# Autonomy in an EFL Teacher Training Context: Trainee Teacher Perceptions of Instructor Expectations

Selami Ok
*Pamukkale University*, selamiok@pau.edu.tr

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Selami Ok
Pamukkale University, Turkey

*Abstract: Developing a sense of autonomy in teacher trainees can be considered as a goal itself; and to this end, instructors' expectations that can help them become autonomous need to be identified through the perspectives of teacher trainees rather than accepting directly what is true for instructors. This paper aims to explore the trainee teacher perceptions of instructor expectations leading them to become autonomous in an EFL teacher training context. The participants were 170 senior teacher trainees attending the ELT Department at Pamukkale University, Turkey. A mixed method was employed in the study. Firstly, a five-point Likert questionnaire was designed based on the students' replies to two open-ended questions covering in-class and out-of-class instructor expectations. Secondly, 10 senior students taking the School Experience course were asked to give their written opinions related to the instructor expectations leading to learner autonomy and they were classified under a set of themes. Based on the findings of the study, the participants seem to reflect a positive tendency towards in-class and out-of-class instructor expectations. The written views of the participants also offer significant hints for achieving autonomy within class practices and outside the class hours. One can say that instructors need to be as sensitive and selective as possible about their in-class and out-of-class expectations of teacher trainees in order to assist them in becoming autonomous as they try to find their own way independently of the instructors with relevant, carefully selected and meaningful tasks, activities and assignments.*
*Key Words: Learner autonomy, in-class and out-of-class instructor expectations, EFL (English as a Foreign Language), ELT (English Language Teaching)*

## Introduction

Developing a sense of autonomy in language learners by leading them to take charge of their own learning processes has become a topic of interest for teachers and researchers in the field of language teaching during the last couple of decades as a crucial precondition to successful language learning (Holec, 1988, 2008; Dickinson, 1993; Little, 1991, 2007; Smith, 2000, 2003; Lamb, 2008; Lamb & Reinders, 2008; Benson, 1997, 2001, 2007, 2008; Murphy, 2008), and the nature of autonomy has been viewed as a "goal of education" (Boud, 1981; Cotteral, 2000) in the course of time. However, there seems to be a lot of criticism on the lack of coherence in the theoretical framework of learner autonomy (Martinez, 2008) in terms of interrelationships between the concepts which are still unclear (Lamb, 2008). To foster learner autonomy among learners, it is also argued that teachers need some degree of

autonomy, freedom and internal capacity as well to exercise discretion in matters of curriculum implementation (Benson & Huang, 2008; Benson, 2010). On the other hand, there is a need to develop more systematic models of learner autonomy (Benson, 1997; Oxford, 2003). Also, there is an emphasis on looking at learner autonomy through the learners' or student teachers' perspectives (Benson, 2008; Martinez, 2008). Keeping the present picture of learner autonomy in mind, this paper aims to underline the relevance of autonomous learning practices in teacher education by exploring the trainee teacher perceptions of instructor expectations leading them to become autonomous in an EFL teacher training context in Turkey.

Graduates from ELT departments in Turkey have various options after their graduation from faculties of education which offer four-year training in pedagogical courses and language teaching. They can apply to The Ministry of National Education for teaching posts in primary and high schools providing that they score high enough in a two-step official test administered by ÖSYM (The Center for Placement of Students in Higher Education). The initial test, known as KPSS (Placement Exam for Public Personnel), tests candidates' general ability and cultural knowledge as well as their pedagogical knowledge based on the courses taken during their education. The subsequent test, known as ÖABT (Test of Language Teaching), tests candidates' proficiency in English and knowledge on linguistics, second language acquisition, language teaching (based on the courses such as Linguistics, Approaches and Methods in English Language Teaching, Second Language Acquisition, Teaching Young Learners, Teaching Language Skills, Testing in ELT) and English literature. Graduates can sit these two tests only once a year to be able to apply to the Ministry of National Education. Graduates from ELT departments can also apply to both private institutions (primary and high schools) and state or private universities around Turkey in order to get teaching posts in the schools of foreign languages which provide preparatory EFL programs.

Based on the present case of EFL teacher education and job opportunities in Turkey, it is particularly essential for teacher trainees to develop a sense of autonomy to assist them in their new roles as teachers and in their ongoing professional and linguistic development so that they can model it to their own future students at various levels. To this end, teacher trainees need to be guided to act independently in order to accomplish the goal of becoming autonomous. In other words, they can undergo a process in which they can study entirely on their own and control their own learning, making choices about what and how they learn. Such a learning process can be described as a self-managed or self-directed learning in which students are expected to have the responsibility for planning and organising their studies and for assessing the value of these studies to themselves. In this sense, Nunan and Lamb (1996, p.155-6) state that "all instruction should point learners toward self-directed learning because, in the final anlaysis, it is the learners who have to do the learning". Nunan and Lamb also point out that "if the learners are seriously interested in becoming proficient in the language, then they are going to have to do most of the learning on their own." From a similar perspective, Trebbi (2008) speaks of "self-directiveness" involving "decision-making related to learning objectives, choice of learning activities and self-assessment according to students' own definitions of learning goals", which are all closely associated with the concept of freedom.

