A QUALITATIVE STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF A 'SELF-RUNNING CLASS'

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Abstract:
The aims of this study are to describe 'Self-running class' project which is meant to provide maximum participation of pupils, assist them to set the learning goals, choose and apply learning techniques, brush up their study skills, monitor their performance, evaluate their academic progress, and measure its effect on learner autonomy. For the study, a qualitative research methodology was used in order to investigate and discuss the results of 'Self-running class' project as a means of developing secondary school learners' autonomy level. In this study, the data were collected by means of classroom observations recorded in descriptive and reflective fieldnotes, pupils' performance video-recordings and learning logs in the shape of E-Twinning twinspace page-discussions. This study also reports on the participants' experiences and reactions towards the application of 'Self-running class' project grounded in self-regulated learning. The results revealed that application of 'Self-running class' project contributed to the development of the pupils' autonomy level, namely, its five components: positive attitude, participation, reflection, decision making skills, interaction with others in the learning process, thus, making the participants partially capable of taking charge of their studies. It is believed that application of Class Jobs, giving learners multiple chances to practice various language skills, actively collaborate with each other, resulted in participants' gaining features of autonomous learners and findings acquired from the study contributed to clarification of the secondary school pupils' autonomy and the constituents which their level of autonomy comprises.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, teaching a second language, learner autonomy, self-regulated learning, 'self-running class'

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Аннотация:

Цели данного исследования - описать проект «Самообучающийся класс» ('Self-running class'), в основе которого лежит самоуправляемое обучение и который призван обеспечить максимальное участие учащихся, помочь им овладеть целеполаганием, выбирать и применять методы обучения, совершенствовать свои навыки обучения, отслеживать и оценивать собственную учебную деятельность, и проанализировать воздействие проекта на автономию учащихся. В исследовании использовались качественные методы, сбор данных был осуществлен с помощью классных наблюдений, зафиксированных в описательных и рефлексивных полевых заметках, видео-записей деятельности учеников и письменных дискуссий на страницах платформы образовательных проектов E-Twinning. В этом исследовании также изложены опыт и ответная реакция участников в течение выполнения проекта «Самообучающийся класс». Результаты показали, что претворение проекта «Самообучающийся класс» в жизнь способствовало повышению уровня автономии учеников, а именно, развитию/активизации ее пяти составляющих: позитивного отношения, участия, рефлексии, навыков принятия решений, кооперации с другими в процессе обучения, что в свою очередь сделало учеников способными брать на себя частичную ответственность за собственное обучение. Считается, что в результате применения на занятиях классных профессий (Class Jobs), дающих учащимся возможность активно практиковать различные языковые навыки и сотрудничать друг с другом, участники проекта приобрели черты «автономных» учащихся, а практические результаты, полученные в ходе исследования, способствовали разъяснению понятия автономии учащихся и компонентов автономии учеников средней школы.

Ключевые слова: английский как иностранный, обучение иностранному языку, автономия учащегося, самоуправляемое обучение, «самообучающийся класс»

1. Introduction

Learner autonomy defined as the degree of responsibility learners take for their own learning is one of the widely discussed and researched phenomena, recently brought under attention of English language teaching. Given that learner autonomy is considered to be one of the important goals in language education (Little, 2003; Shafiee and Yaraghi, 2018; Le Thi Cam Nguyen, 2012; Balcıkanlı, 2008; Öztürk, 2019), language teachers have to develop better understanding and promote autonomy of EFL learners. Learner autonomy is, for its part, tightly bound to self-regulated learning that (Zimmerman, 2001) consists of self-regulated processes like self-motivation, planning, goal setting, use of learning strategies, self-monitoring, help-seeking, self-evaluation and attention control, most of which are considered as inevitable aspects of learner autonomy development.

The majority of those who contributed to the development of learner autonomy believe that learner autonomy is a must as, firstly, autonomous learning is essential in education whose goal is to enable people to think, act and learn independently; secondly,

learner-centered teaching has become a concern; thirdly, responsibility of learners for their own learning accounts for greater achievement; fourthly, an encouragement of classroom autonomy increases student performance and stimulates motivation and self-esteem which, in turn, boosts achievement rates.

