**T.C**
**İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY-CERRAHPAŞA**
**INSTUTUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**MASTER THESIS**

# EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS TOWARDS USING A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) AT AN ENGLISH PREPARATORY SCHOOL

**TUNÇ ATALAY OĞUL**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR**
**DR. ÖĞR. ÜYESİ TUNCER CAN**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

**İSTANBUL-2019**

T.C
İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY-CERRAHPAŞA
INSTUTUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**MASTER THESIS**

# EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS TOWARDS USING A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) AT AN ENGLISH PREPARATORY SCHOOL

**TUNÇ ATALAY OĞUL**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR**
**DR. ÖĞR. ÜYESİ TUNCER CAN**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**
**ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

**İSTANBUL-2019**

Bu çalışma 24.07.2019 tarihinde aşağıdaki jüri tarafından Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (YL) (Tezli) (İngilizce) (Ücretli)Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

TEZ JÜRİSİ

Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Tuncer CAN
İstanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa
Hasan Ali Yücel Eğitim Fakültesi

Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Gülay KIRAY KANATLI
İstanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa
Hasan Ali Yücel Eğitim Fakültesi

Dr.Öğr.Üyesi Aynur KESEN MUTLU
İstanbul Medipol Üniversitesi
Eğitim Fakültesi

# PREFACE

Throughout my ELT career both as a teacher and a material developer, I have always been interested in integrating technology into language teaching. As a teacher I have conducted online courses, supervised various projects and organized seminars about the effective use of technology in ELT. As a material developer, I have written course books and supplementary books, taken part in preparing interactive whiteboard materials and online language activities. While doing these, taking learners' needs and expectations into consideration has always been my priority. I have regarded learners not as passive recipients of language teaching but as active participants who can significantly contribute to the process of content development.

In the course of my research about the use of LMS in language learning, especially during the interviews, I was greatly inspired by the comments and the suggestions of the learners. I hope this study may shed light on the successful design and effective implementation of learning management systems in ELT.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Tuncer Can for his support and guidance. I am also grateful to my parents who have sacrificed a lot for me, to my wife who has always encouraged me with her profound love and to my lovely daughters who have brought joy to my life.

**Tunç Atalay Oğul**

# ÖZET

## İNGİLİZCE HAZIRLIK SINIFINDA ÖĞRENCİLERİN ÖĞRENME YÖNETİM SİSTEMİ KULLANIMI KONUSUNDAKİ ALGILARININ ARAŞTIRILMASI

Harmanlanmış (Karma) öğrenmenin gelişmiş uygulamalarından olan Öğrenme Yönetim Sistemleri yabancı dil öğretimi ve öğreniminde yaygın bir şekilde kullanılmaktadır. Bu platformlar temel olarak çevrimiçi dil dersleri vermek, ders içeriklerini yardımcı aktivitelerle desteklemek ve öğrenci gelişimini takip edip raporlamak için tasarlanmıştır. Son zamanlarda bu platformlar Türkiye'deki üniversitelerin yabancı dil hazırlık okulları dahil olmak üzere dil eğitim kurumlarının çoğunluğu tarafından dil öğretim programlarının bir parçası olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışma dil öğrencilerinin yabancı dil öğreniminde öğrenme yönetim sistemi kullanmaya yönelik algılarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma Türkiye'de bir özel üniversitenin İngilizce hazırlık okulunda yürütülmüştür. Çalışmada karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın nicel bölümünde beşli Likert ölçeği, nitel bölümünde ise yarı yapılandırılmış mülakatlar uygulanmıştır. Nicel analiz kısmında frekanslar, yüzdeler ve ortancalar incelenirken, nitel analiz için mülakatlardan elde edilen ana temalar dizinlenmiştir. Son olarak nicel ve nitel bulgular kıyaslanmış ve yorumlanmıştır. Bulgulara göre, öğrencilerin çoğunluğu kullanılan öğrenme yönetim sisteminin kelime, okuma ve dinleme becerilerini pekiştirmede ve ders başarısını artırmada katkısı olduğunu düşünse de, genel görüş bu kullanılan sistemin bağımsız öğrenmeyi destekleme, iletişimi teşvik etme ve motivasyonu artırma konularında yetersiz kaldığı şeklindedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğrenci algısı, Öğrenme yönetim sistemi, Harmanlanmış öğrenme

## ABSTRACT

### EXPLORING THE PERCEPTIONS OF LANGUAGE LEARNERS TOWARDS USING A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) AT AN ENGLISH PREPARATORY CLASS

Learning management systems, which are sophisticated blended learning applications, have been extensively used in foreign language teaching and learning. These platforms are mainly designed for delivering language courses, reinforcing course content with supplementary tasks and activities, tracking and reporting learner progress online. Recently, these platforms have been widely adopted by the majority of language institutions including foreign language preparatory schools of universities in Turkey as a part of their language teaching programs. The present study aims to investigate the perceptions of language learners towards using a learning management system in foreign language learning. The study was conducted at an English preparatory school of a private university in Turkey. The mixed methods research design was used for the study. A five-point Likert scale survey was administered for the quantitative part and semi-structured interviews were made with the learners for the qualitative part of the research. For the quantitative analysis, the frequencies, percentages and medians of the survey responses were examined and for the qualitative analysis, some key themes obtained through the interviews were indexed. Finally, the quantitative and the qualitative findings were compared and interpreted. The results suggested that although the majority of the learners agreed that the LMS contributed to reinforce vocabulary, reading and listening skills and increase their course achievement, the common view was that, the LMS fell short of promoting independent learning, fostering communication and increasing motivation.