In conjunction with a self-directed understanding, Macaro (2008) views "the right of self-determination of the individual" very significant. Macaro also stresses that the concept of autonomous language learner may shift in the course of time within the developments that relate to world languages in the race for supremacy as new societal, cultural, political and professional demands are imposed on individuals. This suggests that the whole notion of language learner autonomy needs to be taken into consideration as a notion of self-

determination from the smallest classroom task to a life-long attitude and motivation for language learning.  Benson (1997, in Lamb & Reinders, 2008), on the other hand, speaks of "technical, psychological and political versions of autonomy" which are linked to "positivistic, constructivist and critical outlooks" and states that the idea of autonomy may appear differently when viewed from a teacher's or learner's perspective.  Benson (2008, p.15) argues that, from the teachers' perspective, autonomy is primarily concerned with institutional and classroom learning arrangements within established curricula, whereas, from the learners' perspective, it is primarily concerned with learning and its relationship to their lives beyond the classroom.  Therefore, in order to create the optimal conditions for realising the goal of learner autonomy, as a learner-centered idea, we need to be concerned with the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship.  In this sense, Ganza (2008, p.63-65) puts the emphasis on "the interpersonal dynamics of teacher-learner context" and states that it is these dynamics that might influence a learner's capacity to be autonomous, and that developing a learner's capacity to be autonomous is meaningful only in terms of interrelational dynamics or climate.  Ganza also defines learner autonomy as an "achievement" that can be attained interrelationally between the learner and teacher.  Furthermore, to understand the relationship between teacher and learner autonomy and to clarify the changing teacher and learner roles in context, Cotteral and Crabbe (2008, p.125) propose that the role of the teacher in managing the learning opportunities for the learner need to be re-examined in the light of the information gathered by understanding the kind of goals and limitations with which learners operate in particular teaching and learning contexts and the consequent strategic behavior they adopt.  Cotteral and Crabbe also suggest that the effectiveness of the learner's goals and strategic behaviors should be evaluated in those contexts.

When we bring together all these considerations, it seems that there is no one way of achieving learner autonomy.  In other words, there will always be a need to describe its changing character in different language learning contexts; therefore, we have to focus on classroom-based approaches covering both in-class and out-of-class tasks and activities for the development of sense of autonomy in learners.  In order to achieve this, the incorporation of autonomy in curricula at national and local levels seems to be a feasible goal.  To facilitate this, learner autonomy needs to be seen as an essential component of courses at ELT departments by placing it in the centre of curriculum.  In this way, it would be possible to help teacher trainees gain a better understanding of learner autonomy and its dimensions and consequently build an awareness regarding their development as autonomous learners.

While speaking of what is required for an individual to lead an autonomous life, Wall (2003) stresses that one needs several things to realize autonomy, such as:

> *the capacity to form complex intentions and to sustain commitments, the independence necessary to chart one's own course through life and to develop one's own understanding of what's valuable and worth doing, the self-consciousness and vigor necessary to take control of one's affairs, and access to an environment that provides one with a range of valuable options (p.308)*

Keeping these conditions in mind, it is worth investigating the issue of learner autonomy and the prerequisites conducive to its realisation from various perspectives by relating it to learners in various contexts as differences may naturally arise.  In support of this, Holec (in Lamb & Reinders, 2008, p.4) points out that researchers need to show care to avoid looking for monolithic and stable answers at all levels of investigation into learner autonomy because "there is no one single answer to the question of the relationship between learning competence and self-directed learning, no single answer to the status to be officially given to

self-evaluation, no single set of language learning objectives to be achieved, no single best pedagogical procedure." This fact has to motivate us as instructors and researchers to explore learner autonomy from various perspectives in various contexts with various learners.

It is commonly agreed that successful language learners share similar features and do present them in the classroom while participating in language activities and continue to benefit from these specific characteristics as they continue to learn on their own outside the classroom. With regard to what successful learners do, Dickinson (1993) listed such typical characteristics of autonomous learners as being aware of the learning material, its goal and why the teacher does particular activities in the classroom, being able to set their own goals, choosing and practicing appropriate learning strategies, using particular strategies, and finally being capable of self-assessing their performance. In a similar understanding covering all these characteristics, Bren and Mann (1997) described such learners as those who seek opportunities to learn outside classroom settings and create their own instructional settings, free of teachers. Likewise, Benson (2001, p.8) defined autonomy as "the capacity to take charge of one's own learning" and "the ability of learners to control their own learning". Sinclair (2008, p.243) also described autonomy as "a capacity which is operationalised when willingness is present" and stressed that "this capacity consists of development and conscious awareness of a body of specific meta-cognitive knowledge about one's self as a learner, one's learning context, the subject matter to be learned and the processes of learning". This means that language learners who can be described as autonomous tend to feel more responsible for their own learning in all stages of the process by presenting a much higher level of motivation in contrast to those who do not perform so well in the language classroom using the same material. As Holec (1985, p.179) pointed out much earlier, "taking responsibility" is the key element for autonomous learners as they use their capacity to take charge of their own learning processes in all stages coupled with a high level of motivation. They can determine their learning objectives at the first stage of their learning process and follow certain steps to achieve them, for instance, by choosing strategies that are appropriate and effective for their learning processes (Wenden, 1991).

It appears that teachers' expectations of learners throughout a language learning process are closely linked to the three questions posed by Benson (in Lamb & Reinders, 2008, p.20):

(a)     What kinds of learning best lead towards the goal of personal autonomy?
(b)     What can teachers do to help learners move towards the goal of personal autonomy?
(c)     What can learners do to help themselves move towards the goal of personal autonomy?

Based on these three above-mentioned questions, it could be said that teachers' expectations deriving out of their personal development and language teaching experiences in order to help learners to become autonomous need to be investigated in various language teaching and learning contexts. Smith (2003, p.130-132) makes a distinction between "strong" and "weak" pedagogies for autonomy, arguing that the former is based on the assumption that learners are already autonomous, whereas the latter is based on the assumption that they lack autonomy. Smith stresses the need for co-creating the optimal conditions for the direct exercise of autonomy with students themselves rather than seeing it as a deferred goal and as a product of instruction. Concerning this relationship, Little (2000, p.45) drew attention to the role of the teachers in facilitating the development of learner autonomy and stated that "the development of learner autonomy depends on the development of teacher autonomy". According to Little, fostering autonomy in learners initially requires knowing what it is to be autonomus learner. Little also stated that in determining the initiatives they take in the classrooms, teachers must be able to exploit their professional skills autonomously, applying to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their

learning.  To be able to set up the optimal conditions for the realisation of autonomy in an EFL teacher training context in our case, instructors' expectations of teacher trainees and those of teacher trainees of their instructors need to be identified.

