of sound judgment. The first question in mind is how the textbooks used in the seventh grade of public schools provide information and practice in the areas of whether materials give students opportunities for reflection and awareness building.

As it can be clear from the other parts of this study, textbooks are indispensable parts of language learning classrooms and this makes the textbooks the most likely way in which learners will come into contact with ideas about autonomy. Fenner(2000:78) suggests that certain aspects of learner autonomy can be promoted with the textbook as a useful tool.

This study analyzed four textbooks used for seventh grade learners at state schools in Turkey for autonomy. These books have been used for the last five years. In this part, each unit of the books was analyzed and whether they provided practice and information about these stages in self-directed learning was found. The steps in self-directed learning stages gave the chance of seeing whether the textbooks used for seventh grade learners at state schools allow learners to identify their needs, set their goals, plan learning, select resources and learning strategies, do practice, monitor progress and make assessment and revision.

Table 3

*The Names of the Units and Topics in the books evaluated*

| Unit Number | Unit names              | Topic                      |
|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1           | Interesting beliefs     | Horoscopes                 |
| 2           | Tourist attractions     | Places to visit            |
| 3           | Our natural heritage    | Preserving our environment |
| 4           | Computer                | Surfing on the net         |
| 5           | Fashion                 | Technology                 |
| 6           | TV programmes           | Series                     |
| 7           | Old Days                | Family Album               |
| 8           | Inventors and explorers | Inventions and Discoveries |
| 9           | Tales and Legends       | Folk Tales                 |
| 10          | Amazing History         | Hard to believe            |
| 11          | Skills                  | Personal Skills            |
| 12          | Changing Life Styles    | Social Life                |
| 13          | Inner World             | Emotions and Thoughts      |
| 14          | Ecology                 | Fauna                      |
| 15          | Modern Medicine         | Miracles                   |
| 16          | Inner World             | Emotions and Thoughts      |

This study aimed to investigate how textbooks used for seventh grade learners provide information and practice in the areas of whether textbook materials give students opportunities to make their own choices about what or how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus on learning styles and strategies, and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness-building with a framework for self-directed learning developed by one of the authors (Reinders, 2010). A summary of the study can be seen in the table 3. As it can be clear there are no evidences of the steps in self directed learning.

Table 4

*Self-Directed Learning Stages in Textbooks Evaluated*

| LEARNING STAGE                       | INCLUDED? | INFORMATION OR<br>ACTIVITY? |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Identifying Needs</b>             | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Setting Goals</b>                 | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Planning Learning</b>             | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Selecting resources</b>           | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Selecting learning strategies</b> | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Practice</b>                      | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Monitoring progress</b>           | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |
| <b>Assessment and revision</b>       | <b>X</b>  | <b>X</b>                    |

#### **4.1. Identifying needs**

The first question of the framework is about identifying needs of the students. With this stage of the framework, whether textbooks allow learners to identify their needs or not can be seen. Reinders(2010) explains that it is surprising how often learners have no clear idea of language needs and the discrepancies that exist between what learners think they need and where their actual weaknesses lie. As it can be also be seen in the earlier parts of this study, in traditional classes which are teacher-directed, different techniques such as placement tests, teacher feedback are used for identifying the needs of the learners. However, such criteria as learners' experiences and difficulties in using language became important in learner-directed classes. Textbooks used in English lessons can focus on these kinds of things. That is , they can allow the learners to think about their needs. This type of needs analysis helps students identify where they are in terms of their knowledge, skills and competencies, and how they can go further. "Identifying needs" is the first step in self-directed learning, so textbooks were evaluated by considering this stage firstly.

The first book evaluated is "Spot On" for 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners of state schools. As mentioned before, the book has been used in some state schools for the last five years. This book was scrutinized unit by unit in order to make the study more effective. However, in this book it can be seen clearly that there aren't any parts for the students to identify their needs. Neither does the book have practice nor does it mention this subject. This situation shows that the author of the book doesn't give room for the students to identify their needs. This makes the language learning process teacher-centered because the teacher will inform the learners about their weaknesses and strengths by using placement tests or by giving feedback to them.

