Learner Autonomy and English Language Course Achievement Mediated by Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to determine learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement mediated by foreign language learning anxiety. In the study, carried with 472 undergraduate students, utilizing the relational survey model, it was found that students' foreign language learning anxiety and learner autonomy perceptions were at moderate level; there was a moderate, positive and significant relationship between learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety; there is a statistically insignificant, negative and close relationship between English language course achievement and foreign language learning anxiety and learner autonomy perceptions and this relationship does not predict English language course achievement significantly; therefore, foreign language learning anxiety could not have a meaningful mediation role in the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievements.

Keywords: Foreign language learning anxiety, Learner autonomy perception, English language course achievement, Foreign language education

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1. INTRODUCTION

The gradual lifting of borders and the emergence of the concept of multilingualism required a reorganization of foreign language education in Europe. To this end, Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) has been established by the Council of Europe's Department of Modern Languages (Mirici, 2000). Based on the philosophy of self-evaluation, cultural diversity, and learner autonomy, CEFR has developed European Language Portfolio. Turkey, wishing to enter the European Union, in accordance with this purpose, attaches importance to the regulation of foreign language teaching programs according to the standards established by the Council of Europe Department of Modern Languages (Demirel, 2004; Gedikoğlu, 2005). Therefore, the concept of "learner autonomy" comes to the forefront in foreign language teaching programs in Turkey.

Conceptual Framework

Learner autonomy, defined as the ability of the student to take responsibility for their own learning (Holec, 1981), also expresses attitudes of the student to observe their progress in learning (Scharle & Szabo, 2000) and thoughts about the learning process and content (Little, 1991: 24). Learner autonomy refers to the development of control mechanisms and decision-making in conjunction with the methods and techniques used to acquire the desired language skills in foreign language education (Benson, 2007). Learner autonomy does not mean to behave in an uncontrolled way and to have complete freedom; it is to have the initiative to make wise choices by trying to find oneself (Zoghi and Dehghan 2012). Students learn better only when they take responsibility for the content of their choice (Little, 1991: 48); therefore, the teacher becomes an instructive guide in an autonomous learning environment (Scharle and Szabo, 2000). Requiring a process, the steps of improving learner autonomy are to raise awareness of students, to change their attitudes, to organize semi-structured exercises, or to transfer the role of teachers (Scharle & Szabo, 2000). In order to develop autonomous learning skills, learners need to have "self-authorship", which means being aware of what they learn and why (Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981); to be aware of the learning process (Crookall, 1983; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Wenden, 1991) and to adopt a positive attitude towards lifelong learning, to acquire skills for self-managed learning, to have the ability to manage time, and to possess the ability to cope with stress and some affective factors that hinder their learning (Knowles, 1975: 23). It can be said that the most effective of these affective factors is anxiety.

Research in the field of affective factors indicated that foreign language learning anxiety had a significant effect on students' language performance (Scovel 1978; Horwitz, 1990). According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127), foreign language learning anxiety consists of a self-perception, feeling and behavior specific to foreign language classes due to the unique process of learning a foreign language.It can be associated with communication, exam and negative evaluation anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1991: 30-31). Being taught foreign language in the classroom, an artificial environment,

(Littlewood, 1984: 58-59), having low perceptions and self-confidence about their success (Clement, 1980, cited by MacIntyre, 1999: 32; Horwitz & Young, 1991) are the factors causing students to experience this anxiety. It should be handled differently from other types of anxiety because people trying to learn language feel themselves in a very different environment with this language and perceive it as a threat to their identity and fear rather than create excitement in language learning (Allwright & Bailey, 1991: 175). In learning a foreign language, as students are not exposed to the target language in daily life, time spent for foreign language education does not exceed a few hours per week, and therefore such learning environment provides little input and interaction to the student, it is possible for students to acquire better language proficiency by taking responsibility for their own learning (Kormos & Csizer, 2014); in other words, by developing autonomous learning skills.