**Key words:** Learner Perception, Learning Management System, Blended Learning

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**PREFACE ……...…… IV**

**ÖZET …….……...…… V**

**ABSTRACT …….……...… VI**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS …….……...…….....… VII**

**LIST OF TABLES …….……...……...…….....…. X**

**LIST OF FIGURES …….…….……...…….....… XI**

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION …… 1**

1.1. Statement of the Problem ……. 1

1.2. Purpose of the Study ……..…….. 2

1.3. Significance of the Study ……. 2

1.4. Assumptions of the Study …… 3

1.5. Limitations of the Study ……... 3

1.6. Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts …….……. 4

**CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW ……..…… 5**

2.1. Introduction …….. 5

2.2. Blended Learning ……. 5

2.2.1. Levels and Modes of Blended Learning ……..…… 6

2.2.2. Benefits of Blended Learning and Reasons for Adopting it ……..... 7

2.2.3. Potential Weaknesses of Blended Learning …….…… 9

2.2.4. The Teacher's Roles in Blended Learning ..…….. 10

2.2.5. The Learner's Roles in Blended Learning……...11

2.2.6. The Development of Blended Learning Tools in ELT ……..… 11

2.2.7. The Future of Blended Learning …… 12

2.2.8. Past Studies Related to Blended Learning……..…… 13

2.3. A Learning Management System (LMS) ……16

2.3.1 The Need to Use an LMS …… 16

2.3.2 Major Learning Management Systems ……...… 17

2.3.3 ELT Specific Learning Management Systems ……...… 18

2.4. Learner Autonomy ……..……... 19

2.5. Self-Assessment ……..……23

2.6. Motivation ……...……24

2.7. Language Skills ……...……27

**CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY …….. 33**

3.1. Research Model …….. 33

3.2. Setting and Participants …….. 34

3.2.1. Setting …… 34

3.2.1.1. The Implementation of the LMS ……. 35

3.2.1.2. The Features of the LMS ……. 35

3.2.2 Participants …….. 39

3.3. Data Collection Instruments ……..… 41

3.3.1. Survey on Learners' Perceptions of Using an LMS …….. 41

3.3.2. Interviews with Learners …… 42

3.4. Data Analysis ……...…….. 43

**CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS ..... 44**

4.1. Reliability of Instruments ……...……..…. 44

4.2. Findings of the Survey on Learners' Perceptions of using an LMS ..… 44

4.3. Findings of the Interviews with the Learners …… 51

**CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS ..... 57**

**REFERENCES ..... 65**

**APPENDICES ..... 73**

**CURRICULUM VITAE ..... 77**

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 4-1: Demographic Information of the Participants ……..…….... 40

Table 4-2: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Language Skills ……..…..... 44

Table 4-3: The Survey Items with Regard to Language Skills and the Medians ……..…..... 45

Table 4-4: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Technology Use and Support ……..….. 45

Table 4-5: The Survey Items with Regard to Technology Use and Support and the Medians ……... 46

Table 4-6: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Motivation …….……..... 46

Table 4-7: The Survey Item with Regard to Motivation and its Median…….…..... 46

Table 4-8: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Learner Autonomy…….…..... 47

Table 4-9: The Survey Items with Regard Learner Autonomy and the Medians…….…..... 47

Table 4-10: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to the Content Used……... 48

Table 4-11: The Survey Items with Regard to the Content Used and the Medians…….…..... 48

Table 4-12: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Communication and Interaction ……... 48

Table 4-13: The Survey Items with Regard to Communication and Interaction and their Medians ……..... 49

Table 4-14: Frequencies of the Survey Item with Regard to Learning Styles…….…..... 49

Table 4-15: The Survey Item with Regard to Learning Styles and its Median…….…..... 49

Table 4-16: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Self-Assessment…….…..... 50

Table 4-17: The Survey Items with Regard to Self-Assessment and their Medians…….. 50

Table 4-18: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Learner Satisfaction…….…..... 50

Table 4-19: The Survey Items with Regard to with Regard to Learner Satisfaction and their Medians…….. 51

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1: The Teacher Interface of the LMS ……..……...……..... 36

Figure 3-2: The assignment & Test Section of the Teacher Interface …….…….……..... 36

Figure 3-3: The Gradebook Section of the Teacher Interface ……..…….. 37

Figure 3-4: The Student Interface of the LMS ……..……...…….. 38

Figure 3-5: The Grammar Activities in the Student Interface …….…..... 38

Figure 3-6: The Vocabulary Activities in the Student Interface …….…..... 38

Figure 3-: The Listening Activities in the Student Interface ……..…….…..... 39

# PART I: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Statement of the Problem

Blended learning, which can be defined as "a combination of face-to-face and technology mediated instructional forms and practices" (Friesen, 2012), has virtually been an indispensable aspect of language learning and teaching with the extensive use of computers and the internet over the last few decades. The technology required for blended learning encompasses a variety of tools, such as the Internet, digital tablets, mobile devices and interactive whiteboards. It has been suggested that blended learning is a highly effective way of learning which skillfully puts together the best aspects of both traditional and online learning with an effort to reduce classroom time and promote independent learning. Most of the stakeholders of English language teaching have contributed to the popularity of blended learning either by developing materials and platforms of blended learning or institutionally adopting these materials for an effective teaching.

The learning management system (LMS), one of the most widespread designs of blended learning platforms, is an internet-based software application which provides the teacher with an integrated system for delivering course content, interacting with learners, prompting discussions, presenting tests and assignments and conducting various administrative tasks (Levy and Stockwell, 2013, p.3). Learning management systems have become increasingly common development tools at universities around the world and the majority of the course books that have been used in university language classes include an LMS component.