The second book to be evaluated for allowing learners to identify their needs is "A Step to English" for seventh grade learners. This book has also sixteen units and the names of the units are the same with "Spot on English". What is more, they cover the same topics. However, the units of this book start with some questions. For example, the first unit consists of such questions:

"Do you believe in fortune telling?"

“Do you read horoscope parts in newspapers? Why or why not?”

“Do you know star signs? What are they?”

In unit thirteen named “Technology”, the questions at the beginning of the unit are like these:

“What is technology for you?”

“What are the most recent technological items in your house?”

“What are the useful technological inventions?”

These questions prepare learners for the upcoming subjects and make them think about how knowledgeable they are about the subject. They lead the students to ponder over their experiences and their background knowledge becomes more important. However, it is clear that these questions are for “warming up” the learners rather than for identifying the needs of the learners. In other parts of the units there aren’t any activities or practices for identifying needs.

Another book that is used in the seventh grades of public school is “Spring” for seventh grade learners. In this book, there are also sixteen units and the names of the units are also the same with the other books evaluated. In Spring, all units were analyzed in order to find whether it allows the learners to identify their needs. However, there isn’t any information about it. In the units of the book, there are some reading passages and questions about them. Furthermore, listening, speaking and writing parts can also be seen. However, all these parts don’t encourage learners to know about learner autonomy. As an example, unit eleven “Personal skills” starts with a reading part and it goes on with true-false questions. In writing part, students are expected to look at the pictures and write sentences about children’s abilities in the photos. There are other reading activities and there is a puzzle. At the end of the unit, the task is to paste a photo of themselves showing one of their abilities and to write a sentence about this photo. In fact, the activities don’t help themselves to find out their needs. Especially, the “personal skills” unit could help learners to discover their skills and think about their needs. By this way, they could improve themselves in terms of their skills. Another example is unit fourteen. The name of the unit is “Ecology”. It starts

with a reading passage about blue whales and this is followed by some activities on it. In listening section of the unit, students are expected to listen to the text and fill in the missing information. After these activities, writing part wants learners to complete a chart about blue whales and African elephants. In speaking part, students look at some pictures and answer questions about them. The unit ends with drawing a poster about animals. All units in this book have the same style.

After this, there is a matching activity that wants learners to find who invented what. A reading passage follows this activity and this is followed by a listening and writing part both of which are also about inventions. As it can be understood from the types of the activities there is no room for learners to identify their needs. All information and activities were prepared for them beforehand and they don't lead them to think about their needs.

The last book evaluated for identifying needs of the learners is "Texture". This book also doesn't allow learners to identify their needs of learning. It doesn't highlight skills, knowledge or competencies that need developing. This book only consists of activities based on four skills. There aren't any parts in which students have difficulty in using the language. Some of the units will be taken into account in order to make this situation clear. Unit three, "Our Natural Heritage" starts with a reading passage about water. There are some activities about the passage. After these activities, there is a reading and listening part. In this part, students listen to the news and answer questions. Then, they are expected to write some suggestions for environmental problems by using different patterns. The unit ends with a task which requires learners to design an environmentally friendly means of transport and write its characteristics. Another unit that can be given as an example is the unit eight "Inventors and Explorers" It starts with a speaking part. After this, there is a matching activity that wants learners to find who invented what. A reading passage follows this activity. This is followed by reading and writing parts both of which are also about inventions. As it can be understood from the types of the activities, there is no room for them to identify their needs. All information and activities were prepared for them beforehand and they don't lead them to think about their needs. They just provide activities but they don't help learners to identify clearly what they wish to achieve. The teacher is thought to be the dispenser of the

knowledge and the activities support this idea. It provides neither information about identifying needs, nor the practice for allowing this.

As a result, all these books don't give the students opportunities to identify their needs and they don't have activities that can give learners the chance of identifying what skills or knowledge they already have. This situation creates a classroom environment in which teacher is responsible for making learners aware of their needs. Moreover, this means that student will be given scores that indicates their general levels. As they aren't given the opportunity to determine their needs by the help of the textbooks, they will not have an individualized profile of their strengths and weaknesses.

#### **4.2.Setting goals**

The process of setting goals gives learners the chance of choosing where they want to go at school and what they want to achieve. If they know what they want to achieve, they can improve their academic performance, increase their motivation to achieve, increase pride and satisfaction in performance, and improve their self-confidence. All these can show the importance of this stage of framework.