Related Studies

It is identified that autonomy perceptions of university preparatory students are insufficient and there is no relationship between their language achievement and autonomy perceptions (Demirtaş & Sert, 2010); students' English proficiency is significantly and positively related to their autonomy (Dafei, 2007); students' perceptions of autonomy are high in general and the higher perception of autonomy the greater success of reading comprehension (Bayat, 2007);students' autonomous learning skills are above the intermediate level (Dede, 2017); female students are better than males in preparation, self-study, content selection and evaluation / motivation for self-management in foreign language learning (Gömleksiz & Bozpolat, 2012).

In studies on foreign language learning anxiety, it is observed that students' higher levels of emotional intelligence significantly reduce their foreign language learning anxiety (Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008); a higher level of perceived proficiency in a language reduces foreign language learning anxiety (MacIntyre, Noels & Clément, 1997; Dewaele, Petrides & Furnham, 2008); there is no significant relationship between foreign language learning anxiety and gender (Altunkaya, 2017; Çubukçu, 2008; Genç, 2009; Latif, 2014; Rastegar, Akbarzadeh, & Heidari, 2012); female students have higher foreign language learning anxiety (Aida, 1994; Koul, Roy, Kaewkuekool & Ploisawaschai, 2009; Mesri, 2012; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013); male students have higher levels of foreign language learning anxiety (Awan, Azher & Naz, 2010; Na, 2007); students have medium level foreign language learning anxiety (Aida, 1994; Hashwani, 2008; Phillips, 1992); foreign language learning anxiety affects academic achievement and students with high foreign language learning anxiety have lower grades (Aksoy, 2012; Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012; Awan, Azher & Naz, 2010; Batumlu & Erden, 2007; Coulombe, 2000; Elkhafaifi , 2005; Gülözer, 2010; Horwitz, 1986, 2001; Karakış, 2014; Khodadady & Khajavy, 2013; Marcos-Llina´ s & Juan Garau, 2009; Na, 2007; Öner, 2008; Öner & Gedikoğlu, 2007); foreign language learning anxiety is mostly caused by speaking in front of others, concerns about grammatical errors, pronunciation and inability to speak spontaneously (Awan, Azher & Naz, 2010).

In the studies conducted by Oxford, Park-Oh & Sumrall (1993), Vatanartıran, Dalgıç & Karadeniz, (2014), Deniz, Gülden & Apaydın Şen (2013) and Andreou, Vlachos & Andreou (2005) it was concluded that there is a significant difference between gender and foreign language achievement in favor of female students. Furthermore, it is seen that there is a strong relationship between learner autonomy perceptions and English language achievement of students; foreign language learning anxiety was found to be significantly and negatively related to English language course achievement; foreign language learning anxiety significantly mediates the relationship between learner autonomy perceptions and English language achievement (Ghorbanejad & Ahmedabad , 2016); 22-25% of the students are very anxious and only 13-16% have learner autonomy perceptions; foreign language learning anxiety and learner autonomy perceptions of the students are at the same levels in pre and posttests, and only foreign language learning anxiety has a negative relationship with classroom performance of students (Shinge, 2005).

Importance and Purpose of the Research

With the present research, it has been tried to identify the factors that are important in developing autonomy skills of university students in language learning, to raise awareness about autonomous learning and foreign language learning anxiety and to contribute to the studies to be done in this field. In the relevant literature, only the study about learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement mediated by foreign language learning anxiety conducted by Ghorbanejad & Ahmedabad (2016) on high school students has been found; therefore, the present study is also thought to enrich the field.

Aiming to determine the aspects of the relationship between learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement mediated by foreign language learning anxiety of university students, the following problems are sought:

1. What are the aspects of the relationship between university students' learner autonomy perceptions, foreign language learning anxiety and English language course achievement?

2. Is there a meaningful relationship between university students' learner autonomy perceptions, foreign language learning anxiety and English language course achievement?

3. Do students' learner autonomy perceptions, foreign language learning anxiety and English language course achievement levels differ significantly according to their genders and types of high school they graduated?

4. Do students' learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety levels predict their English language course achievement significantly?

2. METHOD

Research Model

The present research, a descriptive study using survey method, is an exploratory relational design (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2011).