As a person who has been engaged both in teaching English and developing ELT course books and digital materials, I have personally noticed that during the development phase of these LMS components, the designers and publishers do not take the perceptions of learners into account as required. Their focus is mostly on the visual and technical aspects of the learning management systems and the marketing of them. Since the administration and the teachers have the loudest voice during the decision making process of the materials that will be used in a language school, the priority of publishers is to satisfy them by meeting their expectations which is vaguely similar to the expectations and the perceptions of the learners. When learners

realize that the materials they use do not appeal to their opinions, interests and learning habits, they tend to lose motivation and their learning processes may suffer a great deal.

### 1.2. Purpose of the Study

Some university language preparatory schools in Turkey make the use of the LMS an obligation for their learners in order to help them access online course content outside the class and have an additional language practice opportunity. The language preparatory school, where this study was conducted, used a variety of course books, skill books and exam practice books and most of these books had LMS components. This study aims to explore language learners' perceptions of using a learning management system (LMS) regarding the aspects such as language skills, learner autonomy, motivation, technology use and support, the content used, communication and collaboration, learning styles, self-assessment and learner satisfaction through a survey and face-to-face interviews.

Research Questions:

1. What are the learners' perceptions towards using a Learning Management System (LMS) at a university language preparatory school?

a. What are the learners' perceptions with regard to language skills, the content used, communication and interaction?

b. What are the learners' perceptions with regard to learner autonomy, self-assessment and technology use and support?

c. What are the learners' perceptions with regard to motivation, learner satisfaction and learning styles?

### 1.3. Significance of the Study

Although a wide range of studies were conducted about the practice of blended learning in language learning (Poon, 2013; Hirata and Hirata, 2008; Banados, 2006; Felix, 2001; Zapata and Sagarra, 2008; Kobayashi and Little, 2011; Sahin, 2010; Akkoyunlu and Soylu, 2010; Wang, 2009; Usta and Ozdemir, 2007),

not sufficient research has been specifically conducted on learning management systems in language learning. The only studies I could find related to the use of an LMS belong to Krake (2013) and Bilgin (2013). Both aimed to investigate the effects of using a learning management system (LMS) on language learning, while the former's participants were high school students, the latter was conducted at a university preparatory school. However, these studies did not intend to investigate learners' views or opinions. As it can be seen, there is an evident need for conducting research on exploring the perceptions of language learners towards the use of learning management systems in order to find out how they regard these platforms.

Furthermore, in most cases, very little attention is paid to the ideas of learners towards using learning management systems, thus the adoption of the learning management systems becomes a top-down process rather than a bottom-up one. This study might help raise awareness of the significance of exploring learners' perceptions and encourage decision makers to involve learners in the processes of needs analysis, material development and implementation of these materials effectively at an institutional level.

### 1.4. Assumptions of the Study

It is assumed that the participants of this study responded to the questions both in the survey and the interview honestly, reflecting their real perceptions towards the use of the LMS in their learning context. The researcher is assumed to have conducted the study objectively, without any prejudice and the school administration is assumed not to have discouraged the participants from expressing themselves freely about the materials they use.

### 1.5. Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to the 248 EFL learners and a specific learning management system at a foreign language preparatory school of a private university in Turkey. Although this research might shed light on the effective implementation of an LMS and provide an insight into new research, it cannot be generalized to other teaching contexts.

### 1.6. Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

**BLENDED LEARNING** A form of education which mixes the traditional face-to-face instruction with electronic and online learning applications

**EFL** The instruction of English to people whose native language is not English. It is an abbreviation for “English as a Foreign Language”.

**ELT** An abbreviation for “English Language Teaching”.

**LMS** An online management platform which is used to plan, administer, and assess a learning process.

**PERCEPTION** The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.

# PART II: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1. Introduction

The first part of this section aims to look at how blended learning has been defined, how its main characteristics, levels and modes are explained by various researchers and scholars. Secondly, a more detailed review of blended learning with regard to the benefits of implementing it, its potential weaknesses, the roles of the teacher and the learner in blended learning are presented. Then, the development of blended learning tools is examined, some future predictions are highlighted and some past studies about blended learning are introduced. Finally, a brief review of learning management systems, their benefits and some prominent LMS platforms is presented.

## 2.2. Blended Learning

Definitions of blended learning have been given in two ways, the first from a broader perspective and the latter from a more specific one. The following can be regarded as fine examples for the first group. Marsh (2012, p. 3) defines blended learning as any combination of different learning methods, learning contexts and learning styles. According to Tang and Pan (2008), it is learning that is promoted by the successful combination of various modes of delivery, methods of teaching and styles of learning and established on effective communication among all parties in a learning context. According to Singh and Reed (2001) blended learning is "a learning program where more than one delivery mode is being used with the objective of optimizing the learning outcome and cost of program delivery". Singh and Reed (2001) suggest that blended learning focuses on optimizing achievement of learning objectives by creating a successful blend of appropriate learning technologies and personal learning styles

On the other hand, Graham (2006, p. 7) complains from the fact that blended learning is described in such a broad manner that, it virtually seems to encompass all learning systems and he brings a more specific definition to blended learning as the combination of traditional face-to-face instruction with computer mediated instruction. Similar specific definitions to blended learning as follows: "a combination of face-to-face and technology mediated instructional forms and

practices" (Friesen, 2012), "a language course which combines a face-to-face classroom component with an appropriate use of technology" (Sharma and Barret, 2007, p. 7). According to Banados, (2013) blended learning essentially combines online and face-to-face instruction in a flexible approach to maximize the benefits of both mediums in terms of training and assessment. Collis and Moonen (2001) emphasize the natural integration of online learning into the traditional learning and define blended learning as a mixture of face-to-face and online learning in order to make the online component as a natural complement of traditional classroom learning.

The last two definitions comply with Thorne's interpretation of blended learning as "a way of meeting the challenges of tailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals by integrating the innovative and technological advances offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning" (Thorne, 2003 as cited in Akkoyunlu and Soylu, 2008) and they all suggest that a successful blended learning approach should be able to combine face-to-face learning with online learning in a principled way and benefit from both worlds .