This second question of the study is whether the textbooks chosen allow learners to set their goals. In traditional language learning environment it is clear that goals are determined by the course and they are relatively fixed. However, this situation is contextually determined and relatively flexible in learner-directed classes.

The first book evaluated in terms of allowing learners to set their goals was "Spot on English" for seventh grade learners. The units were scrutinized in order to have a clear vision of this term. The first thing noticed at the very beginning of the units are "aims" parts. The goals for the students are predetermined by the book. In "Spot on English" there is a part named "aims". In the first unit, the aims are given below.

In this unit, you will be able to

- \*describe people, their personalities,
- \*learn the names of Sun Signs in English,
- \* make predictions.

This is the same with the other units of the books. All goals of the units are predetermined by the author of the book. The goals are not flexible. That is, this book doesn't give permission to the students to have a say over what they are taught. All the goals are predetermined and they are prescriptive.

Being able to set goals is an important part of autonomous learning. As it can be remembered from the earlier parts of this study, Holec(1980) defines learner autonomy as the ability to take charge of one's own learning. Moreover, he goes on to explain the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning. In his explanation he firstly uses the term "determining objectives" in autonomous learning. Holec's definition is also taken into consideration by Fenner(2000) who also focuses on the learners' choice. He suggests that it should be possible for the learner to use the material in the textbook in such a way that he can determine some of his own objectives; however, the book evaluated doesn't allow learners to do this. This entails for the students not being able to choose which texts and tasks will suit his purpose. There aren't any rooms for this choice in this book. Moreover, "Spot on" for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners doesn't provide texts and tasks that can be used in different ways for different purposes. However, the books evaluated don't allow learners to choose texts and tasks that are in connection with the aims. An example can be given by looking at the aims written in unit seven "Old Days" . One of the aims for the students in this unit is to be able to describe and narrate past events. After analysis of this unit, it became clear that the books didn't provide learners with choice of freedom in terms of tasks or texts and they are limited in application for different goals. In this unit, there is a table that helps learners while talking about past events. After this, it has another part called "Check Spot" in which students are expected to rewrite Bill Gates' biography by using some clues given. These kinds of activities don't let the students set their own goals with suitable tasks or texts.

The second book in this study is "A Step to English". This book doesn't give learners the chance of setting their own goals. What is more, it also doesn't give the aims at the very beginning of the unit like Spot on. It is also inefficient in providing information about setting goals and there aren't any opportunities for learners to put their goals into practice.

When units were evaluated, it could be clearly seen that each unit has reading, speaking, writing and listening parts. All parts have different kinds of activities. There are some open-ended questions, true-false question parts and at the end of each unit there is a task for the students. However, these tasks also don't encourage students to set their goals or at least to have a say over what is taught. What is expected from students is given in the "task" parts and students are thought to follow the steps and do the tasks. These pre-determined tasks don't lead them to search for new information and set new goals for learning. For example, the task in the first unit asks students to find out and make a list of the sun signs of family members and write some predictions about their family members.

Another example is in the eighth unit of the book, "Inventors and Explorers". The task requires students to think about the most important invention or discovery for them and stick its picture. Then, they are expected to write sentences about it and read them to the class. As it can be understood from these examples, students don't have a freedom of creating their goals. Such tasks don't give them this opportunity.

Third book evaluated is "Texture" for seventh grade learners. It doesn't allow learners to set goals, as well. It doesn't give information about goal setting process. Moreover, the activities, tasks and texts found in the book don't encourage learners for this. The units in the book are divided by considering four skills namely reading, writing, listening and speaking. The goals for the students are relatively fixed and they are determined by the course. Students just see the activities, tasks or texts in the unit. Even they don't know what will be taught in the next lesson. Teachers have some pre-determined goals for the students and they provide these predetermined goals to the learners. In unit 1, Interesting Beliefs, students are expected to provide these predetermined goals to the learners. They answer some questions, read some texts, fill in the blanks or talk about some pictures given. This is the same with the other units. However, there aren't any evidences for setting goals.