A language teacher is supposed to create favourable conditions which can trigger learning activities. 'Self-running class', whose goal is to increase learner autonomy, is a project which aims at having learners (aged between 11 and 15) participate in English lessons more actively through having class jobs, getting them to gain confidence in speaking foreign language, teaching them to plan and have their own lessons with activities they choose within the course curriculum, having learners decide, choose and do class jobs (duties) as lessons evolve. Pupils, while working collectively, make and use a learning plan, create situations of learning themselves, observe the process of studying, evaluate their own performance, criticize, generate their own ideas, reflect upon their learning, change their lesson environment according to the situations they are exposed to. All in all, jobs are supposed to be very beneficial in many aspects as language, lessons, discipline, self-confidence, respect, skills of planning and timing, decisions, mood and even desire to study and learn. Learners' speaking skills are considered to develop along with grammar and vocabulary knowledge as pupils are not limited by the course book, its activities and curriculum. Class Jobs are deemed to provide full participation of almost all students in class thus giving them multiple opportunities to practice English speaking skills which results in gaining autonomy in speaking activity.

'Self-running class' has its roots in self-regulated learning (SRL). SRL, which means that rather than being passive recipients of information students contribute actively to their learning goals and exercise control over goal attainment, is seen as a means to improve achievement. SRL can help students create better learning habits and strengthen their study skills, apply learning strategies to enhance academic outcomes, monitor their performance and evaluate their academic progress. Zimmerman (1990) puts emphasis on the processes facilitating learning such as planning, setting personal goals, organizing, self-monitoring, self-efficacy, reconstructing and creating ideas, practicing automaticity and refining personal skills and behaviours. According to Zimmerman (2001), SRL takes place when firstly, students self-generate thoughts, feelings and actions to attain their learning goals. Secondly, students while monitoring the effectiveness of their learning methods choose one or another learning strategy. Thirdly, generated by self-concept motivation to persist in learning activities is supposed to play a role in the concept of self-regulated learning.

Generally, models of SRL have phases. One popular cyclical model has three distinct phases: forethought and planning, when students analyse the learning task and set specific goals toward completing it, performance monitoring, when students employ strategies to make progress on the learning task and monitor the effectiveness of those strategies as well as their motivation for continuing progress toward the goals of the task, and reflections on performance, when students evaluate their performance on the learning task with respect to the effectiveness of the strategies they chose. These self-

reflections then influence students' future planning and goals, initiating the cycle to begin again.

To promote SRL in classrooms, it is advised that teachers teach students self-regulated processes like goal setting, planning, self-motivation, attention control, flexible use of learning strategies, self-monitoring, appropriate help-seeking and self-evaluation.

2. Literature Review

The origin of autonomy goes back to thinkers such as Galileo, Rousseau, Dewey, Kilpatrick, Marcel, Jacotot, Payne and Quick who reflected on the autonomy at different times (Dinçer, 2010). Apart from them many scholars, researchers and educators (Nunan, 1996; Benson, 2001; Little, Ridley, Ushioda, 2003; Creswell, 2011; Yaraghi, Shafiee, 2018) have paid attention to the phenomenon investigating it from different perspectives and coming up with various characteristics describing autonomous learners.

According to Holec, learner autonomy, the ability to take charge of one's own directed learning, is to have and hold responsibility for all decisions concerning the following aspects of this learning: determining objectives, defining contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques to be used, monitoring procedures of acquisition, evaluating what has been acquired (Holec, 1981, as cited in Sofraci, 2016). Little (2003) presumes that learner autonomy, necessitating insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection and preparedness to be proactive in self-management, can be developed and enables learners to be responsible for their own learning through strategies and techniques utilized in the learning process. Benson (2007) points out that teachers cannot teach students to become autonomous but may create such atmosphere and conditions in which they will be encouraged to develop autonomy that they already have since human beings are born with autonomy. Balcıkanlı (2008) claims that Dickinson seems best to describe the profile of autonomous language learners who:

1) understand the input and the purpose of pedagogical choices;
2) are able to set learning goals;
3) are able to choose and utilize appropriate learning strategies;
4) are able to track implementation of strategies;
5) are able to self-assess, or monitor their own learning.

Although there are many ideas of what features autonomous language learners must have in existing expanding literature, there is nevertheless broad agreement that autonomous learners understand the purpose and accept responsibility for their learning, take the initiative in determining learning goals, planning and executing learning activities, regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness. In other words, there is a consensus that the practice of learner autonomy requires insight, a positive attitude, a capacity for reflection, and a readiness to be proactive in self-management and in interaction with others.