Fostering learner autonomy also covers what learners do and what they are expected to do by their teachers outside the language classroom on their own.  It is commonly agreed that learners will find it difficult to learn a language unless they aim to learn outside the class hours as well as during class time in a specific language course, and that it may take time to achieve before they have had the kind of exposure and opportunities for use which are essential for real progress (Harmer, 2007).   James (2006, p.151) also suggests that a basic goal of English language teaching is that "students will apply outside the classroom what they have learned inside the classroom".  In this sense, in order to compensate for the limits of classroom time and to boost the chances for successful language learning and acquisition, Harmer (2007, p.394) proposes that learners need to be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies so that they can become autonomous.  Within such a framework, Harmer draws our attention to enabling learners to be "the doers rather than the recipients of learning action" as a way of helping to sustain their motivation and states that attitudes to self-directed learning are frequently conditioned by the educational culture in which learners have studied or are studying, and this may not always "prioritise learner autonomy".  Saying so, Harmer places the emphasis on enabling learners to see the need to learn for themselves and being enthusiastic about taking responsibility for their own learning.  Likewise, Littlewood (1999) pointed out much earlier that we need to match the different aspects of autonomy with the characteristics and needs of learners in specific contexts.  On a similar line, Cotteral (2000, p.109) asserts that learner autonomy is not to be seen as a goal only for highly committed students, or for learners operating in selected educational or cultural contexts, but should be seen as "an esssential goal for all learning".  Littlewood (1999, p.73) also draws our attention to "involving students' capacity to use their learning independently of teachers".  Within this whole picture, the question in our mind has to be what ways we can find for "fostering learners' ability to take charge of their learning" (Holec, 1981, p.3) and for "transfering the responsibility for decision-making about learning from teacher to learner" (Cotteral, 2000, p.110).

All in all, in order to foster learner autonomy, what instructors expect their students to do in and out of classes should be closely related, as Cotteral (2000, p.110) suggests, to the learner goals, the language learning process, tasks, learner strategies, and reflection on learning.  At this level, there seems to be a need to identify these expectations objectively; therefore, we need to turn our attention to the teacher trainees' voices in a teacher training context.  In support of this, Martinez (2008, p.120) suggests in a case study that researchers must "shift from an external to an inner perspective" in order to see things through the eyes of teacher trainees by giving them an opportunity to raise their voices and by listening to what they say about language learning and language learning autonomy.  In a similar vein, Benson (2008, p.30) stresses that instead of reverting to earlier models of autonomy in learning, which prioritized situational autonomy, we should work towards a more complex view of the requirements for autonomy and of the relationship between autonomy in learning and autonomy in life.  Benson suggests that we might approach this more complex view of autonomy by paying greater attention to learners' perspectives.  Based on all the views related to learner autonomy and how to foster such a growth in learners as well as the views on the need to hear the teacher trainees' voices or perspectives on what leads to learner autonomy, this present study aimed to explore the instructors' expectations of teacher trainees in an EFL teacher training context.  These expectations were specifically aimed to be captured through the eyes of the teacher trainees at an ELT department on their senior year prior to their graduation.  Identification of instructors' in-class and out-of-class expectations

of teacher trainees in various courses at ELT departments through their inner perspectives would offer instructors valuable benefits and suggestions in fostering learner autonomy in pre-service EFL teacher education in Turkey and elsewhere, and as a result, various dynamics in the student / instructor relationship in teacher training context can be better underlined.

## Research Questions

(a)     Which in-class instructor expectations lead teacher trainees to become autonomous?
(b)     Which out-of-class instructor expectations lead teacher trainees to become autonomous?

## Methodology
### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the trainee teacher perceptions of in-class and out-of-class instructor expectations leading teacher trainees to become autonomous in an EFL teacher training context.

### Participants and Research Setting

The participants who took part in this study were 170 teacher trainees (132 females and 38 males) attending the fourth year class in The Department of ELT, Pamukkale University, Turkey.  They were taking the Materials Evaluation and Development in ELT course when the questionnaire was administered and they had already taken most of the field courses in the curriculum.  In addition to this, 10 teacher trainees taking the School Experience course were also asked to give their written opinions related to the two research questions.

### Data Collection Instruments

A mixed method was used in this study.  The data were collected by employing two different instruments and therefore included both quantitative and qualitative aspects.

In order to collect the data, first of all, Instructors' Expectations Leading to Learner Autonomy Scale, which is a 5-point Likert scale, was designed based on the teacher trainees' replies to two open-ended questions as seen in the research questions.  The scale consisted of an ELT instructor's typical expectations of teacher trainees leading them to become autonomous.  Rather than creating some items from what the theory says creates learner autonomy, I preferred to rely on the teacher trainees' perspectives on the instructors' expectations leading to learner autonomy.   In order to see these expectations through the eyes of the teacher trainees, as suggested by Benson (2008) and Martinez (2008), I specifically chose to focus on teacher trainees' perspectives regarding what leads them to become autonomous rather than exploring what the instructors believe would develop learner autonomy in our specific context.   While forming the items on the questionnaire, 6 MA TEFL students taking the Classroom Research course at our department were asked to give their opinions on the items.  In this way, overlapping ideas were omitted and the related ones were combined in a single item.

Three instructors from the field of ELT and one instructor from the Department of Educational Sciences were consulted for their opinions on the survey items, and necessary

changes were reflected to the items based on their comments. After all these modifications, the scale consisted of 25 items at the initial stage. Then, thirty students who were attending another ELT department and did not actually participate in the actual study scored the items in the scale in the pilot study. The students indicated their opinions by marking in a range of "Strongly Agree" (5), "Agree" (4), "Partially Agree" (3), "Disagree" (2), and "Strongly Disagree" (1).

As a result of the amendments, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as .71 over 23 items, indicating a satisfactory level of reliability. According to the reliability statistics of the scale items based on the answers of 170 participants who formed the sample in this study, the Cronbach's alpha co-efficient was calculated as .87, which indicated greater reliability (Özdamar, 1999; Pallant, 2001). In the analysis of the data, SPSS 17 software version was used. All the data were analysed using statistical calculations based on the frequencies, means and standard deviations.