At the end of each unit, there is a task; however, these tasks also have predetermined and fixed goals. The task in the unit 1 requires students to find out and draw the sun signs of family members or best friends in chronological order. In the unit

3, the task for the students is to design an environment friendly means of public transport and write its characteristics and draw its picture. Another example is unit nine, “Tales and Legends”. In this unit, the task is to choose a famous tale or legend and to change the end of it. All these show that tasks also don’t provide opportunities for setting their own goals and for having a say over what is taught to them. All these mean that this book is written for teacher-directed classes in which the teacher is the omnipotent dispenser of the knowledge and even the goals are determined by the author of the book, and the teachers follow these goals. The goals aren’t determined by negotiation between teacher and students.

Spring is the last book evaluated for finding whether it allows learners to set their goals. The units in this book are divided by skills. The book doesn’t allow the learners to set their goals and determine objectives. There is not any evidence showing that goals are contextually determined or they are flexible. When the units are analyzed, this situation can be realized easily. The fifth unit named “Fashion” can be taken into consideration as an example. It starts with a reading passage in which there are some matching, true-false and multiple choice activities. In writing part, they are expected to complete the sentences, in speaking part they talk about their countries by using comparative and superlative forms of adjectives. Listening part consists of multiple choice questions and this unit goes on with a speaking activity. Students practice making and responding to suggestions. On the other pages of the unit, there are activities that help students to learn comparing and contrasting. At the end of the unit, there is a task which expects learners to design and advertise their own technological devices. The other units have the same construct with this unit. However, the problem is that this book doesn’t let students to have a say over what they are taught. The courses are very prescriptive. There is not a process that gives the learners freedom of choice. In fact, what is expected is that it helps the learners to set their goals. Furthermore, goals should be set by collaborate efforts of teachers and students. As it can be clear from the findings, none of the books supports the idea of letting students set their goals.

#### **4.3.Planning learning**

Setting goals and planning learning are different sides of the same coin (Reinders, 2010). One’s goals help to specify one’s destination while planning is like finding the

best road to get there. In teacher-directed classes, teachers generally prescribe “what”, “when” and “how” of the learners’ actions. Little (1991:7) suggests that the learner generates his own purpose for learning. In the pursuit of those purposes, he determines not only the content of learning but the way in which learning will take. That is, he plans his learning when he is given the opportunity to be autonomous.

In this part, the books were evaluated in order to see whether the textbooks allow learners to plan their own learning.

The first book analyzed for this purpose is “Spot On” for seventh grade students. As it can be clear from the earlier parts, this book gives the learning goals at the very beginning of the units and they are like the destination for the learners but the problem is that they are predetermined. This book doesn’t provide learners with opportunities to plan learning. It is designed for the teachers who direct classroom practice in terms of content and activities, the order of content and activities and the ways in which learners are expected to participate and interact. There is a spoon-feeding process in which teacher plan everything for the students and students are the consumers of this.

“A step to English” is the second book evaluated in order to see whether they allow learners to plan learning. In this book, students aren’t encouraged to decide when, what and how of the learners’ actions. All these are determined by the teacher. The book doesn’t allow learners to plan their learning, which doesn’t support the idea of autonomous learning. Autonomous learning requires students to learn how to learn and even plan their own learning.

Texture is the third book evaluated in order to see whether it provides learner with the opportunity to plan their learning. This book also doesn’t have activities or information on planning learning. All these are predetermined by the teacher. Students are the information takers while teachers are the omnipotent dispensers of the knowledge. The book acts as a plan of the lesson.

The last book evaluated for planning learning is “Spring”. This book also doesn’t encourage learners to plan their learning. It acts as a lesson plan for the teacher-directed classes instead of helping learners to be autonomous. That is, it doesn’t allow learners to plan their learning. An example of this can be seen by just looking at unit seven named

“Old Days”. It starts with warm-up questions and students are expected to talk about their childhoods. The unit goes on with a reading and writing parts. These are followed by some matching and fill-in-the blanks activities. As it can be clear, all these books don’t encourage learners to plan their own learning.