Study Group

The study group of this research is 472 students studying at a big university (about 33000 students and 1450 academic staff) located in Turkey's western black sea region. Frequency and percentage values of the independent variables analyzed via SPSS 21 program are summarized in Table 1

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Independent Variables

Variable	Level	N	%
Gender	Female	274	58,10
	Male	198	41,90
High School Type (Graduated)	Basic	47	10,00
	Religious Vocational	43	9,10
	Anatolian	134	28,40
	Anatolian Teacher Training	32	6,80
	Anatolian Fine Arts	37	7,80
	Vocational	179	37,90

As summarized in Table 1, the data of this study consists of 472 students;47 students graduated from basic, 43 from religious vocational, 134 from anatolian, 32 from anatolian teacher training, 37 from anatolian fine arts high and 179 from vocational high schools.

The normality of the general total scores of the scales was evaluated by examining the kurtosis and skewness coefficients and Q-Q graphs in both the general data set and the independent variables, and it was observed that these coefficients remained between ± 1.5. Descriptive statistics and kurtosis and skewness coefficients of independent variable groups are given in Table 2.2, Table 2.3 and 2.4. If the kurtosis and skewness coefficients are within ± 1.5, the distribution of the data set is assumed to be normal (Pituch & Stevens, 2016, p.228).

Table 2

Descriptive Analysis Results of the Scales According to General Data Set

Scale	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Language Learning Anxiety	387	45	225	158,59	39,41	-0,64	-0,10
Learner Autonomy Perception	387	41	100	77,57	11,45	-0,33	-0,42

Table 3

Descriptive Analysis of Scales According to Gender

Scale	Gender	N	Min.	Max.	Ave.	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Learner Autonomy Perception	Female	274	43	175	113,83	22,66	-0,27	0,71
	Male	198	38	165	109,42	22,07	-0,36	0,10
Language Learning Anxiety	Female	274	45	151	96,54	20,17	0,20	0,13
	Male	198	58	157	99,89	18,21	0,30	0,08

Table 4

Descriptive Analysis Results of Scales by Type of High School (Graduated)

Scale	High School Type	N	Minimum	Maximum	Average	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Learner Autonomy Perception	Basic	47	51	159	110,51	22,93	-0,62	0,64
	Religious Vocational	43	66	145	111,33	18,35	-0,39	-0,30
	Anatolian	134	50	171	111,64	22,12	-0,22	0,24
	Anatolian Teacher Training	32	49	175	116,19	25,43	0,08	1,04
	Anatolian Fine Arts	37	46	165	109,57	24,59	-0,18	0,34
	Vocational h	179	38	163	112,52	22,76	-0,39	0,56
Language Learning Anxiety	Basic	47	45	137	95,32	18,08	-0,40	1,00
	Religious Vocational	43	61	146	98,74	17,87	0,30	0,39
	Anatolian	134	47	148	98,40	21,00	0,17	-0,29
	Anatolian Teacher Training	32	72	150	103,28	17,36	0,78	0,66

Anatolian Fine Arts	37	50	144	99,38	21,90	0,28	-0,41
Vocational	179	55	157	96,86	18,72	0,25	0,38

Data Collection Tools and Process

Autonomy Perception Scale consisting 38 items being developed by Bayat (2007) ["taking responsibility for language learning" (17 items), "conducting extracurricular English activities" (7 items), "using metacognitive strategy" (9 items) and "correlating the language learned with real life" (5 items)dimensions] was used. Cronbach alpha reliability of subscales was found as 0.872, 0.775, 0,789 and 0,804, respectively; the overall reliability of the scale was calculated as 0.925 with layered alpha in the current study. Cronbach, Schonemann, and McKie (1965) propose the use of the Stratified Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the reliability of the composite scores obtained from the sub-dimensions. The stratified Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated using the "sirt" (Robitzsch, 2017) package in the R program. The scores obtained from the learner autonomy perception scale were evaluated over the total score in the present study as 105 points or less as low; scores between 106-124 points as moderate and scores 125 and above as high.