### 2.2.1. Levels and Modes of Blended Learning

Graham (2006, p. 10-12) suggests that there are four levels of blending which are activity-level blending, course-level blending, program-level blending and institutional-level blending. Activity-level blending takes place when an activity includes both face-to-face and online elements. To bring an example for activity-level blending in language learning we can think of a vocabulary task in which the main focus is learning new vocabulary about the weather. In the face-to-face version, the teacher introduces the vocabulary in the context with some follow-up activities and then the learners are asked to get online and access a website that reports weather forecast and to present a detailed weather report for different parts of the world. Course-level blending on the other hand, contains a combination of specific face-to-face and online tasks and activities used as part of a course. These two components can either overlap in time or can be used separately to be sequenced chronologically. Using an online workbook can be shown as an example of course-level blending in language learning. According to Graham (2006) in program-level blending

participants either choose a model that mix “face-to-face courses and online courses or one in which the combination between the two is prescribed by the program”. Finally, institutional-level blending can be defined as the organizational commitment of an institution towards blending face-to-face and online instruction.

Staker and Horn (2012) introduce a taxonomy for blended learning models as rotation model, flex model, self-blend model and enriched-virtual model. Rotation model is defined as a program in which students systematically rotate between online learning and other learning modalities that involve activities such as individual tutoring, group or pair projects and full-class instruction. Flex model is the program where content and instruction is delivered mainly online in an individually customized way but still under the supervision of a teacher who provides face-to-face support when needed. Self-blend model is the program in which students take completely online courses to supplement their traditional courses. In this model the teacher-of-record is the online teacher and students may take these online courses in the campus or off-site. The last of these four models, the enriched-virtual model is a whole school experience in which students are not obliged to attend the physical school and online learning is enriched through periodical face-to-face supplementation.

It could be considered that to increase the efficiency of blended learning, flexible approaches and well-planned strategies should be implemented in each level and model of blended learning. According to Dudeney and Hockly (2013, p. 81), maximizing the potential of different delivery models is crucial. While face-to-face component of the blend can be used for confidence building, fostering interaction and collaboration through group activities and critical input sessions, the online component can be used during research, discussion, reflection and project work.

### 2.2.2. Benefits of blended learning and reasons for adopting it

Studies have shown that adopting a blended learning approach has many benefits essentially in terms of methodology, learning styles, motivation, time, and cost. Shaw and Igneri' (2006, p. 3) suggest that blended learning reduces costs by reducing time spent in the classroom and by re-using or leveraging existing materials, introduces self-paced, more flexible and independent study components, increases rate of learning, learner satisfaction and motivation, increases collaboration

and accommodates different learning styles. Poon (2013, p. 5) summarizes the benefits of blended learning as increased learning outcomes, greater flexibility both for learners and teachers, improved learner autonomy, enhanced reflection and research skills, creation of a professional learning environment, decreased student absence rate and resource savings. According to Marsh (2012, p. 4) blended learning sustains a more individualized learning experience along with more personalized learning support, fosters a wide range of learning styles, helps students develop beneficial twenty-first century learning skills, promotes collaborative learning, increases student participation and provides flexible and less stressful study opportunity to practice the target language beyond the classroom. Blended learning has also the potential to change students' experiences and outcomes through learning (Davis and Fill, 2003, as cited in Tayebinik and Putah, 2012) along with helping them become independent learners ready to take their own responsibilities in learning.

Graham (2006, p. 7-9) narrows down the reasons to prefer a blended learning approach to three and focuses on pedagogy, flexibility and cost effectiveness. Improved Pedagogy: Blended learning focuses on interactive strategies rather than transmissive ones and increases the level of active learning strategies and learner-centered strategies used. Increased Access and Flexibility: Blended learning sustains the comfort provided by a distributed environment, however it does not sacrifice the communication and human touch learners are involved in a face-to-face classroom. Increased cost effectiveness: Blended learning platforms give on opportunity to reach incredible large audiences in a short period of time with consistent, semi personal content delivery in a reasonable and affordable way.

Sparrow (2003) introduces the results of an online survey and highlights the reasons for implementing blended learning tools as, the ability to match learning styles, individually tailored solutions and improvement in the learning rate. According to Osguthorpe et al. (2003), the benefits of blended learning include pedagogical richness, access to knowledge, social interaction, personal agency, cost effectiveness and ease of revision.

### 2.2.3. Potential weaknesses of blended learning and some concerns about its practice

Along with its numerous benefits, blended learning potentially has some weak points and they need to be treated cautiously. Some of the main potential weaknesses can be summarized as the isolation of the learner, lack of self-discipline, increasing workload, technological problems, lack of support and long established traditional teaching and learning habits. Poon (2013, p. 5) mentions about weaknesses and challenges of blended learning as unrealistic learner expectations, learner isolation, technological problems and lack of support, invasiveness into other areas of life, time commitment, difficulty in adopting a new teaching approach. Dudeney and Hockly (2013) stress the increasing workload of the teachers and state that one of the fundamental challenges is that online version of a blended learning may be more demanding for a teacher and many institutions are not aware of it. Similar to this statement, Chen, Lu (2013) suggests that the negative effect of blended learning for teachers is overwork, difficulty to adjust the proportion of face-to-face and online learning and on the side of learners, it is mainly the increase in the cognitive load. On the other hand, Aborisade (2013) focuses on technical difficulties and points out that deficient technology infrastructure and inadequate facilities may exert extra pressure on the most eager learners and teachers, in terms of effort, time and finance. Graham (2006, p. 15-16) sums up the main challenges of adopting a blended learning approach as following.