An ideal foreign language class promoting learner autonomy is considered to be organized as a natural learning environment where learners test and investigate new things with the help of the same interactive mechanism they used in first language

acquisition. Learners are encouraged to participate in making decisions related to their own learning. Teachers facilitate the process. Thus, evaluation takes place and learning process becomes visible in this type of class. Learner autonomy favours pair and group work because pair and group work develop learners' capacity to use the target language. In addition, learners learn to negotiate meaning, transmit the message, listen for a reason so that they can establish links between classroom and the world outside the school, and improve their social abilities as well as their proficiency levels.

The following are the ways advised to enhance learner autonomy:

1) explain teacher/learner roles from the outset;
2) encourage students to speak only English in classroom;
3) focus attention on fluency rather than accuracy;
4) motivate students to be interdependent and to work collectively (the less students
5) depend on their teacher, the more autonomy develops);
6) move gradually from interdependence to independence (give the learners time to familiarize with new learning strategies);
7) ask students to write about their learning experiences so that they may become
8) more aware of their learning preferences;
9) stress the importance of peer-editing, corrections, and follow-up questioning;
10) get the learners to prepare projects outside the classroom to increase motivation and to have classroom duties to perform (taking roll, writing instructions, notices, etc.);
11) hold sessions to help learners gain insights into their learning styles and strategies;
12) instruct students on how to use available resource centres;
13) have students design lessons or materials to be used in class. (MEB, 2006, as cited in Inozu, 2011).

2.1 Studies on learner autonomy measurement

Important factors affecting the measurement of learner autonomy are discussed by Benson (2001), who treated learner autonomy as the capacity to take control of one's own learning, because "control" appears to be more investigatable than "charge" or "responsibility". He states that, firstly, learner autonomy is a multi-component phenomenon including learners' control over learning process components such as setting purposes, planning and organizing learning, self-accessing, reflecting on the value of activities that are used to improve learning, interacting with others in the learning process. He also claims that the extent and the degree to which learners are autonomous is bound to some variables such as the cultural context, particular situation, stage of learning, individuals themselves and their experiences. Secondly, learners might not necessarily use the skills of being autonomous though they know how to control and manage their learning. Thirdly, the more mature learners become, the more autonomy they gain (Benson, 2001, as cited in Çakıcı, 2015).

It is also said that without empirical evidence, it is difficult to exhibit the actual development in the learners' autonomy or to verify the fruitfulness of the certain approach utilized to advance learner autonomy. Some qualitative assessment tools to

reveal this evidence, as proposed by Mynard (2006), may include students' diaries (Dam, 1995; Matsumoto, 1996; Porto, 2007), portfolios (Gottlieb, 1995; Gardner & Miller, 1999; Yang, 2003; Nunes, 2004), or interviews (Sinclair, 1999a), (as cited in Everhard, Murphy, 2015).

There are several practical studies investigating learner autonomy from different perspectives. Yıldırım (2008) mentioned some studies owned by Cotterall (1999), Murray (1999) and Chan (2001). Cotterall's research resulted in the conclusion that the role of the teacher and feedback, the learner's sense of self-efficacy, important strategies, dimensions of strategies-related behaviour and the nature of language learning influenced learners' autonomous behaviour. A study, conducted by Murray with French second language learners studying by means of interactive video program, revealed that motivation played a great role in learner autonomy. Hong-Kong study on learners' perceptions of learner autonomy belongs to Chan, whose findings showed that state of being autonomous learners arose positive attitudes and among important factors fostering learner autonomy there were learners' involvement and activities, boosting interest and motivation. Yıldırım (2008) indicated perceptions, behaviours and positive attitudes towards learner autonomy of Turkish ELT students willing to take responsibility and control of their own learning English. Chu's study on Taiwanese learners' and teachers' consideration of learner autonomy in EFL conversation classrooms demonstrated their positive attitudes towards learner autonomy and the factors like learners' willingness to take responsibility, low motivation, lack of learning goals of the course and lack of learner training on learning strategies were found to affect learners' expectations of learner autonomy (Chu, 2004, as cited in Öztürk, 2019). Öztürk (2019) touched upon works of Çakır and Balcıkanlı (2012), who contributed to this field of study by integrating autonomy principles into learning and future teaching practices of the student-teachers who were positive and enthusiastic about application of, for example, the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), which resulted in a positive effect on participants' self-awareness and attempts towards being more autonomous. He also remarked about Kojima (2008), Fabela-Cardenas (2012) and Gabryś-Barker (2017), who reported positive perceptions of their participants towards learner autonomy. Barlas (2012) found that learner autonomy stimulators are certain areas such as finding their own learning methods, formulating their own explanations, interaction pattern, course content, self-assessment and course objectives; on the other hand, record keeping and classroom management were considered as less suitable aspects for learner autonomy (Barlas, 2012, as cited in Öztürk, 2019). Yıldırım, who carried his study on beliefs and practices of Turkish EFL instructors regarding learner autonomy, found that the participants had positive opinions about learner autonomy, and they, being fond of fostering learner autonomy, were willing to help their learners be more involved in learning process; however, thought that the learners did not make much effort to be more autonomous (Yıldırım, 2014, as cited in Öztürk, 2019). Sofracı (2016), investigating the perceptions of EFL instructors and Turkish EFL pre-service teachers regarding learner autonomy, pointed out that most participants backed promotion of learner autonomy and pre-service teachers were more supportive of *engaging* learners as *decision-makers*