Single-factor Foreign Language Anxiety Scale, which Horwitz et al. (1986) developed and Horwitz (1986) conducted its validity and reliability study, was used. Turkish adaptation of the scale was made by Kunt (1997). The scale consists of 5-point Likert-type 33 items. In the current study Cronbach's alpha reliability of this scale was calculated as 0.90. In the present study, the scores between 33-77 points were evaluated as low; scores between 78-121 points as moderate; scores between 122-165 points as high.

2018-2019 Academic Year English II course grades were coded as "successful" for 55 points and above as "unsuccessful" for 54 points and below, in accordance with the student evaluation regulations of the related university.

To test the structural validity of scales, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in Mplus program based on polychoric correlation matrix, and Mean and Variance Adjusted Weighted Least Square (WLSMV) was used as the method. The results of the goodness of fit of the scales are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Compliance Goodness Index for Factor Structure of the Scales

Goodness Compliance Index	Acceptable Limit	ForeignLanguage Anxiety Scale	Autonomy Perception Scale
X^2/sd	<5 Medium Level <3 Good Fit	4054,15/495=8,19	3055,59/659=4,64

CFI	>0,90	0,73	0,87
NNFI	>0,90	0,71	0,86
RMSEA	<0,08	0,12	0,08

(Çokluk, Şekercioğlu & Büyüköztürk, 2010, p.271-272)

Data Analysis

The results of the first sub-problem are summarized by descriptive statistics. In the second sub-problem, the relationship between the scale total scores was expressed by Pearson correlation coefficient due to the normal distribution of the data, whereas the achievement of the foreign language course was expressed as an artificial two-category variable; thus, its relationship with the other two continuous variables was expressed by double-series correlation coefficient. The correlation results calculated in this study were interpreted over the limit values that Kirk (2008: 138) and Büyüköztürk (2011: 32) stated as frequently used. These limits are; the absolute value of the correlation coefficient is defined as a very high if r > 0.90; a high if r = 0.70-0.89; a moderate if r = 0.69-0.30, and a low level relationship if r ≤ 0.29. In the third sub-problem, because of the normal distribution of the scores for the Foreign Language Anxiety Scale and Autonomy Perception Scale for English Learners as a Foreign Language, the comparison of group means in the gender variable was analyzed with t test while ANOVA was used in the high school type from where the students graduated variable. The homogeneity of group variances was controlled by Levene test as summarized in Table 3.6 and it was observed that the variance of scale scores was homogeneous in the groups for both independent variables. For the results of the difference between the means of the group found to be significant at 0.05 alpha level, eta-square (η2) statistics were used to determine whether the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable was related to the sample size.η2, also called effect magnitude, indicates how much of the total variance in the dependent variable describes the independent variable and ranges from 0.00-1.00.This coefficient is interpreted as small for η2 = 0.01, medium for η2 = 0.06, and wide for η2 = 0.14 (Büyüköztürk, 2011, p.44).In the third sub-problem, the relationship between gender and high school type from where the students graduated variables was examined by chi-square analysis because of the categorical variance of foreign language achievement.

Table 6

Homogeneity test of scale scores for groups

Variable	Scale	Levene Statistics	sd1	sd2	p
Gender	Autonomy Perception	0,01	5	466	0,93
	Foreign Language Anxiety	1,19	5	466	0,28

High school Type (Graduated)	Autonomy Perception	0,41	5	466	0,84
	Foreign Language Anxiety	1,56	5	466	0,17

Regression analysis was used to investigate the mediation effect of students' foreign language learning anxiety levels on the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement. Logistic regression analysis was used because English language course achievement was taken as dependent variable and it was categorical.

3. FINDINGS

Students' learner autonomy perception, foreign language learning anxiety and English language course achievement levels were examined with mean and standard deviation values of the total scores for the scales, frequency and percentage values for the course achievement. The results of the statistical analysis of the scales are given in Table 7.

Table 7.

Mean and Standard Deviation of Perception and Anxiety Scales

Scale	Mean	SD
Learner Autonomy Perception	111,98	22,50
Foreign Language Anxiety	97,95	19,42

When Table 3.1 is examined, it can be said that students' learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety scores are at moderate level.