Self-regulation: Graham states that online components of blended learning systems require a considerable amount of self-discipline on the part of the learners (Collis et al. 2003, as cited in Graham, 2006) and raises the question of how blended learning environments can be designed to support enhancing learner maturity and capabilities for self-regulation. Support and training: He emphasizes on the issues related to support and training such as increased demand on the teacher time, the task of providing learners with necessary technical skills, the challenge of changing organizational culture and persuading participants to accept blended approaches and the requirement to provide professional development for teachers.

Digital divide: Graham is concerned with the accessibility and practicality of blended learning and he investigates whether blended learning models can be

developed that are feasible and that can cater for the needs of different learners from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Cultural adaptation: He underlines the significance of the need to find balance between local and global interests and customizing the contents to the local users so that they can be culturally appropriate and relevant.

The balance between innovation and production: Finally Graham suggests that, considering the constant change in technology, finding a perfect balance between innovation and production will be a great challenge for educational technologists and material designers, thereby highlighting the importance of producing cost-effective solutions.

### 2.2.4. The Teacher's Roles in Blended Learning

Although the face-to-face component remains central to blended language learning and the teacher remains indispensable in the blended learning environment (Marsh, 2012, p. 8), the teacher's roles naturally change as learners' engagement increase and learners take more responsibility on their learning. This shift in the learner's roles compels teachers to gradually adopt the role of a facilitator, mediator and motivator. Peachey (2013) outlines the roles of the teacher in his blended learning context as a moderator in online element and a facilitator in the face-to-face element. Civello (1999, as cited in Neumeier, 2005) also implies that the teacher's role in blended learning is flexible and suggests that the blended learning setting determines whether the teacher acts as an instructor, a resource, an aid, a partner or a facilitator. Banados (2006) defines the teacher's roles as a guide and collaborator who support students and provide feedback while Strauss (2012) claims that the teacher should be "mentoring, monitoring, coaching and sometimes instructing". Marsh (2012, p. 8-12) summarizes the teacher's roles as promoting student-centered learning in the classroom, facilitating the blend, encouraging independent and collaborative learning, fostering a supportive online community and managing online interaction.

As already mentioned as a challenge of blended learning above, considering the time necessary to design the blend and the support learners need during their online studies out of the class, an increase in the teacher's workload has been

noticed (Aborisade, 2013). Mohammad (2009) also stresses the teacher's increasing workload and suggests that since class time is reduced and a significant part of learning takes place online, in order to manage a successful blended module an instructor must invest significant time and effort in redesigning a traditional module and effectively integrating online activities with face-to-face sessions. Another significant role of a teacher in blended learning is accommodating the learners to the digital content, guiding and supporting them through their online studies. Blake (2008) believes that teachers need to have sufficient knowledge about interface design and computer pedagogy so that they can evaluate the software used. Kobayashi and Little (2011) also suggest that for a blended program to be beneficial, it is essential that the teachers be aware of the capabilities and the limitations of the online component.

### 2.2.5. The Learner's Roles in Blended Learning

Since blended learning employs various methods, learners take on quite diverse roles according to different phases of blended learning. Marsh (2012, p. 12-13) defines the learner's roles in a blended learning environment as managing and planning independent study time, learning independently, working collaboratively online, reviewing and self-correcting. According to Neumeier, (2005) learners can act as recipients, as partners in an activity or as peer teachers and experts depending on the context and types of activities.

### 2.2.6. The Development of Blended Learning Tools in ELT

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) has always been a catchy method in ELT and it has interested learners, teachers and institutions for the last few decades. Although teachers had been blending face-to-face instruction with various kind of technology-mediated language learning, due to the absence of technology to the specific needs of language learners, the influence of this blend had been somewhat limited (Marsh, 2012, p. 4). Technology had either been used as an enjoyable combination of attractive tools such as videos, games and songs to draw learners' interest or to impress potential learners and parents. However, with the Internet becoming widespread, language learners and teacher had the opportunity to connect to the world and access authentic resources. The interactive web-based exercises and activities appealed to learners and the feedback they provided allowed

them to review and recycle the language studied in the classroom. Seeing the benefits of mixing online learning with traditional face-to-face instruction in language learning, many institutions searched for effective designs of implementing blending learning into their curriculum in a principled way. However, it was an extremely challenging and even overwhelming task for teachers and institutions as it required plenty of effort, cost and experience in digital material developing and designing. At this stage publishers stepped in started to design websites including tests and activities that complement their course materials. Learners could access these websites, complete the necessary tasks and receive immediate feedback. Although most of the activities were mainly mechanical ones such as gap-filling, sentence-completion and matching, some websites included audio-visual content. Being satisfied with the feedback from learners and teachers about the efficacy of these websites, publishers started to design online workbooks that were sold as components of main courses learners could use with an access code. The ultimate blended learning solution in ELT has been introduced with the development of learning management systems (LMS) which will be described in later stages.

### 2.2.7. The Future of Blended Learning

Since technology and learning methods have constantly been changing it is inevitable for blended learning systems to modify and develop. Research indicates that there has been an upward demand for using blended learning solutions in education and blended learning will continue to be indispensable in most learning settings in the near future. To support this statement, Bonk et al. (2006) presents some studies about the growth of blended learning and suggests that blended learning is a permanent trend rather than a temporary area of interest particularly in higher education. According to Ross and Gage (2006) the future of blended learning is not whether to blend but how to blend. Lewis (2009) implies that in the future, the traditional blended learning will substantially be improved and in the personal learning environments of future, students will have an array of tools and materials at their disposal which match their personal interests as defined in their self-generated profiles. He also suggests that mobile technology will play an ever-increasing role in how students learn which will allow learning to take place anytime, anywhere.