#### **4.4.Selecting resources**

Selecting resources is generally thought to be a task of teachers. However, many teachers have experimented with involving learners in the selection and preparation for learning(Aston,1993; Benson, 1994). This process also gives learners opportunities for being autonomous while learning a language. Dam(1995) asked students to locate authentic materials to be used in the classroom and self-access centre. This is an example of involving “selecting resources” process into the classroom .Ellis (2000) also mentions activities that could be classified as tasks because tasks involve production and sharing of the materials by learners. The selected books are analyzed by taking all these issues into consideration.

The first book evaluated for seeing whether it encourages learners to be autonomous in selecting the resources they use is “Spot on” for seventh grade learners. Each unit of the book was analyzed to see whether they include examples of allowing learners to select their resources. In the first unit, there aren’t any places for students to select the resources. The second unit named “Tourist Attractions” also doesn’t include this process. In this unit, the places to visit are introduced; however, students aren’t encouraged to search for the necessary materials to get needed information. For example, on the page twenty-four, there is a passage about Çanakkale, but all information is ready for the students. At the end of this reading passage, there is a part “After you read”. In this part, students are required to work in pairs and talk about the given cities such as İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara. However, there aren’t any chances that lead learners to search for new resources about the subject.It is clear from the whole of this study that textbooks contain texts, other materials, activities, exercises or tasks. The subject “learner autonomy” can be integrated into the materials or activities. However, the second book evaluated “A step to English” doesn’t allow learners to select their own resources. It doesn’t provide information or practice about this, as well. Although all units were scrutinized for this,

only two units will be mentioned as an example. A good example of this is the unit five named “Fashion”. This unit doesn’t let learners be autonomous in choosing their resources. It starts with a reading passage about technological devices with some questions. Moreover, students learn to compare things by using superlative and comparative forms of adjectives. They are expected to design and advertise their technological device. Another example is unit nine whose name is “Tales and Legends”. In this unit, firstly students match the famous tales with pictures and read a traditional folk tale. In other parts, there are some Turkish folk tales. In the other part, there is the story of “Cricket and Ant” and “Nasreddin Hodja”. By the help of these stories they learn to tell a story. At the end of the unit their task is to think about a tale or a legend and to change the end of the story. After analysis of all these units, it became clear that this book doesn’t permit learner to select their own resources. Everything is predetermined for the students. The book doesn’t lead students to new resources and include any information about this. This means that students will not be able to take a reflective and critical attitude toward learning tools. Students are seen as the consumers of the materials. They don’t have a say over the materials they use in the class.

Texture is the third book which was analyzed to see whether it lets learners select resources. However, findings show that it provides neither practice nor information about this subject. In a unit, TV programmes, they have a speaking and listening activity about TV programmes. The unit goes on with true-false questions, fill-in the blanks questions. There aren’t any opportunities supporting resource selection for the students. Especially, task part was expected to help in this area, however, it is clear from the task that it doesn’t allow learners to do it. It wants students to choose their favorite character from TV series and write an imaginary biography of him/her or a poem for him/her. As it can be clear from the example, there aren’t any evidences of learner autonomy in terms of giving learners the chance of selecting resources.

The last book is “Spring” which is also inefficient in providing learners with opportunities to select resources. It was expected that this book would contain certain elements of learner autonomy; however, the situation wasn’t so in the book. It just focuses on skills with reading passages; fill in the blanks or matching activities.

The units don't let learners to search for information by using different materials as sources. As it can be seen clearly, all books are the same in not providing this chance.

#### **4.5. Selecting Learning Strategies**

In any teacher-directed classes, it is ordinary that students are content to leave the teacher the choice of activities to be completed. What is more, it is crucial to appeal to all students in the class; therefore, not only teachers but also students will need to develop a wide range of strategies and to choose appropriate strategies for their tasks.

As mentioned in the earlier parts of the study, the strategies for learning can be divided into three: cognitive strategies, meta-cognitive strategies and social-affective strategies. It is important to cover all these at once and letting students do it for themselves. This means that being allowed to select their own learning strategies gains importance for the students. If the textbook allows learners for this, learner can be more and more autonomous in language learning process.