who made up their minds about course objectives, content, time, place and pace of the lesson, record keeping, interaction pattern, classroom management and homework tasks, than in-service ones. According to Balcıkanlı (2008), Turkey has a teacher-centered educational system where traditional teaching methods are applied, individuality and creativity are not encouraged and learners do not tend to be responsibility takers for their own learning during educational processes. Üstünlüoğlu (2009) mentions that the majority of Turkish students lacks the necessary critical thinking and reflection skills and fails to direct and keep track of their own learning. Students yield responsibility to teachers, while they perceive themselves capable in several areas such as choosing learning activities and objectives inside/outside class, deciding how long to spend on each activity and evaluating learning. Thus, researchers emphasize the need to integrate learner independence into the language curriculum, with a well-structured focus, delivery, and content and strongly recommend that learner autonomy be improved in the context of language learning/teaching in the Turkish context.

In this regard, E-twinning project, named 'Self-running class', was generated to answer the question of how Turkish school learners can be helped to become more autonomous in the EFL school context where not much freedom is allowed.

2.2 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to describe 'Self-running class' project and measure the impact of this project on learner autonomy of the 6th graders. The following research question was addressed throughout the study:

- How does 'Self-running class' affect learner autonomy?

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted at a private college in Kayseri in Turkey where pupils of secondary school receive a four-year education learning English language as a foreign language. For this study, E-twinning 'Self-running class' project, whose goal is to increase learners' autonomy, was chosen and applied.

The study involved 41 Turkish 6th graders, 14 males and 27 females, ranging in age from 10 to12. Purposeful sampling has been applied that is 82 6th graders had an English language placement test and half of them with higher score were invited to participate in the project since the teacher-researcher, being a foreigner, could use minimum of Turkish language while teaching English and needed learners understanding as much as possible of all English instructions and explanations. 41 pupils were selected in case many of them wouldn't be willing to participate actively and generate necessary data. The participants were in their second semester of the educational year. They were informed about the project, introduced as an E-twinning project, but had no idea that they were under investigation as the researcher intended to explore the phenomenon in a natural environment. Before starting the project, permission papers were obtained from pupils'

parents who were informed about the fact that all data except for names, surnames and faces of pupils could be viewed by individuals outside of the project.

3.2 Procedure

The study used a three-step procedure: introduction and implementation of the 'Self-running class' project, data collection and data analysis.

Step 1: Introduction and Implementation of the 'Self-running class' project

At the beginning of the 2nd semester, which lasted 18 weeks, pupils were asked to participate in the E-Twinning project named 'Self-running class' which was applied within the English course curriculum for the 6th graders in a Turkish private school in Kayseri. Class Dojo application was used for giving positive and negative points.

In the first week the project was introduced to the participants and as a result started.

In the second week possible class jobs that could be fulfilled while having English lessons were discussed. The participants were informed about the fact that other jobs could be created and implemented when needed.

In the third week the pupils were invited to the Twinning space. They started deciding on jobs and their duties. At the beginning of every lesson the teacher would give a plan that said what had to be done at the lesson time to the coordinator and would point at the most important things. Then the coordinator would start the lesson introducing her/himself and saying what the participants were going to do, then the coordinator would invite 'workers' to do their jobs in turn. The number of class jobs depended on the lesson plans and varied according to situations experienced. The teacher monitored the lessons and helped when needed. When the teacher needed to have her own lessons without class jobs, she would announce that in the class. During lessons the teacher-researcher kept descriptive and reflective fieldnotes, video recorded performances of pupils (jobs they did) and participated in page-discussions together with pupils after the lessons. In that way the whole second semester went on.