As a second source of data, 10 senior teacher trainees who were taking the School Experience course were asked to answer the same open-ended questions regarding the topic of the study after getting their full consent for participation. They were asked to use their leisure time to answer the questions. Their opinions were analysed through content analysis and grouped under a set of specific themes. Instead of using an interview technique in a limited time, I preferred to receive written reflections of the teacher trainees in order to give them the opportunity to express their opinions in a relaxed way by considering their experiences on autonomy.

### Data Collection Procedure

Data collection procedure covered three fall terms in 2011-2012, 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years in order to increase the participant population in the sample. The questionnaire was administered to the teacher trainees only during the above-mentioned terms at our department, and it was assumed that all the participants had a variety of experiences on learner autonomy and what instructor expectations may lead them to become autonomous within the courses they have taken.

## Findings

This study investigated the instructors' expectations of the teacher trainees which may lead them to become autonomous throughout their studies at our department through the students' eyes. The instructors' expectations were classified in two groups as "in-class" and "out-of-class". Initially, Table 1 shows the overall attitude of the participants towards the instructors' expectations.

| | n | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Level of Agreement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Overall attitude of students towards the instructors' expectations** | 170 | 4.21 | .42358 | **Strongly Agree** |

**Table 1. Overall attitude of participants towards instructors' expectations leading to learner autonomy**

The descriptive statistics on the overall attitude of the participants regarding the instructors' expectations were given in Table 1. As seen in Table 1, the participants report an agreement with a mean score of 4.21 at the level of "Strongly Agree" on in-class and out-of-class expectations of instructors as a whole. Based on this finding, the participants seem to

agree that when the instructors use particular strategies, this can lead them to become autonomous.

**In-class Expectations Leading to Learner Autonomy**

The first research question was to do with in-class instructor expectations that could lead EFL teacher trainees to become autonomous. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for in-class expectations leading to learner autonomy from the highest to the lowest in a descending order.

| When our instructors expect me to ……., it helps me to become an autonomous learner. | n | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Level of Agreement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ITEM 1: to be aware of the reasons why I am learning English | 170 | 4.60 | .537 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 2: to participate actively in the learning process by asking and answering questions, making comments, joining discussions and using critical thinking strategies | 170 | 4.46 | .635 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 4: to discover my own learning styles | 170 | 4.45 | .714 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 3: to discover my own learning strategies and use them actively and effectively to develop my language skills | 170 | 4.41 | .735 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 15: to ask questions when I don't understand something or when I need more clarification | 170 | 4.37 | .728 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 16: to use the target language (English only) in class activities / tasks most of the time rather than the mother tongue | 170 | 4.32 | .788 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 24: to make constant effort (e.g. using on-line resources on the Internet) to develop my communication skills and be more fluent in the use of language | 170 | 4.27 | .798 | Strongly Agree |
| ITEM 17: to prepare and make oral presentations in the class in line with our course materials and subjects | 170 | 4.18 | .840 | Agree |
| ITEM 7: to use the language in class without fear of making mistakes | 170 | 4.16 | .987 | Agree |
| ITEM 8: to self-correct my pronunciation mistakes in class using a dictionary and focusing on phonemic transcriptions of words | 170 | 4.15 | .826 | Agree |
| **IN-CLASS EXPECTATIONS** | **170** | **4.33** | **.39894** | **Strongly Agree** |

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for in-class expectations of instructors leading to learner autonomy
Note: **Totally Disagree** (1.00-1.80), **Disagree** (1.81-2.60), **Partially Agree** (2.61-3.40),**Agree** (3.41-4.20), **Strongly Agree** (4.21-5.00)

The descriptive statistics for in-class instructor expectations were given in Table 2. As can be seen in this table, the participants strongly agree on Item-1 with a mean score of 4.60, which means that they should be made aware of the reasons why they are learning English while trying to develop their level of English. To this end, they would like to be given opportunities for taking charge of their own learning. Two participants emphasized this need clearly, stating:

> "*To become an autonomous learner, we should know what our aims are.*"
> "*The instructors should give their students opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.*"

In addition, the survey items 2, 4, 3, 15, 16 and 24 fall into the "Strongly Agree" category respectively as well. On the other hand, the participants agree at a lower level with Item-8 "self-correcting pronunciation mistakes in class using a dictionary and focusing on phonemic transcriptions of words" with a mean score of 4.15. Items 7 and 17 fall into the same agreement level, too.

When all the items in the survey are considered, the participants report a tendency with a mean score of 4.33 at the level of 'Strongly Agree' on in-class instructor expectations. Based on the mean scores for in-class instructor expectations, it can be said that the

participants were quite positive about these expectations that may lead them to become autonomous when they are used by their instructors. This finding suggests that instructors need to be very sensitive and selective about their expectations of teacher trainees in class practices in order to foster autonomy.

**Out-of-Class Expectations Leading to Learner Autonomy**

The second research question in this study was to do with out-of-class instructor expectations that could lead EFL teacher trainees to become autonomous and Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics related to this kind of expectations.