Based on the predictions made by Bonk et al. (2006) it can be foreseen that mobile technology will be one of the prominent driving forces of blended learning systems. The increasing use of mobile phones and tablets will allow learners to study beyond the boundaries of a venue, thus making blended learning environments increasingly individualized and flexible. Blended learning will also create new possibilities for communication, collaboration and global connectedness which will enable learners to interact with each other and provide more learning opportunities. With the improvement of blended learning systems, most decisions about the type and format of blended learning will be made by learners rather than teachers and instructional designers. Moreover, learners will be able to design their own courses and programs. It is estimated that authenticity elements such as simulations, scenarios and problem-based learning will be at the core of these designs. Another point about the future of blended learning is the emergence of specialists who will teach programs related to blended learning courses and programs. As for the positions of teachers in the future, it can easily be said that the teacher's role will shift to one of a mentor and a guide. It has been frequently questioned if technology will expand in the future from being a complement to traditional face-to-face teaching and replace the teacher and the classroom. Blake (2008) suggests that technology will not replace teachers, but rather teachers who are adept at technology will probably replace teachers who are not. Some of the predictions mentioned above have already begun to come true while realization of the rest is imminent. It is imperative for learners, teachers and institutions to search for new ways of effectively integrating blended systems into their learning contexts since it seems the future of learning will largely be based on blended solutions.

### 2.2.8. Past Studies Related to Blended Learning

A great deal of research has been done to investigate the efficiency and the practicality of blended learning programs in ELT. Poon (2013) conducted a descriptive study to examine the application of blended learning for undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Nottingham Trent University and to evaluate the students' experiences of using blended learning. The results briefly suggested that most of the academics interviewed believed the initial development of blended learning required a great deal of upfront resources including financial resources,

time, effort and expertise. As for the students, the majority of them stated that as long as adequate support was given, blended learning would be quite beneficial since it provides flexibility, encourages active learning, gives prompt feedback and respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Gregorio and Godeo (2005) examined the use of blended learning approaches at the EFL division of University of Castilla, Spain and their paper suggested that the ELT practitioners at the institution claimed to have become more aware of the importance of to guide students into how to learn by themselves. The study also revealed that most of the teachers considered performing counseling roles as challenging but enriching. On the other hand, students widely appreciated the opportunity of taking responsibility for their learning process by actively organizing and monitoring it. Additionally, they suggested they became fully aware of the potential of online learning tools and self-access approaches. In another study on students' attitudes towards a blended language learning course conducted in Japan by Hirata and Hirata (2008), the students found blended learning course quite beneficial in two ways; firstly it included an independent and self-paced online component, secondly it encouraged students to engage in critical thinking and reflect on what they had learned in the face-to-face instruction.

Bilgin (2013) carried out an experimental study with the students at a preparatory English program of a university in Turkey in order to explore the effects of a learning management system (LMS) which is an online medium of blended learning. According to the results of the study, the experimental class which used the learning management system outperformed the control class. In addition to the experimental study, a survey was also implemented and the survey indicated that although the students valued online resources in language learning, they still preferred printed materials over online materials.

Banados (2006) outlined the results of a study based on a blended learning program conducted at a university in Chile in his article stating that blended learning caused a remarkable improvement in learners' linguistic competence and a high level of learner satisfaction in the program. In another study conducted by Krake (2013), students of a high school were handed out a survey in order to investigate the effects of using a learning management system (LMS) on language learning. According to

results of the survey, learners widely appreciated using the LMS since it provided independent and constant access to language materials and created opportunities for doing extra practice. Felix (2001) carried out a study to explore the potential of the online medium of language instruction. The results of the qualitative data pointed out that although using online materials had plenty of gains such as time flexibility, wealth of information, reinforcement of learning, it also had some disadvantages such as lack of speaking practice and interaction with pairs, distraction, insufficient feedback and absence of teacher. The study conducted by Zapata and Sagarra (2008) to find out students' perceptions towards using an online workbook, which can be regarded as a means of blended learning, revealed an overall positive attitude towards the accessibility and effectiveness of the online workbook although some students claimed that it is time-consuming. The findings of the study carried out by Wang (2009) suggested that blended courses motivated learners' engagement in learning, strengthened their intention to engage in the materials at their convenience and assisted them to better comprehend the course content. Usta and Ozdemir's (2007) study to examine the views of university students on blended learning indicated that students were widely satisfied with the use of blended learning in education although some of them complained from technical issues in application process due to the problems in computer and the internet use.

The results of the study conducted by Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2008) to examine the students' learning styles and their views on blended learning revealed that students' opinions on blended learning process differed according to their learning styles. Kobayashi and Little (2011) implemented a case study with 141 university students in Japan to evaluate a blended learning EFL program in light of learners' computer literacy and perceptions of its usefulness. The results indicated that the students' perceptions of the program differed according to the proficiency levels of students, lower levels benefiting more from the blended learning than higher levels. Sahin (2010) conducted an experimental study to find out whether blended learning can contribute to students' performance in a vocational school in Turkey. While the results indicated that the blended learning model significantly affected students' performance, yielding a higher achievement rate for students in vocational education, some unfavorable findings were also revealed. The negative

findings were summarized as increased workload, technology problems and lack of interpersonal interaction with the teachers.

## 2.3. A Learning Management System (LMS)

The LMS can be defined as an online platform to deliver online content such as online courses, supplementary materials, activities and workbooks to both learners and teachers. It also serves as a medium to provide and facilitate online learning through administrator tools for teachers and institutions to manage classes, monitor learner development along with tools for learners and teachers to communicate and collaborate. Although there might be slight differences in practice among them, the LMS is sometimes called as CMS (Content Management System), VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). According to Mohammad (2009) The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a flexible and accessible web based learning platform designed to support and enable the electronic teaching and learning needs of learners and teachers. Levy and Stockwell (2013) define the LMS as an internet based software that allows teachers to distribute course materials, communicate with learners, encourage learner discussions and assign various tasks. It has been believed that teachers are mostly resistant to change their teaching habits and they lack confidence to use new technology. Since the move towards online and blended learning in ELT is mostly top-down rather than bottom-up it is significant for an LMS to be attractive and user-friendly so that it does not fall victim to the teachers' prejudice.