The frequency and percentages calculated to determine the level of achievement of the students are given in Table 8.

Table 8

Frequency and Percentage of Course Achievement Variable

Variable	Level	N	%
Achievement	Successful	309	65,50
	Unsuccessful	163	34,50

When Table 8 is examined, it is seen that 65.50% (N = 309) of the students are successful in foreign language course.

Findings Related to the Second Research Question

The relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions, foreign language learning anxiety levels and English language course achievements was examined by correlation analysis. The correlations between the three variables are given in Table 9.

Table 9

Relationship between Achievement, Learner Autonomy Perception and Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

Variables	Achievement	Lear. Auto. Per. Scale	Lang. Lear. Anx. Scale
Achievement	1		
Learner Autonomy Perception	-0,04	1	
Language Learning Anxiety	-0,05	0,31**	1

**p<0,01

When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between the total scores of the learner autonomy perception and foreign language anxiety scales (r = 0.31; p <0.01). However, that there is a non-significant, negative and close to zero relationship between the English language course achievement and foreign language learning anxiety and learner autonomy perceptions is found.

Findings Related to the Third Research Question

Whether the students' learner autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety levels change according to their gender was analyzed by independent t-test and types of high school they graduated were examined with one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Moreover, the chi-square analysis was used to determine whether the students' English language course achievement levels changed according to gender and types of high school they graduated.

The results of independent groups t-test analysis about whether students' learner autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety levels change according to gender are given in Table 10.

Table 10

Independent groupst-test results about whether students' learner autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety levels change according to gender

Scale	Variable	N	Mean	S.D.	t	sd	p	η²
Learner Autonomy Perception	Female	274	113,83	22,66	2,11	470	0,04*	0,01
	Male	198	109,42	22,07				
Foreign Language Anxiety	Female	274	96,54	20,17	-1,86	470	0,06	-
	Male	198	99,89	18,21				

*p<0,05

When Table 10 is examined, it is determined that learner autonomy perceptions of female students is significantly higher than that of males (t = 2.11; p = 0.04) and both female and male students have equal language learning anxiety levels.

Table 11 shows the mean and standard deviations of learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety of the students who graduated from different high schools.

Table 11

Mean Standard Deviations of Scales according to High School Type (Graduated)

Scale	High School Type (Graduated)	N	Mean	S.D.
Learner Autonomy Perception	Basic	47	110,51	22,93
	Religious Vocational	43	111,33	18,35
	Anatolian	134	111,64	22,12
	Anatolian Teacher Training	32	116,19	25,43
	Anatolian Fine Arts	37	109,57	24,59
	Vocational	179	112,52	22,76
Foreign Language Anxiety	Basic	47	95,32	18,08
	Religious Vocational	43	98,74	17,87
	Anatolian	134	98,40	21,00
	Anatolian Teacher Training	32	103,28	17,36

Anatolian Fine Arts	37	99,38	21,90
Vocational	179	96,86	18,72

When Table 11 is examined, it is seen that the number of students having attended vocational and anatolian high schools is much higher than the others. Moreover, it can be said that the mean scores of students' learner autonomy perceptions are relatively close to each other except the students' graduated from anatolian teacher high school. In foreign language anxiety scale, the average of students graduated from basic high school has decreased considerably, the average of students graduated from anatolian teacher high school has increased considerably, and the average of students graduated from other high school types are approaching each other.

The results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) about whether students' learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety change according to the type of high school students graduated are given in Table 12.

Table 12

ANOVA Results According to High School Type (Graduated)

Scale	Variability Source	Sum of Squares	sd	Average of squares	D	p
Learner Autonomy Perception	Between- groups	969,158	5	193,83		
	Within-groups	237402,63	466	509,45	0,38	0,86
	Total	238371,79	471			
Foreign Language Anxiety	Between- groups	1576,56	5	315,31		
	Within-groups	176125,12	466	377,95	0,83	0,53
	Total	177701,68	471			

When Table 12 is examined, it is seen that the mean scores of students' learner autonomy perceptions vary between 109.57 and 116.19 according to type of high school they graduated, and it is moderate in all high school types.According to the ANOVA analysis, the differences between thetypes of high school students graduated are not statistically significant (D (5,466) = 0.38; p = 0.86).In addition, when Table 4.5 is examined, it is seen that the average scores of foreign language learning anxiety ranged between 95.32 and 103.28 according to the type of high school students graduated and foreign language anxiety level is moderate in all high school types.According to ANOVA

analysis, the differences between the average of types of high school students graduated are not statistically significant (F (5,466) = 0.83; p = 0.53).