| When our instructors expect me to ……., it helps me to become an autonomous learner. | n | $\bar{x}$ | SD | Level of Agreement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ITEM 20: to learn about the language teaching techniques and apply them in micro-teaching activities by preparing original / authentic materials, tasks and activities, and worksheets | 170 | 4.50 | .608 | **Strongly agree** |
| ITEM 10: to find relevant materials and create opportunities for further practice and develop my level of English on my own outside the classroom, such as books, stories, poems, plays, novels, songs, films, videos, on-line resources on the Internet, etc. | 170 | 4.43 | .712 | **Strongly agree** |
| ITEM 23: to observe real classes in schools as part of tasks in practicum course (school experience and teaching practice) in line with relevant teaching theories/techniques and discuss our findings by writing reports | 170 | 4.34 | .814 | **Strongly agree** |
| ITEM 9: to do assignments or projects by collaborating and negotiating with my peers in a group | 170 | 4.32 | .846 | **Strongly agree** |
| ITEM 6: to make use of the feedback I receive from them to prepare for the next class activities / tasks | 170 | 4.29 | .710 | **Strongly agree** |
| ITEM 8: to self-correct my pronunciation mistakes out of the class using a dictionary and focusing on phonetic transcriptions of words | 170 | 4.15 | .826 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 11: to come to class prepared and prove it by participating actively in class activities | 170 | 4.14 | .792 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 5: to solve the problems I have in the process of language learning on my own by giving relevant tasks and assignments | 170 | 4.10 | .789 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 25: to take part in community service and prepare a project in order to help learners at various ages to learn English using the materials we prepare on our own | 170 | 4.04 | .925 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 14: to make my own decisions regarding vocabulary learning, language rules and functions, selection of classroom materials, etc. | 170 | 3.98 | .821 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 13: to keep a portfolio containing my written products as a proof of my self-improvement in English over a term or a whole school year | 170 | 3.91 | 1.031 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 22: to participate in seminars, workshops, panel discussions, and conferences related to the field of ELT, take notes, and discuss about the topics in our classes | 170 | 3.84 | .925 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 19: to read scientific articles regularly related to our courses and write reviews of them or have discussion on them in class | 170 | 3.76 | .969 | **Agree** |
| ITEM 12: to write a report periodically about what I feel or think about my general performance for evaluating my own learning process | 170 | 3.49 | .981 | **Agree** |
| **OUT-OF-CLASS EXPECTATIONS** | 170 | 4.09 | .486 | **Agree** |

Table 3. **Descriptive statistics for out-of-class instructor expectations leading to learner autonomy**
Note: **Totally Disagree** (1.00-1.80), **Disagree** (1.81-2.60), **Partially Agree** (2.61-3.40),
**Agree** (3.41 4.20), **Strongly Agree** (4.21-5.00)

The descriptive statistics related to out-of-class instructor expectations leading to learner autonomy were given in Table 3. When Table 3 is examined carefully, it can be seen that the participants strongly agree on Item-20 "learning about the language teaching

techniques and applying them in micro-teaching activities by preparing authentic materials, tasks, activities and worksheets" with a mean score of 4.50.  In addition, the items 10, 23, 9 and 6 fall into the agreement level "Strongly agree" as well.  It can be said that the teacher trainees perceive these strategies as much more effective than the others in developing autonomy in our ELT program.

On the other hand, the participants agree at a lower level on Item-12 "writing a report periodically about what I feel or think about my general performance for evaluating my own learning process" with a mean score of 3.49.   Items 8, 11, 5, 25, 14, 13, 22 and 19 fall into the same agreement level as well.  One reason why the participants reported a lower level of agreement for these items could be that the instructors may not be applying them or expecting the students to engage in these strategies in their courses as much as the others.

When considered as a whole, the participants seem to report an agreement with a mean score of 4.09 on out-of-class instructor expectations.  Based on the mean scores and levels of agreement for each item on the survey and out-of-class expectations of instructors as a whole,  it can be stressed that the participants agree on the benefit of these strategies in leading them to become autonomous outside the class hours when their instructors use or apply them.

### Written Reflections on In-class and Out-of-class Expectations

The written views of the participants also provided us with some hints on the instructors' expectations of teacher trainees leading to learner autonomy and its realization within ELT courses.  The views given by the teacher trainees were grouped and presented under some themes as follows:

### Assisting Teacher Trainees to Plan Their Learning

One participant speaks of the instructors' help in planning his learning which reflects into making his own decisions in selecting the relevant content he is to learn based on his individual interests and the reasons why he is learning the target language.  This kind of support seems to help him  pay attention to and searching for what is missing in the courses.

> "Our instructors also helped me plan my learning. Thanks to them, I learned about some methods, some skills, strategies and how to make use of learning tools.   I generally make my decision according to my individual interests. Depending on whether I'm learning the target language for daily use or for specific or professional purposes, I just select the relevant content. I also enjoy learning on my own what is missing in the language course.  This way, I can also invest more time in the target language."

### Importance of Studies at the ELT Department in Career Planning

The next participant also shares some reasons related to her studies at the ELT department and the importance of them in her career planning, which altogether seem to have turned into an individual goal.
> "Throughout my studies in this ELT department for five years, I didn't only study to pass my exams but I also did extensive reading. Maybe it is because of my individual interest on this field and future career planning. Extensive reading and listening was

*a necessity to improve myself. I felt that I needed to catch up with the recent teaching methods and techniques. For example, I need to know about Multiple Intelligences and NLP theories to teach effectively and catch the modern world of language teaching and learning."*

### Providing Opportunities in the Use of Learning Strategies, Language Use and Active Class Participation

Some participants gave the following comments regarding modelling the use of learning strategies, language use and active participation in class activities.

*"Instructors should model the use of learning strategies and they can help us discover and develop our learning strategies."*

*"Our teachers helped us to realize the learning strategies that help us learn independently outside the classroom. We learned and practised different learning strategies in some skills courses. Of course, we knew and used some of the learning strategies before, but we used them unconsciously. In the school I realized many other strategies that I did not know about before; and I started to use them selectively according to my learning style."*

*"To become autonomous learner, the instructors should teach us how to use the language."*

*"Except for memorization, active participation in activities is much more useful."*

In the light of the findings and written reflections of the participants on in-class instructor expectations of teacher trainees, we can state that what we do in the process and expect our students to do in classroom practices may serve them in fostering a sense of autonomy. These findings may serve instructors in handling the learning problems of their students by creating a more independent and constructive learning environment. With a specific concern on developing such a focus, instructors can help teacher trainees plan their learning better by raising their awareness on the reasons why they are learning the language or a specific material. Also, they can be expected to select the relevant course content based on their individual interests and they can be guided on how to learn on their own by offering extensive reading and listening assignments as an outreach of in-class practices in various courses. Furthermore, practice on the learning strategies and providing students with opportunities for participating and using the language in class activities and tasks actively can be beneficial. In time, they can reach a level at which they can begin to identify what is missing in their knowledge in a "self-directed" manner (Nunan & Lamb,1996; Trebbi, 2008), and as an expected outcome of this process, they can use their in-class experiences to serve them in their career planning and life-long learning as well.