### 2.3.1. The Need to Use an LMS

Due to the increasing trend towards online and blended learning in language teaching, almost each ELT publisher has designed an LMS platform. Recently, many schools and universities all around the world have been using these platforms with a growing interest. Although a lot of reasons could bring forth this interest, Harrison (2013) emphasizes on the administrative aspect of LMSs by stating "the main justification for their existence is that they allow for centralized administration of online and blended learning". Bury (2012) suggests a few reasons to use a learning management system. The first one is that a well-designed LMS provides all the tools and services to create and administer courses in one convenient place, with one user

account for each participant. The second reason is that an LMS allows teachers, institutions, curriculum and material developers to create courses that are coherently organized and that can be easily updated and adjusted. Another reason to use an LMS is its capability to provide more appropriate types of roles for users. By giving more specific control over certain activities and resources, the LMS can enable some learners to have more responsibilities and adopt different roles at different levels. Some other reasons to use an LMS is the ease of record keeping and management, a more coherent communication and more effective assessment tools.

### 2.3.2. Major Learning Management Systems

LMS platforms range from relatively simple online workbooks to extensive learning systems developed to deliver full online courses to large numbers of learners simultaneously. While some of these platforms function as a supplement to print courses, there is a strong tendency towards putting the digital at the core. Considering the increased demand for the LMS, there have been higher expectations of much more comprehensive, flexible and professional platforms by educational institutions. In order to meet these expectations, a plenty of learning management systems have been developed by educational developers the most popular and well-established ones were given below:

Moodle: This platform is one of the most well known and most widely used LMSs in education and it is quite widespread in ELT as well. Due to the open source feature of Moodle, schools and universities are able to develop their own modules, manage and customize them according to the needs of the institutions, teachers and learners. Therefore, Moodle has been extensively preferred by institutions who want to create their own learning management systems rather than using publishers' ready-made platforms.

Blackboard: It can be considered as the oldest major LMS platform and it has been used for over twenty-five years by millions of teachers and learners. The main difference between Blackboard and other LMSs is that Blackboard is much more extensive and commercial. While this extensiveness can be regarded as an advantage, for some users it is not so much favoured. Harrison (2013) states that the main criticisms addressed to Blackboard are its complicated and potentially confusing features and its highly commercial nature.

Desire2Learn (DL2): This platform is becoming more popular day by day due to its "open, mobile-centric and extensible" features (Harrison, 2013). While many ELT institutions have already been using this platform, a major ELT publisher Oxford University Press (OUP) has signed a strategic partnership with DL2 with the aim of using the LMS for delivery of online materials. (Harrison, 2013)

Canvas: It stands out as one of the most up to date LMSs and it places great emphasis on simplicity and speed while still providing a wide range of useful features.

### 2.3.3. ELT Specific Learning Management Systems

The following are some of the large-scale LMSs specifically designed for language teaching by major publishers:

MyEnglishLab: Pearson's MyEnglishLab has been specifically designed to deliver online versions of a broad range of ELT courses and currently has been extensively used worldwide by teachers and learners. This platform provides language schools with the capability of delivering their courses online as a blended learning option. The online course content on this platform is completely integrated with print course books and the additional features such as assessment tools, interactive activities, language tasks and assignments enrich this content. MyEnglishLab may not have as many features as Moodle or Blackboard but this relative simplicity helps the publisher create an online component for almost every product and this makes Pearson arguably the largest blended learning course supplier in ELT.

Macmillan English Campus (MEC): Macmillan English Campus is one of the most popular LMSs in ELT and it has been used both as a platform and as a product for over ten years. It is designed as a blended learning solution and it provides a great number of content resources and supplementary materials along with some basic LMS tools for course management. However MEC has been criticized for lacking some features that large-scale LMSs have and for not enabling any social interaction between students and teachers or among students. (Bilgin, 2013)

Cambridge LMS: This LMS has been developed to support any online product that the publisher presents. The platform has two different interfaces, one for

primary courses and products and another for adult and secondary courses and products. The creation of separate interfaces helps learners access their courses faster and use the platform more effectively.

Oxford University Press LMS: The LMS of OUP has been developed basically for the administration of testing and assessment. However this platform also supports online versions of many OUP course books and workbooks. Learners can purchase materials from the platform and it allows learners to do the exercises as self-study and teachers can manage their learners' progress using the LMS. Although OUP LMS lacks remarkable and unique features, its relatively simple interface makes it quite user-friendly.

### 2.4. Learner Autonomy

We can simply define learner autonomy as the responsibility learners take for their own learning or the ability learners have in order to manage their learning independently. Littlewood (1996) categorizes the definition of autonomy into three dimensions as language acquisition, learning approach and personal development. Autonomy in language acquisition requires functioning independently with the target language and effectively communicating with it, autonomy in learning approach requires applying effective strategies into the learning process. Autonomy in personal development is a higher level goal combining the characteristics of both previous concepts. Although measuring autonomy is rather complicated compared to measuring language proficiency, it is necessary in order to find out whether a teaching method contributes to learner autonomy and for purposes of assessment.