The results of Chi-square analysis performed to determine whether achievement levels of the students change significantly by gender are given in Table 13.

Table 13

Results of Chi-Square Analysis to Determine if Students' Achievement Levels Change Significantly by Gender

| Gender | Achievement Status | | | | Total | Chi-Square | sd | p |
| | Successful | | Unsuccessful | | | | | |
	N	%	N	%				
Female	202	73,72	72	26,28	274	19,70	1	0,00*
Male	107	54,04	91	45,96	198			

*p<0,05

When Table 13 is analyzed, it is seen that 73.72% of female students and 54.04% of male students are successful in the foreign language exam. According to chi-square analysis, female students are found to be more successful.

Table 14

Chi-Square Test Results by High School Type (Graduated)

| High School Type (Graduated) | Achievement Status | | | | Total | Chi-Square | sd | p |
| | Successful | | Successful | | | | | |
	N	%	N	%				
Basic	27	57,45	20	42,55	47			
Religious Vocational	27	62,79	16	37,21	43	57,90	5	0,00*
Anatolian High School	110	82,09	24	17,91	134			
Anatolian Teacher Training	29	90,63	3	9,38	32			

Anatolian Fine Arts	31	83,78	6	16,22	37
Vocational	85	47,49	94	52,51	179

*p<0,05

When Table 14 is examined, it is observed that students graduated from anatolian teacher training high schools got the highest percentage with 90.63% in the achievement status, while the least success is observed in the students graduated from vocational high school with 47.49%. According to chi-square analysis, students graduated from foreign language intensive high schools are found to be more successful in the foreign language exam.

Findings Related to the Fourth Research Question

Regression analysis was used to investigate whether foreign language learning anxiety level has a significant mediation role in the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement. The structural representation of the mediation effect is shown in Figure 1 Logistic regression analysis results are given in Table 15.
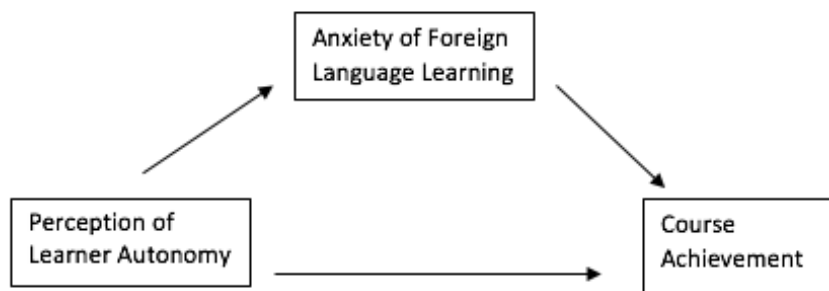

Figure 1. The structural representation of the mediation role of foreign language learning anxiety in the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement

Table 15

Logistic Regression Analysis of Students' Learner Autonomy Perception and Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Levels in Predicting their English Language Course Achievement

Variable	*B*	Std. Error	Wald	df	p
Learner Autonomy Perception	-0,002	0,005	0,228	1	0,633
Foreign Language Anxiety	-0,004	0,005	0,608	1	0,436
Fixed	-0,003	0,607	0,000	1	0,995

When Table 15 is examined, it is seen that students' learner autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety levels do not significantly predict their English language course achievement. Based on the fact that, beta coefficients of the independent variables predicting dependent variables are very low, it can be concluded that foreign language learning anxiety levels cannot have a meaningful mediation role in the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement. Based on these results, it is found unnecessary to provide statistics about the meaningful mediation role of foreign language learning anxiety levels.

4. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In the research, it has been determined that there is a significant difference between English language course achievement and gender in favor of female students and students who graduated from foreign language intensive high schools. Furthermore, it has been determined that there is a significant difference in English language course achievement in favor of the graduates of foreign language-based high schools. This may result from the fact that in Turkey foreign language-based high schools curricula includes very intensive English language lessons with a total of 576 hours and 16 hours per week excluding English language preparatory class (Çetintaş & Genç, 2001). This finding of the study also coincides with the findings of the study conducted by Şanlı (2016).

In the study, it has been found that there is a statistically significant difference between English language course achievement and gender in favor of female students, and this

finding is supported by the findings of studies conducted by Şanlı (2016), Oxford et al. (1993), Andreou et al. (2005), Deniz et al. (2013) and Vatanartıran et al. (2014). In the light of these data, it can be said that university students' achievement in English II course shows significant differences according to gender. The fact that female students have higher levels of English language course achievement than male students may be due to the higher attitudes towards learning a foreign language (Kubota, 2003).

In the research, it has been found that the students' learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety is moderate; it is observed that learner autonomy perception scores of female and male students are moderate and female students' learner autonomy perceptions are significantly higher than that of male students; the average of female and male students in the foreign language learning anxiety scale is moderate and the difference between the two averages is not statistically significant. It has been also determined that there is a moderate, positive and significant relationship between the total scores of learner autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety scales.

In the study, the finding that students' learner autonomy perceptions being moderate is supported by the study conducted by Kurt and Acat (2016). This finding is partly supported by the study conducted by Dede (2017) in which the autonomous learning skills of the students were found to be slightly above the medium level. Finding that the students' learner autonomy perceptions are moderate and the female students' learner autonomy perceptions are significantly higher than male students' in the current research is an indication that students' organizing semi-structured exercises, taking responsibility, determining their needs and objectives and determining their own targets to be able to decide the method of study, being aware of what the teacher is doing for what purpose, being able to selectively apply the appropriate learning strategies, making self-evaluation, managing time efficiently and coping with stress and certain affective factors that interfere with learning skills are moderate level, and also it is an indication that female students have these skills higher than that of male students.

In the study, the finding that students' foreign language learning anxiety being moderate is supported by the findings of the studies conducted by Aida (1994), Hashwani (2008) and Phillips (1992). In addition, the findings of the study conducted by Altunkaya (2017), in which the students' listening and reading anxiety levels were moderate, support the findings of the present study partially. The medium level of students' foreign language learning anxiety in the present study may be due to their lack of exposure to the target language in daily life, differences in the culture of the target language, feeling in a very different environment with this language and thus perceiving this as a threat to their identity and the fact that the time spent on foreign language education does not exceed a few hours per week, and therefore such learning environment provides little input and interaction to the student, and that the foreign language learning process is unique. In addition, this finding indicates that these students' communication, examination and negative evaluation concerns are also moderate. The finding in this research, that the average of female and male students in the foreign language learning

anxiety scale is moderate and the difference observed between the two averages is not statistically significant, is also supported by the findings of the studies conducted by Altunkaya (2017), Çubukçu (2008), Genç (2009), Latif (2014), Rastegar, Akbarzadeh and Heidari (2012), and it is also an indicator that both female and male students in the research have a similar level of communication, examination and negative evaluation anxiety.

In the research, the finding that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between learner autonomy perception and foreign language learning anxiety total scores, may result from students' foreign language learning anxiety that may be arising from self-perception, self-cognition and fear of losing their own identity (Hashemi, 2011), anxiety of negative evaluation and students' independent communication and autonomous learning skills. In other words, it is an indicator of moderate interaction of autonomous learning perceptions. Foreign language learning anxiety is associated with responsibility (Bailey, Daley & Onwuegbuzie, 1999). To be autonomous, the student must learn to learn. A student who learns to learn can take their own responsibility, determine their needs and objectives, choose useful resources and tools, and decide on their own studying methods and learning situations (Aydoğdu, 2009). In addition, autonomous learners are individuals who can consciously select and apply appropriate learning strategies and perform self-evaluation and thus, make detailed analysis of their own successes and failures (Dickinson, 1993). In brief, students' own responsibility for learning affects both their anxiety of learning a foreign language and their perception of autonomous learning.