Some participants reflected the following comments covering out-of-class activities and tasks that may help them become autonomous and they were also presented under some themes.

**Using Blogs and Benefiting from the Internet Resources**

Three opinions below indicate a need for using blogs on the Internet as a requirement of a writing course and sharing written assignments there and benefiting from various Internet resources.

> *"Our instructors expect us to use some blogs or websites on the Internet to develop ourselves."*

> *"We created a blog and loaded some writing assignments there. In the blog, we used things independently that we learnt in the writing lesson. I think it was very useful for us to continue writing outside the classroom."*

> *"Our instructors often expected us to benefit from the Internet resources to do our group works and to make presentations."*

**Providing Teacher Trainees with Alternative Activities and Tasks for Self-development and Monitoring Their Individual Progress**

The following opinions lead us to say that instructors can provide teacher trainees with alternative activities and tasks to be implemented outside the class so that they can do them independently of their instructors and monitor their own progress.

> *"The instructors provide us with a variety of alternatives, like project works, watching films and videos etc., to develop ourselves on our own."*

> *"The instructors can encourage us to keep a journal about our learning process."*

> *"Our instructors helped us become autonomous learners by giving us responsibilities such as preparing presentations, group works, …"*

The next opinion also reveals the contribution of assignments, such as project work or oral presentation, into this particular student's monitoring and evaluating what she does as part of the courses.

> *"My instructors helped me so far in becoming an autonomous learner throughout my studies at our department. Assignments like project work and presentations etc. helped me to be an autonomous learner. These learning tasks require responsibility to learn and I can monitor and evaluate what I do."*

**Giving Meaningful Reasons for Tasks, Providing Feedback and Allowing Teacher Trainees to Choose Topics in Portfolio Process**

One participant gave the following comment and reflected the importance of giving meaningful reasons for tasks, providing feedback, allowing students to choose topics as part of their portfolio work and essay assignments.

> *"Our instructors gave meaningful reasons for the tasks and provided feedback. They led us to keep portfolios and to write essays frequently. For the assignments they allowed us to choose the topics according to our interests."*

**Encouraging Teacher Trainees to Prepare Oral Presentations Individually**

The opinion below draws our attention to the expectation for preparing oral presentations individually rather than working in a group.

> *"In my opinion, we should prepare our oral presentations individually, not with the other students."*

**Searching for and Reading Articles and Related Material as Part of Class Work**

Two opinions below stress the significant contribution of searching for and reading articles and related material as part of class work in various courses into learner autonomy.

> *"Our instructors gave us lots of duties like searching and reading articles about our course subjects. While we were reading these articles and the related material in the course books, we learned so much."*
> *"Our instructors helped us become autonomous learners by giving us responsibilities such as preparing presentations, group works and reading research articles, etc. With these, I believe I developed myself a lot."*

**Recommending Websites to Develop Listening Comprehension and Pronunciation**

The participant who reflected the following opinion seems to have benefited a lot from the websites recommended by her instructors as sources to develop her listening comprehension and pronunciation on her own.

> *"I think that some activities or tasks that are advised by our teachers contributed to our autonomy in learning. For instance, in the prep class, our teacher recommended us to use some websites that can help us to improve our listening skill and we selected and used them. I still use some of them to develop my listening comprehension and pronunciation."*

When we have a look at these above-mentioned reflections of the teacher trainees regarding out-of-class instructor expectations, we can see that most of them include a self-directiveness on behalf of the students. To put another way, as instructors, we should consider ways of engaging teacher trainees in managing their learning process on their own using their capacity. The opinions derived from the participants reveal that this can be achieved by offering relevant tasks and activities to be done outside the class independently of their instructors as well as by providing them with relevant content or material. Such tasks and activities as well as carefully selected course content would help the students develop themselves in the long-run and create opportunities for participating in the process actively and sharpen the learning strategies they tend to employ.

**Discussion and Implications**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the instructors' expectations of teacher trainees which may lead them to become autonomous through the perspectives of students at an ELT department in a Turkish university. One limitation of the study was that it was carried out at one department and only focused on the instructors' expectations of the teacher trainees. Findings from this study could be used by instructors as ideas for developing the sense of autonomy in teacher trainees in any EFL teacher training context. However, future studies need to include other similar EFL teacher training contexts to make further generalisations. A second limitation of the study was that gender was not taken into consideration as the female participants outnumbered the male students; therefore, this study leaves the ground open for further research studies to investigate whether female and male teacher trainees perceive instructor expectations at the same level or differently to achieve autonomy. A third limitation of this study lies in the fact that the participants may not be sure whether some of the strategies mentioned in the survey did help them to become autonomous or not as they may not be practised by their instructors in their courses, so the findings may lead instructors in various institutions to revisit and use some strategies that they do not practice or give importance in the courses they teach. A fourth and final limitation is that the items in the questionnaire were determined based on the perceptions of the teacher trainees in our program in response to the research questions in order to reflect their perspectives rather than what the theory says creates learner autonomy.

To begin with, overall attitude of the teacher trainees towards their instructors' expectations indicates an agreement, which means that when the instructors use particular strategies they can help students in becoming autonomous (see Table 1). In this sense, Railton and Watson (2005, p.192) makes an analogy between autonomous learning and learning to drive and suggests that "it must be taught, it requires practice, and it is assessed against specific criteria. Unless they are taught how to take the wheel for themselves, learner students, like learner drivers, may be at risk." As Ganza (2008, p.65) stressed, taking control of the learning process with a sense of responsibility and self-directing themselves independently of their teacher in a process of experimentation and discovery seem to be two crucial dimensions of learner autonomy within the "interpersonal dynamics" of teacher-learner relationship, as an "interpersonal construct, whose realisation depends as much on the capacities of the teacher as on capacities of the learner." With respect to this interpersonal relationship, Reeve and Jang (2006, p. 217) point out in a research study on what teachers say and do to support students' autonomy during a learning activity that "most validated autonomy-supportive instructional behaviors can be seen as acts of supportiveness", and when considered as a whole, "these acts of instruction significantly advance researchers' understanding of what it means to be supportive (and unsupportive) of students' sense of autonomy." Reeve and Jang also note that "the discussion about the interrelationships between teachers' autonomy support and teachers' attunement and supportiveness shows that teachers cannot directly give students a sense of autonomy." Instead of this, teachers can try to find ways of providing students with "high-quality interpersonal relationships rich in attunement and supportiveness", so students can begin to exercise their own sense of autonomy out of this relationship in the course of time.