The following are the examples of mostly performed class jobs:

- *Coordinator*'s duties were to take plan of the lesson from the teacher, fulfill it when coordinating the lesson, timing all activities, inviting 'workers' to do their jobs, grading pupils' activities together with the teacher, choosing the best (gets 30 points) and outstanding (gets 20 points) pupils.
- *Teacher's Assistant* was responsible for writing a lesson report. He/she observed the pupils and wrote what they usually/never/sometimes... did, were doing then, (do at the lesson time, have done, going to do). The aim was to practice grammar material in particular tenses. Teacher assistant's duty became very famous in the class as the teacher and the students decided to give as many positive Dojo Class points as sentences the assistant wrote. After the lesson finished the assistant gave the paper to the teacher and the teacher corrected mistakes. That is how number of right sentences became clear and points were given to the assistant.

- *Warning Inspector* was in charge of warning and writing trouble-makers. Those who were warned 3 times got negative points in *ClassDojo*. When writing the names of the trouble-makers he/she had to state the reason for warning. Thus, he/she had duties to warn, note and disqualify trouble-makers from any activity for a short time.
- *Judge* was selected to solve problems appearing in the class. When a student found a situation disturbing or got treated unfairly in the class, he/she could write a note to the judge explaining everything. The judge read the note loudly and tried to find a solution. He/she could ask help from the pupils. They could vote for one or another solution.
- *10-Minute-Teacher* dealt with teaching something. Before the lesson he/she learnt the material to be explained and taught that to the pupils. He/she could deal with exercises in the course book and so on.
- *Karaoke Inspector* was a person finding a song to be learnt and sung in the class.
- *Points Monitor* kept writing points of pupils which they gained or lost for doing any activity. Later on, he/she awarded points in *ClassDojo.*
- *Mood Corrector* was invited to break a lesson when concentration level seemed to be going down. He/she prepared an activity to entertain pupils beforehand and fulfilled it in the lesson time.
- *Gossip Box Keeper* got notes from the pupils as a lesson evolved. They wrote funny messages. At the end of the lesson he/she read all of them loudly.
- *Mistakes Monitor* noted, corrected and explained mistakes with the help of the teacher.

At the end of the last week of the semester all data were gathered, transcribed, checked and analysed.

Step 2: Data Collection

In order to obtain triangulation and to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the qualitative data, three instruments were used: classroom observations, pupils' performance video-recording and learning logs in the shape of E-Twinning twinspace page - discussions (forum - discussions) which can be viewed on https://twinspace.etwinning.net/85023/forum/ 81426.

Learning logs were used to record pupils' ideas about possible jobs to diversify activities, feedback in the form of opinions on fulfilled jobs and their benefits in terms of English learning, opinions on their behaviour during the class time. The purpose of the learning logs was to explore autonomous behaviour demonstrated by the participants. The learning logs were checked by the researcher on a weekly basis for the feedback. The students were provided with the researcher's comments on their reflections, which was done to encourage the learners to write more frequently.

Classroom observations and video-recording of pupils' performances (jobs they did) were conducted to track any features of learners' autonomy in pupils. A changing observational role was performed by one of the researchers who kept descriptive and reflective fieldnotes as well as video recorded subjects by means of a smartphone. Video

recordings were replayed later and notes regarding observable features of learner autonomy were taken.

Step 3. Data Analysis

The data obtained from each source were analysed separately. For this purpose, only the statements in relation to learner autonomy were noted. Qualitative content analysis (Creswell, 2011) was applied. The analysis had three stages: multiple reading and making notes (choosing data related to autonomy dimensions), transforming notes into emergent themes, and seeking relationship (Pietkiewicz and Smith, 2014). Repeated patterns were labelled, coded and these codes were reduced to major themes through the process of eliminating redundancies at the end of the analysis. To ease the analysis, the coloured coding system was deployed. 5 colours were used in the coding system: **red** colour emphasizes pupils' positive attitude, **blue** colour portrays participation, **black** colour depicts reflection, **violet** colour shows interaction with others, **green** colour illustrates decision making skills.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed five major themes which are explained below.
A. The first major theme was positive attitude which is mentioned in literature as one component of learner autonomy.

Results obtained from the study showed that participants liked the idea of 'Self-running class' and had positive attitude towards its implementation. According to the pupils, jobs were good and interesting, they helped them learn to study on their own and get them to love English lessons. Observation revealed that subjects viewed responsibilities assigned to them and later chosen by them as attractive and useful. As some of the pupils explained briefly (error correction was not applied):

"I love jobs because we learn how to do things on our own",

"Jobs cause loving English lessons, I think class jobs are awesome",

"a lesson with jobs are more enjoyable than a lessons without jobs."