The first book evaluated to see whether it is effective in selecting leaning strategies is "Spot On". Units were scrutinized to find examples of these stages; however, the problem is that there aren't any opportunities for learners to select their own strategies. The other three books are also ineffective in this aspect. The second book "A step to English", the third "Texture" and the last one "Spring" also don't let learners to select their own strategies for learning. None of them provides even limited opportunities for students to select their own strategies. They don't include tips on how to improve their skills. In fact, it was expected to see some points that help learners about how to learn. Some advice could be given to learners how to apply various learning strategies while studying inside or outside of the classroom. For example; some guidelines could be given for learning vocabulary items. Grouping vocabulary items or keeping vocabulary records are two easy ways for this. Textbooks could have the potential to give choices for selecting the best strategies for learning by giving some tips to them. However, the result of the analysis of these four textbooks proves that all four books are inefficient in providing learners with opportunities to select the way they learn.

#### **4.6. Monitoring Progress**

In a teacher directed class, it is ordinary that progress is measured by the teachers. They give feedback to the learners after assignments or exams. However, in order to make the learners autonomous, they should have the ability to monitor their own progress.

All four books were evaluated so that evidences of monitoring process could be seen. However, none of them gives opportunities to the learners about it. Learners don't revise what they have learned with some activities for monitoring. These books don't have parts for reflection. They may suggest "learning diaries" by the help of which students can write their own progresses or difficulties while learning some areas of language. They can focus on the problems they have. They record not only the problematic areas but also the areas in which they are successful. These books don't let them monitor their own progress by answering questions. In fact, by asking some retrospective questions at the end of the unit, students would be able to help learners determine their next step in learning process. Moreover, as these books didn't have any practice or information on monitoring students progress, students can find it difficult to discover the aim of the activities and evaluate their own progress. For helping them personalize the information, they should reflect on what they have learned. The books were expected to support this process by including some parts asking the students about what they had learned. Moreover, the books would suggest or lead them to prepare "progress portfolios" which are helpful for learners to keep track of how much they have achieved over time. Finally all these books neither provides practice nor information about monitoring progress.

#### **4.8. Practice**

The chosen books for this study were also investigated to find examples of practices which help students to be autonomous. All units in these books were scrutinized but the problem is that none of them has this quality. There are some exercises for revising the subjects in the units; however, they don't offer students any choice in which aspect of the new knowledge they have learned they will practice. The practices in these books don't encourage learners to activate their own knowledge.

They present information as a written text and this makes students the passive consumers of the knowledge. It is important to find a balance between giving the students the freedom or giving them support. Textbooks can give them freedom of choice of practices. Furthermore, they could help them search for information without being bound to the teacher. The activities in these books include mechanical practices which include true-false questions, fill-in-the blanks questions and answering open-ended questions. That is, they are inefficient in making learners choose the best practices for themselves.

#### **4.9. Assessment and Revision**

As mentioned in the earlier parts of this study, textbooks play a big role in making learner autonomous and the last step in self-directed learning for students to be autonomous is “assessment and revision” section. Knowles(1975) suggests that active learners taking initiative learn more things and learn better than do people who sit at the feet of their teachers. This fact is also valid for the assessment process of the learning.

This section follows “monitoring progress” section. In monitoring, students are expected to reflect on what they have learned. And in this stage they revise and assess what has been learnt.

Reinders(2010) suggests that while monitoring one’s progress is an ongoing task that takes place as part of every learning episode, assessment is usually less frequent. In fact, it is a crucial process because sense of achievement can be gained by the help of assessments.

One of the main purposes of assessment is to stimulate review and then to make learners aware of the areas they need to improve. Student-generated tests are of great value because they can be useful in fostering intrinsic motivation, and giving them a chance to select content that is more relevant to them. That is, they will be able to use the language. This shows the importance of giving learners opportunities to assess and revise what they have learned. Alternative assessment is useful in order to succeed this. Textbooks used in the classrooms should also have certain qualities to achieve this goal. However, the books evaluated don’t have such qualities to help learners. After analyzing four books, it was clear that there weren’t any choices for learners to assess own their progress.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS**

#### **5.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, conclusions of the study will be presented, pedagogical implications will be provided and some suggestions in the light of the results of this study will be made.