The findings in this study have been explored and presented under two specific sub-themes as in-class and out-of-class instructors' expectations of teacher trainees.

First of all, the findings reflect a strong agreement of the participants on in-class instructor expectations in leading teacher trainees to become autonomous (see Table 2). Of all the expectations derived from the findings, the expectation for helping the students to be aware of the reasons why they are learning English is drawing our attention. As instructors,

as this finding indicates, we can guide the teacher trainees through individual talks in reshaping their aims throughout their studies until they graduate and we should continually attempt to find ways of motivating them to develop their level and sense of autonomy. The participants in our study agreed strongly on the following expectations of the instructors as well: participating in the learning process actively by asking and answering questions, making comments, joining discussions and using critical thinking strategies ($\bar{x} = 4.46$), discovering their learning styles ($\bar{x} = 4.45$), discovering their own learning strategies and using them actively and effectively to develop their language skills ($\bar{x} = 4.41$), asking questions when they do not understand something or when they need clarification ($\bar{x} = 4.37$), using only English in class activities and tasks rather than their mother tongue ($\bar{x} = 4.32$), and making constant effort to develop their communication skills and to be more fluent in language use ($\bar{x} = 4.27$). When approached from the perspective of being strategic or developing strategies in the language class, Oxford (1990, p.136-7) noted that "metacognitive strategies are essential for successful language learning", stresing that "strategies such as organizing, setting goals and objectives, considering the purpose and planning for a language task help learners to arrange and plan their language learning in an efficient and effective way." In addition to these, seeking practice opportunities is especially important. Oxford suggests that serious learners must take on responsibility to seek as many practice opportunitites as possible, usually outside the classroom. In a study on the relationship between autonomy perception and reading comprehension achievement of EFL learners in a Turkish university context, Bayat (2011a) also found significant relationships between reading comprehension achievement and taking language responsibility and using meta-cognitive strategies.

Also, though viewed with a lower mean score by the participants, having the students prepare and make oral presentations in line with course content ($\bar{x} = 4.18$), trying to use the language in class without any fear of making mistakes ($\bar{x} = 4.16$), and self-correcting their pronunciation errors in class using a dictionary and focusing on phonemic transcriptions of words ($\bar{x} = 4.15$) seem to be some expectations as important components on the way to becoming autonomous. It appears that instructors need to be more sensitive about these expectations and give more importance in their class practices with teacher trainees. Based on my class observations, self-repair of pronunciation problems, for instance, is an ability that has to be developed in teacher trainees, and this positive reflection, though it is at the bottom of the list of expectations in our study, seems to be a reflection of the intensive work that the students were expected to do in the skills courses and Linguistics course in our program. Therefore, assignments on pronunciation and phonemic transcription as well as using mobile phones to benefit from on-line dictionaries can guide the students to work individually in and out of the class and develop their ability in self-repair of pronunciation errors. As Oxford (1990, p.137) puts it, they will be "self-monitoring" themselves as an essential part of evaluation of their learning.

All these expectations can be taken into account by instructors successfully within classroom practice with a move from "individualization" to "learner independence" and then to "learner autonomy" as a preferred term while exploring and developing this multifaceted concept in our minds from various perspectives (Smith, 2008, p.395). Smith also refers to Benson (2001, 2007) and Little (1991) for a distinction between a desirable learning situation or behaviour for self-directed learning and the capacity for learner autonomy with a focus on arrangements like CALL, self-access and distance learning. Smith states that exercising decision-making in such areas is in the hands of the learner, and that there is an important role for teachers in promoting psychological attributes and practical abilities involved in learner autonomy and in engaging learners' existing autonomy within classroom practice. In short, in the light of our findings, instructors in ELT programs need to look at their in-class

instructional expectations of teacher trainees more closely in order to foster learner autonomy. To this end, students should be given various opportunities to discover their capacity and take responsibility for their own learning. As reflected by the written views of some participants, we can plan their learning by providing relevant activities and tasks, assisting them select what to read and listen to and providing opportunities to enable them to participate in the class activities actively.

Secondly, as for out-of-class expectations (see Table 3), our findings indicated that students should be expected and encouraged to learn about the language teaching techniques and apply them in micro-teaching activities by preparing authentic materials, tasks, activities and worksheets ($\bar{x} =4.50$), to find relevant materials and create opportunities for further practice and develop their level of English on their own outside the classroom by searching for and using various sources ($\bar{x} =4.43$), to observe real classes in schools as part of tasks in the Practicum course (School Experience and Teaching Practice) in line with relevant teaching theories / techniques and discuss their findings by writing reports ($\bar{x} =4.34$), to do assignments or projects by collaborating and negotiating with their peers in a group ($\bar{x} =4.32$), and to make use of the feedback they receive to prepare for the next classes, activities and tasks ($\bar{x} =4.29$). In addition to these effective strategies, it seems that some instructor expectations, such as coming to class prepared and proving it by participating in class activities, solving the problems students have in the process of language learning on their own by giving relevant tasks and assignments, taking part in community service and preparing a project in order to help learners at various ages by preparing their own materials, keeping a portfolio containing students' various products, participating in academic activities and taking notes to discuss in their classes, reading articles related to the course content and writing reviews of them and writing a report periodically about their performance for evaluating their learning process, are also perceived positively in fostering autonomy.