In the classroom observation and video files it was marked that the subjects in general had strong desire to have this kind of classes instead of the regular ones, they were very creative and willing to find new kinds of jobs in order to diversify activities they wanted to perform on their own and to have maximum number of jobs that would be enough to satisfy the class. There were only a few subjects complaining about or expressing negative attitude towards having jobs in the class due to the noise and discipline problems occurred, as those subjects could not tolerate any kind of disorder happening even during usual lessons.

The following excerpts in Table 1 provide illustrations of the points mentioned above.

Table 1: Examples of the researcher's notes related to positive attitude

Data Collection	Examples
Field-notes and Videos	'they liked the idea of having jobs'; 'they do not want me to have usual lessons'; 'they sulk when we have usual lessons without jobs and get unhappy when the time is up and they can't perform the jobs'; 'promising to behave themselves so that they may have jobs'; 'participants get unhappy when the jobs are cancelled due to some serious discipline problems.'

B. The second major theme that the data revealed, and literature emphasized was participation.

The classroom observation and video-recording displayed more evidence of the pupils' participation at the lesson time, while the participants' writing proved their involvement in after-school hours, which can be considered as the signs of autonomous behaviour. It was observed that the pupils took part in the lessons by performing different kinds of jobs, participated in making decisions and writing in their forums, were busy with planning their lessons together with the teacher and employing different ways of learning English materials, took charge of their discipline, rewards and punishment. There were even error correction activities done by the subjects under control of the teacher. Almost everyone wanted to have a job or a responsibility and tried to fulfill one of them at least one time. Some respondents stated the following **(**error correction was not applied):

"when we vote about it the class chooses song and dance",

"Gossip Box keeper gets notes from the pupils as a lesson evolves, at the end of the lesson he/she reads all of them loudly",

"I'm mood corrector but he or she gave to karaoke inspector 10 minute' judge can look timer's list and he or she can solve this and many other problems".

The excerpts in Table 2 portray the things mentioned above.

Table 2: Examples of the researcher's notes related to participation

Data Collection	Examples
Field-notes and Videos	'they are trying hard to speak English not only at the lesson time but also at breaks – we have decided not to speak Turkish at school'; 'when Ramadan month came they wrote compositions about this month and its meaning and wanted me to share them with our partner school'; 'we stick to the lessons' plans varying approach to activities and catching any single chance to speak, read, write and react in English, they have freedom to choose activities appropriate for achieving the goal';

	'pupils have become the main resource of English'; 'on the day of composition, she takes her time to introduce the topic and give examples'.

C. The third major theme extracted from the data was reflection.

As it was recorded and noted, the subjects were aware of the processes going on, they were able to track their own learning process, to create situations of learning for themselves, monitor and self-access their own performance while being under supervision of the teacher. Pupils did not hesitate to express their own ideas about any event or situation they experienced, thus reflecting on almost everything that happened during the semester. Below are some responses regarding reflection from different pupils (error correction was not applied):

"I want to speak about the problems which are because of us. some of my friends don't know enough thing about jobs. at start teacher told but their englishes are not fine. They couldn't understand true. And the second one is the students are not recognized why there are jobs. they only think about point and doing job. So, they can't improve their selves. The third is taking note. at the beginning of year, we bought notebooks and we should take notes of course. but they both don't listen the lesson and don't write anything. when teacher says "please write the sentences on board", "they always say", "we haven't got paper". In my opinion we should care about this topic. teacher you are very good teacher. You never shout. They are taking advantages of it. So, they think like ı don' have to listen the lesson all in all they won' give me any punishment. But they are doing the worst thing to themselves. they should recognize it."

"That was great but ı was very nervous. And ı tried to get more self-confidence actually ı was not believing myself very much and when ı came to stage my all speech has gone because of feeling excited"

"we were writing only warnings. it was good. and now we are writing sentences in different tenses. It is better. Of course, first was good too but it isn't as good as now".

The excerpts in Table 3 prove the points presented above.