#### **5.1.Results**

The aim of this study was to ‘determine the appropriateness for a context’, which in this case means the extent to which the textbooks attempt to provide information about, and practice in, skills for autonomous language learning. Furthermore, this study aims to show whether the English textbooks used in the seventh grades of state schools for the last five years encourage learner autonomy or not. That is, this study is designed in order to find out if, and if so, how textbooks provide information and practice in the areas of whether textbooks materials give students opportunities to make their own choices about and how to learn within the book, whether there is a focus for learning styles and strategies and whether there are opportunities for reflection and awareness building.

To achieve this goal, a framework designed by Reinders (2010) was used and four books chosen for the study were scrutinized to see whether they include the self-directed learning steps or not. The problem for this study was that although textbooks are so important and they can be useful by promoting learner autonomy, this subject is generally ignored by the textbook writers. That is, there appears to be no attempt to draw learners’ attention to the learning process in a way that gradually gives them more responsibility for their own learning.

Another problem is that almost all the studies done on textbooks evaluation focus on other aspects of the textbook and they are generally about materials for adult learner. The primary and secondary school textbooks are generally ignored and the autonomy researches generally include adult learners.

In spite of these problems, it is also important to note that almost no previous studies exist except from the one done by Reinders and Balcikanli (2011). Especially in Turkey, even though there are many studies on evaluation of text books, almost none of them gave importance to content analysis in terms of learner autonomy. Even though it is important that textbooks promote learner autonomy, this subject is generally ignored and there is almost no previous study in this area. Balcikanli and Reinders (2011) confirm this idea by saying that there are almost no previous studies that have paid particular attention to the place of autonomy in textbooks. As a result, this study is important to get attention to this subject and to fill the gaps about learner autonomy in textbooks.

Whole study proves that textbooks are indispensable parts of classroom environment and they are the most likely way in which learner will come into contact with ideas about autonomy. However, it is an undeniable fact that the whole idea of developing autonomy may be difficult to reconcile with the use of textbook in foreign language classroom.

In this study, English textbooks for 7th grade learners were identified. The criteria for the inclusion were that the books teach English to the students in seventh grade and have been used by the public school for five years. Selecting the books for the same level of the textbooks makes the study more reliable because the same levels of books can give the opportunity to compare them. It is important to note that the schedules are programmed mostly according to these course books in question. This makes them core elements of the lessons for 7<sup>th</sup> grade learners.

Moreover, a distinction was made between the cases where the books provided information about self-directed learning and where they provided opportunities to put them into practice. After evaluating each unit of each book, if a book just mentioned the importance of learning strategies but didn't give any opportunities for controlled practice, this would be considered as an example of giving "information" only. If students were given the chance to practice these strategies by the help of different activities, this would be categorized as "practice".

However, it is clear from the results reported that such a focus on strategies or other elements of self-directed learning is not seen in the four textbooks investigated.

Out of the eight skills, none of them was covered in these books. Clearly, the enormous amount of attention given to autonomy in recent years has not translated into a deliberate focus on developing students' skills for self-directed learning in English language textbooks used in state schools of Turkey. There appears to be no attempt to draw learners' attention to the learning process in a way that gradually gives them more responsibility for their learning.

Even if the textbook included one or more of the skills listed in the framework, it wouldn't be so useful because the structure of the framework would be changed.

What is more, the result of this study is consistent with the results of the study performed by Reinders and Balçıkanlı(2011). They investigated five popular English textbooks for learner autonomy and they come up with the result that such a focus on strategies or other elements of self-directed learning is not at all common in the five textbooks they investigated. Even when a textbook does include one or more of the skills listed in the framework, these are not covered in a structural way; there appears to be no attempt to draw learners' attention to the learning process in a way that gradually gives them more responsibility for their learning.

Another study was also done by these two authors, also. Eleven textbooks were investigated by the two authors to identify if and how they discussed the eight stages of self-directed learning. After the evaluation of these eleven books and any instances where the books mentioned autonomy or any of the skills were marked. A distinction was made between cases where the books provided a description of learner autonomy and where they provided suggestions and materials on how to foster autonomy. Despite the growing interest in autonomy, it was found that the selected books included almost no information about learner autonomy at all and did not, focus on the development of skills for supporting autonomous learning.