Some written reflections of the participants also provide us with some hints to assist teacher trainees in becoming autonomous. Using blogs to share their written products and ideas as part of a writing course, benefiting from the Internet resources to do group work, carrying out project works, preparing oral presentations individually, watching films and videos for meaningful reasons, selecting and focusing on meaningful course-related tasks to be done outside the class hours, providing feedback on students' products, keeping a journal about individual language development process and using some Internet websites for developing their listening comprehension skill and pronunciation are just some other opinions and expectations reflected by the teacher trainees. All these findings give us the message that instructors should be very selective and sensitive regarding their out-of-class expectations of teacher trainees. Teacher trainees can be assisted in finding their own way independently of their instructors and becoming more self-directed and autonomous throughout their learning and development process. To achieve this goal, they can be offered relevant and carefully selected meaningful tasks and assignments to be done outside class hours to improve themselves in various components of language. Nunan and Lamb (1996, p.156) support this, saying that "autonomy describes a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of these decisions" without any involvement of a teacher or an institution. In addition to the things that instructors can get teacher trainees to do in order to foster autonomy, they should also consider reshaping their approach on condition that they believe in the benefit and practicality of some expectations, such as getting students to engage in a portfolio process and expecting them to read articles and write reviews of them or discuss them orally, which were scored relatively lower than the others in our study.

Some studies on learner automomy support our study and its findings in many ways. For instance, in a study carried out by Lee (1998), it was reported that some students

responded well to learner training work after they had signed a learner contract with their teacher.  Lee found that the more enthusiastic learners spent more time learning on their own and felt more positive about themselves and about learning both during and after a term in which self-directed learning had been actively promoted.  The less enthusiastic learners, on the other hand, suffered from low self-esteem and had an ambivalent attitude to learner autonomy and spent less time in self-study than their peers.  It could be said that providing learners with training within a group and individually on what and how to learn better in a self-directed manner can be a beneficial solution in helping them to become autonomous.

Considering our in-class and out-of-class expectations in teacher training context, one can say that creating alternative learning trials for students at various levels using the technological opportunities seems to be a good solution to the development of learner autonomy. This also implies self-directiveness.  In this sense, Trebbi (2008, p. 42-43), in a study that focused on the provision of alternative learning experiences with compulsory contributions to digital portfolios, reports the importance of "collaborative knowledge building" and says  that "the sharing of experiences and reflective negotiation of meaning in digital environments both offer powerful indications of students' representations and constitute resources for knowledge building."  Trebbi  stresses that "reflective verbalising of knowledge is a central constituent of teacher education because of its potential for uncovering intentionality as a component of concrete actions."  In addition to this, Trebbi also points out that "the transparency of digital learning environments" can be seen as an opportunity for teacher trainees and teacher educators to investigate "experience-based knowledge building".  Trebbi concludes saying that "freedom is enhanced through knowledge and consciousness", and it is "a noticeable prerequisite for the development of learner autonomy".

In a study on Turkish EFL teacher trainees' learning autonomy, Sert (2006) points out that the students seem to be unable to identify what language to master and how to do so efficiently, and hence, they lack the capacity for self-assessment in monitoring their own language learning process.  Sert suggests encouraging teacher trainees to become more autonomous and shows belief in the fact that increased awareness of autonomous learning and its benefits will enhance their own self-governing capacity which may contribute to higher achievement and motivation and naturally have a positive effect on the development of autonomous learning.  Similarly, based on his findings, Balçıkanlı (2010) says that teacher trainees should be placed at the centre of learning activities and offers some suggestions for teacher educators to lift barriers in students' minds concerning learner autonomy, such as engaging them in out-of-classroom tasks, involving them in decision-making on the learning and teaching processes, including strategy training in the syllabus to encourage student teachers to experience the use of strategies and making use of portfolios in the courses.  In a study with EFL learners, Bayat (2011b) stresses the significance of out-of-class language learning in the practice of autonomy and suggests using letter-writing activity, as a result of which the participants in her study showed higher levels of autonomy perception.  Lo (2010) reported in a study with Taiwanese EFL college students that the portfolio process enabled the students to engage in multi-domain learning and to practise autonomous learning, as a result of which the students' awareness of autonomous learning was enhanced.  Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010, p.383) suggest that "blog-assisted language learning can foster learner autonomy by developing students' language and cognitive skills and helping them to make more informed choices about their decisions."  Bhattacharya and Chauhan also stress that "blogging can develop independent decision-making skills and the ability to take independent action", and that "interdependence can be creatively used to advance independence rather than hinder it, especially in low-resource, low-proficiency pedagogic situations." Bhattacharya and Chauhan also find a correlation between intrinsic motivation factors and independent decision-making that may lead to the ability to execute independent actions.

Arslan (2014, p.145) suggests in a study with Turkish ELT students that application of blogs and portfolios in writing classes enhances teacher trainees' active participation in the writing practice by receiving teacher or peer feedback and giving feedback to their peers, and this may help to prepare them for their professional lives. In conjunction with this, we can also suggest that writing activities in various genres can be reflected into a portfolio work at freshman level in an integrated reading-writing course in EFL teacher training programs to help students develop their level and foster learner autonomy in a self-directed manner, and using blogs can also assist the process.

In conclusion, the instructors in an EFL teacher training context seem to have significant roles in praparing the ideal conditions for the exercise of learner autonomy when we view learner autonomy as "a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a social, and responsible person" as pointed out by Dam et al. (1990, p.102). As revealed by this study and many other studies from the past onwards, it is possible to foster learner autonomy in any EFL teacher training context by revisiting our in-class and out-of-class expectations of teacher trainees in order to pave the way for them to seek opportunities within the interpersonal dynamics of instructor-learner context. Based on the findings derived from this study, instructors in any ELT department should be as sensitive and selective as possible about their expectations of teacher trainees regarding in-class and out-of-class activities and tasks on the way towards developing their sense of autonomy. As there is no single best pedagogical procedure to realize this, creating a sense of self-directiveness and self-control in learning experiences in which teacher trainees are to take on responsibility needs to be taken into consideration as a pre-condition to succesful learning. We have to keep in mind that the experiences of teacher trainees as autonomus learners who know what and how to do and what strategies to use will definitely serve them in their career lives and guide them in modelling learner autonomy to their own students in various specific contexts and at various levels.

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