Table 3: Examples of the researcher's notes related to reflection

Data Collection	Examples
Field-notes and Videos	'pupils gain more and more self-confidence being not afraid to talk much in English with or without mistakes'; 'When the Judge had minimum 3 written complaints-problems, she asked permission to take the stage in order to read notes and announce her decisions'; 'they can discuss and criticize my behavior'; 'Public speaking skills develop along with grammar and vocabulary knowledge as pupils are not limited by the course book, its activities and curriculum'; 'Everyone can freely express their ideas and opinions'.

D. The fourth major theme obtained from the data was decision making skills.

The subjects showed features of creative decision makers. They were able to set certain objectives, state their own learning goals, they considered different learning strategies they already knew and applied earlier, relevant tools and resources that they could find to learn what was needed to be studied, they put effort into their efficient implementation. Decisions regarding classroom rules were made mostly by the learners. Some of the responses showing the pupils' decision-making skills are as follows (error correction was not applied):

"I think we must do a homework to check the homework, it will be good because we can learn lots of things."

"But we can say our objections to judge. And judge solves problems. After our problems will be solved."

"İf class things the real trouble maker is he or she. They should vote. İf the voting shows one of the trouble maker he or she; CTA can't do anything he or she must obey this decision. Finally, CTA says him or her idea to teacher."

The excerpts in Table 4 represent the facts narrated above.

Table 4: Examples of the researcher's notes related to decision making skills

Data Collection	Examples
Field-notes and Videos	'Another idea is to have a composition inspector who will give and explain necessary vocabulary for a composition, mention the structure of it etc.'; 'He takes vocabulary list from the teacher and studies the words and expressions to be used in composition'; 'They have got a new idea to have a homework inspector to check pupils' homework and to report to the teacher'; 'It was decided that in order to prevent discipline problems all complaints were supposed to be written on paper and given to the Judge'; 'They worried about having no opportunity to write from home. 'Twin space inspector' is a new job which is chosen to give opportunity to those who have no internet/computer or smart phone at home. Thus, when 'Twin space inspector' starts working, he/she has some time to use the smartboard and internet connection in the class to participate in Forum and write his-her ideas/answers ..to the twinspace'.

E. The final major theme extracted from the data was interaction with others in the learning process.

The data showed that the subjects discussed everything, listened to the peer's offers and suggestions, they voted for applying activities and jobs, cooperated performing them, monitored the execution of the planned activities, asked for explanation, help and advice, obeyed the rules set by the class. Thus, pupils had coordination of the lessons in their hands feeling more responsible for the process of studying and the results. Below are some responses regarding this theme (error correction was not applied):

"I think we can have a Smart Board inspector. Because we need to prepare the board before the lesson. And they can prepare the songs, films (we have some jobs to entertain). The Smart Board inspector can take the USB key to open the smart board and he/she doesn't let others touch to board."

"if there is no judge everybody will have different ideas about problems and the problems will mix more."

"we discussed it at the very beginning and we start at the beginning to unit 12′s reading part. After we have 10 minutes left in our lessons honorable-chair can invite theatre inspector and he / she she can helps us to study to theatre."

The excerpts in Table 5 illustrate the items reported above.

Table 5: Examples of the researcher's notes related to interaction with others

Data Collection	Examples
Field-notes and Videos	'Pupils are learning to plan their activities together, collaborate, fulfill responsibilities and duties, respect discipline'; 'Pupils are voting for a new job-'eraser'. The duty is to remember everything written on the board and repeat it together with the class after the board is cleaned. Aim – to draw attention to the board, to revise vocabulary, make up sentences with the new words and boost memory. After cleaning the board, the Eraser has to rewrite everything back and work with the class'; 'We have also tried another interesting job - 'translator' who is responsible for helping others to understand words and phrases by using dictionary when necessary: 'translator' helps classmates to speak English when they have difficulties and translates for them when they do not understand what the teacher says (Google translate, tureng dictionary are applied)'; 'applying shocking therapy - unexpectedly randomly choosing a person to speak non-stop for1-2 min. about any topic the coordinator chooses (the rest of the class try to track the mistakes-later discussion and correction)'; 'they are open to anybody's offers and suggestions, they vote for applying activities and jobs'.

Apart from the major themes mentioned above, there were different results which seemed not describing learner autonomy but were considered worth mentioning as they played important roles as the motivational aspect.

First, enjoyment was another frequently voiced item which the subjects cared much about. Participants wanted to have 'Self-running classes' instead of usual ones because they regarded them as entertaining and usual ones (teacher-centered) – boring. As indicated by some informants **(**error correction was not applied):

"lessons with jobs are more enjoyable than a lessons without jobs"

"I think this activity will be enjoyable for us. And we can study English, too"

"I said it before jobs helps us to having fun in lessons."