In the study, it has been determined that students' learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety are moderate in all types of high school students graduated and the differences between the averages are not statistically significant. Furthermore, the medium level of students' foreign language learning anxiety in all types of high school they graduated may be due to an attempt to be taught English language by Turkish teachers whose native language is not English. Teaching foreign language in the classroom environment, which is an artificial environment, increases the anxiety of learning a foreign language (Littlewood, 1984: 58-59), and many non-native language teachers experience foreign language anxiety and this anxiety may have negative consequences for language teaching (Horwitz, 1996). The present study has found that students' learner autonomy perceptions are moderate in all types of high school students graduated and the differences between the averages are not statistically significant. This finding is an indication that students' independent communication, processing, learning and decision-making skills in learning English is moderate, along with the methods and techniques used to acquire the desired language skills.

In the study, there is a statistically insignificant, negative and close to zero relationship between English language course achievement and foreign language learning anxiety and learner autonomy perceptions, and this relationship does not predict English language course achievement significantly. Based on the beta coefficients of independent variables for predicting dependent variables are very low, it has been concluded that

foreign language learning anxiety could not have a meaningful mediation role in the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievements. The present study has found that there is a statistically insignificant, negative and close relationship between English language course achievement and the learner autonomy perceptions and that this relationship does not predict English language course achievement significantly, which is supported by the findings of the study conducted by Demirtaş and Sert (2010) that the learner autonomy perceptions of language preparatory class students about taking responsibility in learning processes are insufficient and there is no relationship between their academic achievement and learner autonomy perceptions of English language course. According to these data, there is no relationship between students' English language course achievement and the methods and techniques they use to improve their targeted language skills, as well as their level of processing the language skill and decision making.

The present study has found that there is a statistically insignificant, negative and close relationship between English language course achievement and foreign language learning anxiety, and that this relationship does not predict English language course achievement significantly. This finding does not coincide with the findings of the studies in the literature that suggest foreign language learning anxiety affects academic achievement and students with high foreign language learning anxiety have low foreign language grades (Aksoy, 2012; Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012; Awan, Azher & Naz, 2010; Batumlu & Erden, 2007; Coulombe, 2000; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Ganschow and Sparks, 1996; Gardner et al., 1997; Gülözer, 2010; Horwitz, 1986,2001; Karakış, 2014; Khodadady & Khajavy, 2013; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Marcos-Llina &S & Juan Garau, 2009; Na, 2007; Öner, 2008; Öner & Gedikoğlu, 2007; Phillips, 1992; Rodriguez, 1995). This may due to the fact that 65.50% (N = 309) of the students in the study are successful in English II language course and 34.50% are unsuccessful; therefore, the number of successful students is close to twice the number of unsuccessful students. In other words, it is seen that students' foreign language learning anxiety does not affect their English language course achievement much.

In the present study, due to the fact that both students' learner autonomy perceptions and foreign language learning anxiety levels do not significantly predict their English language course achievement, it can be concluded that foreign language learning anxiety levels cannot have a meaningful mediation role in the relationship between students' learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement.

Suggestions

Having been performed with qualitative method, the relationship between learner autonomy perceptions and English language course achievement mediated by foreign language learning anxiety can also be performed with qualitative method, and this more in-depth data can be compared with the data of current research. Longitudinal studies can also be conducted in subsequent research and students' progress on these issues can

be monitored. Furthermore, in the faculties of education, teacher candidates can be trained accordingly to develop autonomy-supporting behaviors and reduce learning anxiety.

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In the writing process of the study titled "Learner Autonomy and English Language Course Achievement Mediated by Foreign Language Learning Anxiety", the rules of scientific, ethical and citation were followed; it was undertaken by the authors of this study that no falsification was made on the collected data. "Sakarya University Journal of Education Journal and Editor" had no responsibility for all ethical violations to be encountered, and all responsibility belongs to the authors and that the study was not submitted for evaluation to any other academic publishing environment.