## **5.2. Suggestions and Implications**

This study revealed that autonomy is one of the most important subjects in EFL classes and it can be fostered by the help of the books which are almost the most likely way to meet the students. Some suggestions could be made for the further research driven from the findings of this study. This study could be repeated with a larger number of textbooks so that the results may be gained more reliably. In this study, the

books were chosen from the same level. This could be widened by taking different levels of the book into consideration. This may help the researcher compare and contrast the autonomy existence in different books with different levels.

There are some implications for this study, also. Firstly, teachers should be careful about the choice of the textbooks and they shouldn't rely on the textbooks for promoting learner autonomy. This means that teachers will have to be prepared to evaluate resources before their application in class. They need to use an evaluative framework before using the books. Textbooks need to be seen more as a source of activities and information rather than as a storyboard for what happens in class.

Finally, the findings from this study have clear implications for textbook writer, as well. It is clear that there is currently very little attention given in these textbooks to developing autonomy. Fenner(2000) recommends: 'If textbook writers can create tasks and options which leave room for personal interpretation and scope for autonomy, and where, consequently, the outcome is unpredictable, the teacher joins a process of learning in collaboration with the learners. That is, they should give learners more freedom in the textbooks.

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## **APPENDICES**

## ÖZET

Bu çalışma Türkiye'deki devlet okullarının yedinci sınıflarında son beş yıldır okutulan İngilizce ders kitaplarının öğrenci özerkliğine katkı sağlayıp sağlamadığını incelemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Kısaca, bu çalışma ders kitaplarının öğrenciye seçme şansı verip vermediğini, bunun öğrenciye öğretilip öğretilmeyeceğini, kitaplarda öğrenme stil ve yöntemlerine vurgu yapılıp yapılmadığı ve ayrıca öğrencinin yansıtıcı düşünme ve farkındalık kazanma yönünden geliştirilip geliştirilmediği incelenmektedir.

Ders kitabı inceleme yöntemi kullanarak veriler elde edilmiştir. Birçok araştırma yöntemi arasından nitel bir araştırma tekniği olan içerik analizi seçilerek çalışmanın daha güvenilir olması sağlanmıştır.

Bu çalışma ilköğretim okullarının altı, yedi ve sekizinci sınıflarını kapsamak üzere başlatılmış olup bütün bu seviyelerdeki kitapların incelenmesinin mümkün olmayacağı ve aynı seviyedeki kitapların incelenip daha geçerli ve güvenilir bilgiler elde edileceği düşünülerek yedinci sınıf kitaplarıyla sınırlandırılmıştır. Ayrıca kitaplar arasında karşılaştırma yapabilmek açısından kitapların aynı seviyeye ait olması kolaylık sağlamaktadır.

Milli eğitim bakanlığın bağlı devlet okullarına okutulan bu kitapların öğrenci özerkliği açısından incelenmesi önem taşımaktadır çünkü bu kitaplar son beş yıldır kullanılmakta olur yıl boyu işlenen derslerin haftalık planlarının hazırlanmasında temel kaynaklar olarak görülmektedir.

Son yıllarda öğrenci özerkliği her ne kadar en sık tartışılan konu haline gelmiş olsa da öğrenci özerliğinin ders kitaplarda yeri konu neredeyse hiç ele alınmamıştır. Bu konuda sınırlı sayıda çalışma yapılmış olup bu konu kitap yazarları tarafında göz ardı edilmektedir.

Seilen kitaplar Reinders(2010) tarafından geliřtirilen ve zerk ğrenmenin sekiz basamağı ele alınarak hazırlanmış bir çereve ile deęerlendirilmiştir. Bu basamaklar birbirini destekleyerek ilerlemektedir. Seilen kitaplar bütün basamaklar z önüne alınarak ayrıntılı bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Ayrıca kitaplar incelenirken bu sekiz basamaktan hangisinden sadece söz edildiğı hangisi ile ilgili uygulama yapıldığı incelenmiştir. Ayrıntılı içerik analizi sonucunda, bu dört kitabın ğrencinin zerk ğrendiğı bu sekiz basamaktan hiçbirini içermediğı kanıtlanmıştır. Bu ise ğretmenlerin kitap seiminde daha dikkatli olması ve ders kitabı yazarlarının bu konuyu göz ardı etmemesi gereğini ortaya koymuştur.