Second, motivation to fulfill the assigned/chosen jobs seemed mostly to be opportunity for the participants to get Class Dojo points, simply put, a reward. The following excerpts presented below reflect some of the subjects' views regarding Class Dojo points (error correction was not applied):

"if she writes many many sentences, she gets many many points"

"And when you are teacher assistant if you know English well and you can write fast you can take 100 points in a lesson."

"when you are teacher assistant it means you will have many points. I think the point ins. Is better job because you can see the other's points".

All in all, it was spotted that learners' autonomy largely depended on their motivation that was boosted by Class Dojo points and entertainment, which is seen one of the important factors influencing learner autonomy in the learning process (Benson, 2007). At this point it is important to note that these results concerning motivation of the secondary school learners to study English, which is bound to their positive attitude towards the project applied, bring about the necessity for further research that will explore relationship between learner autonomy and motivation and find different kinds of stimuli for the pupils.

5. Recommendations

As the research mainly focused on describing the aspects of autonomous behaviour of the secondary school learners who were under the effect of the applied project and the teacher who mainly spoke English because of being a foreigner, it is obvious that more research in different contexts with different subjects is in need in order to get more solid conclusions on Turkish pupils' autonomy. Usage of quantitative methods together with qualitative ones can be put into practice, for it is claimed that integration of qualitative and quantitative methods contributes to a more complete and synergistic utilization of data. Agenda of further studies can examine primary and high school Turkish learners' autonomy, determine autonomy practices and the ways to integrate them into learning process of the pupils, study the relationship between motivation and learner autonomy and find different kinds of stimuli for the EFL pupils to become autonomous learners.

6. Conclusion

The current research that was conducted in a sample of 41 Turkish 6th graders, ranging in age from 10 to 12, by means of classroom observations, pupils' performance video-recording and learning logs in the shape of E-Twinning twinspace page-discussions,

described 'Self-running class' project and examined the impact of 'Self-running class' project on learner autonomy of the 6th graders learning English as a foreign language. It aimed to find out and investigate aspects of the secondary school pupils' learner autonomy through applying 'Self-running class'.

Based on the excerpts and the findings of the qualitative data, it can be clearly seen that this project contributed to the learner autonomy of the 6th graders in five main aspects: positive attitude, participation, reflection, decision making skills, interaction with others in the learning process, thus, making them partially able to take charge of their own learning. More specifically, under control and supervision of the teacher-researcher and only to the extent children can do, could the participants hold the responsibility for the decisions concerning aspects of their learning, set their own learning goals within the limits of the curriculum, select relevant methods and techniques, tools and resources to reach those objectives, track their own performance and evaluate what and how it was fulfilled. The participants could take the initiative in planning and executing learning activities while exhibiting positive attitude towards the way the learning process was conducted, participating and reflecting on every single step taken by them (Little, 2003; Benson, 2001) and interacting with other peers (Nunan, 1996). These findings show parallelism with what the literature states in general.

Application of 'Self-running class', which aims at setting conditions that enable secondary school learners to contribute to the development of their autonomy level, is believed to be helpful for raising the autonomy level of the secondary school pupils as they participated in English lessons more actively through having class jobs, gained confidence in speaking English, got experience in making and using a learning plan, creating situations of learning for themselves, monitoring the process of learning, evaluating their own performance, generating their own ideas, reflecting upon their learning, criticizing, changing their lessons' environment according to the situations they were exposed to while having their own lessons with activities they chose within the course curriculum. Class Jobs are deemed to provide participation of almost all students in the class thus giving them multiple opportunities to practice various language skills, interact and cooperate with each other which results in participants' gaining features of autonomous learners.

The study was conducted in a specific context with a limited number of the participants being under control and supervision of their teacher; their English learning process was conditioned by the English lesson curriculum, the course book and the applied project, which can relatively be regarded as limitations. However, it is believed that the findings derived from the study shed light on understanding of the secondary school pupils' autonomy and the aspects which their level of autonomy consists of.

In conclusion, the findings of the current study suggest some implications for English language teaching and learning:

- firstly, the findings can help teachers understand the components of secondary school learners' autonomy and learners can depend on themselves in learning English;

- secondly, teachers are supposed to enhance the school learners' autonomy so as to enable pupils to study on their own;
- thirdly, E-Twinning project 'Self-running class' can be a tool used to develop school learners' autonomy by foreign language teachers.

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