Extended Summary

Perceptions of Graduate Students about Autonomous Learning Skills

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Introduction

It is seen that researches in the literature about autonomous learning are generally about analyzing the autonomy of teachers, primary, secondary, high school and university students in foreign language teaching. But it is seen that there are no research results in the literature about determining autonomous learning skills of graduate students. It is believed that, this research will make contributions to the scientific literature and will light the way for future studies and researches.

The goal of this research is to determine the perceptions of graduate students about autonomous learning.

Method

Qualitative research method is use in this research. As this research is carried out in order to reveal the perceptions of graduate students about autonomous learning, case study (one of the qualitative research designs) is conducted. Sample of the research is made of 37 graduate students studying in 2013-2014 academic year, fall semester. Criterion sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods, is used in this research. According to this, the key criterion of participators is being either a graduate or doctoral student. Open ended question form is used as data collection tool in the research. Descriptive analysis technique is used in order to analyze the data obtained from the research. Data are presented by taking the questions in the form into consideration. On the other hand, direct quotations are included in order to reflect the views of graduate students.
Findings and Conclusion

In the research, it is determined that students had the characteristics of learning autonomously. Most of the students stated that they can reach necessary sources and materials, which is one of the characteristics of autonomous learning. In addition to these, they stated that they direct learning processes, determine learning methods, make researches, determine learning requirements, make self-evaluation, have internal motivation, plan learning processes, can use technological materials and take the responsibility of learning process.

It is determined in the research that students are active in decision-making processes, namely determine their learning goals. Most of the students said that they determine their goals by taking learning requirements into consideration. Besides that, students mentioned that they determine their goals in the shape of short-middle-long term, from easy to difficult, as specific-general and they added that they analyze the literature, take the principle of successiveness into consideration and relate them with real life while determining their goals.

In addition to these, students participated in the research stated that they can autonomously learn any issue they need to learn without support. They said that they are aware of the learning strategies that they use in these learning processes and they use the strategy of note-taking very often. They added that they also use underlining, repeating, relating, summarizing and coding strategies.

Another significant result of this research is that students are able to make personal evaluations about their learning after the process of autonomous learning. Most of the students said that they evaluate themselves by making practices. They said that they also evaluate themselves by solving questions, taking experts’ opinions into consideration, reviewing the process, benefiting from predetermined standards, participating in group discussions and repeating.

Besides these, students participated in this research stated that the education they receive during graduate education contribute to their autonomous learning skills. One other
important finding obtained from the research is that according to most of the students, the researches that they make during graduate education process make significant contributions to autonomous learning skills. On the other hand, according to students, doing homework, learning to analyze the literature according to the goal, increasing motivation, writing thesis/article, taking active part in learning process, participating in scientific activities, making group works, increasing the feeling of responsibility also contribute to autonomous learning skills.