Since learner autonomy is believed to enhance linguistic performance, promoting it has long been one of the goals of ELT practitioners. Use of technology, the area of this research, is thought to contribute significantly to the improvement of learner autonomy. With the widespread introduction of information technologies to language learning, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) became a trendy and favored approach in ELT and language teaching institutions rushed to establish self-access centers where learners could read graded books and listen to their audios, do computerized vocabulary or grammar activities and play language games on the computer. These self-access centers which were the examples of self-directed learning were supposed to automatically foster learner autonomy since learners

would have a chance to study and practice language independently. However, since most of these centers were founded without theoretical and pedagogical rationale, they did not produce the predicted outcome in terms of learner autonomy (Benson, 2013). As stated by Gardner and Miller (1999), pedagogical input was the fundamental principle of self-directed learning in order to provide learner autonomy. Only few self-centers had the required pedagogical support and counseling while the majority of them fell short of maintaining this support and counseling.

The initial CALL applications were mostly prepared from a behaviorist standpoint with the purpose of testing vocabulary and structure through mechanical activities such as gap-filling, matching or multiple-choice. These applications seemed to offer some level control by letting learners to choose the activities, check the answers and decide the pace of their learning. However, in practice the only opportunity they provided was the chance of countless repetition (Beatty, 2010). Following the first CALL applications, a great deal of effort was exerted to introduce communicative aspects of language into the second-generation applications. These applications included communicative games, problem-solving tasks and simulative cognitive exercises. In addition, during this period some tools such as word processors, presentation and publishing software, electronic dictionaries and concordances were started to be used by learners for some authentic communicative and collaborative tasks such as designing a magazine, preparing a presentation or writing a story. The nature of these tasks required decision-making, analyzing, discussing and critical thinking which were considered as the elements that promote cognitive and metacognitive autonomy. However, Kenning (1996) argues that, although these tasks contribute to the improvement of independent learning, they require certain language proficiency, skills and strategies which most beginners lack and he suggests that these tasks are appropriate for more advanced learners.

The introduction of the Internet brought a new dimension to the use of technology in language learning. With the possibility of instant access to Web 2.0 technologies such as online forums, wikis, blogs, virtual environments, online chat and video conferencing, the element of authenticity was enhanced and learning applications went through radical changes. Taking teachers' and learners' opinions into consideration, technologically-improved learning environments were created introducing lots of opportunities for learners to take responsibility for their learning.

Online learning approaches such as tandem learning and distance learning were the products of these new technologies which are believed to foster learner autonomy by allowing learners to interact and collaborate with a level of flexibility and independence. It is thought that language applications that promote self-directed learning are the ones that particularly draw researchers' interest with respect to learner autonomy. Internet-based project work such as webquests, simulations and blog writing are believed to have a significant relationship with learner autonomy. Webquests are inquiry-based projects in which learners assume different roles engaging in reading and writing authentic texts. These tasks help learners improve their research, analytical, brainstorming and presentation skills through which they can take a step into being autonomous learners. Internet-based simulations give the learners an opportunity to carry out tasks they may come across in real life such as planning a holiday, applying for a university or doing business online. The authenticity and the relevance of the tasks not only increase the motivation of the learners but also they help them compare different settings and make better decisions. Blog writing which is a web-based productive task contributes to the development of metacognition and learner independence (Alm, 2009). Benson (2013) suggests that Internet-based tasks have the potential to foster learner independence as long as they allow learners to control the significant aspects of their learning. Besides, he emphasizes that sustaining learner autonomy is not dependent on technology use.

Distance learning, which is regarded as an approach through which learners study the language in an autonomous way, is believed to promote learner's self-management strategies. While studying distantly, the potential risk of learner isolation are obvious. Therefore, learners should develop some techniques in order to manage their learning. The extent of their success determines the level of their autonomy. With an effort to promote autonomy among distance learners Open University, a UK based distance-learning university, suggested a guideline. According to the guideline, the aims of the curriculum should be interpreted clearly so that learners feel an ownership, the assignments should be individualized based on their interests, learner training should be provided to help learners solve their potential problems by themselves, self-assessment should be included in the formal assessment and learners should be supported to reflect on their learning process.

The level of autonomy and control in blended learning has also been a subject of interest. Comparing to the traditional classroom-based learning, probably the main change in the learner's role in a blended learning environment is the shift from being a passive recipient to an autonomous learner who takes responsibility on his or her own learning process. Although the learner's role may not significantly change in the face-to-face component of blended learning, the online version imposes a great number of responsibilities on the learner such as planning, decision making, self-pacing, using online resources effectively and interacting with others. Thus, learner autonomy becomes an indispensable element of learning in a blended approach and adjusting the level of it gains extreme importance. Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013, p. 237) suggest that level of autonomy is a significant aspect of blended courses because their design means that learners may have to take on different degrees of responsibility in the different modes of the blend. Neumeier (2005, p. 175) also highlights the significance of learner autonomy and adjusting the level of it in a blended learning environment by stressing the significance of the ability of the learners to be aware of when to take responsibility and when to hand it over. To be able to do it, they need to manage different levels of responsibility regarding with the content and the practice. However Benson (2001, as cited in Tomlinson and Whittaker, 2013) approaches cautiously to the link between studying individually online and being an autonomous learner implying that it cannot be taken for granted that self instruction promotes learner independence. Studies about the use of technology and learner autonomy by Stracke (2007) and Corder and Waller (2007) (as cited in Tomlinson and Whittaker, 2013) also conclude that technology may not automatically result in autonomous learning and stress the importance of the teacher's role in fostering learner autonomy.

As for the studies regarding the link between learner autonomy and blended learning tools such as LMS, the following examples are worth to review. A qualitative study which was conducted by Dang and Robertson (2010) with a very limited number of participants to investigate possible effects of LMS in learners' competence in monitoring and assessing their own learning process suggested that the LMS had some positive effects on learner autonomy by allowing learners to regulate and evaluate their learning. Sanprasert (2010) conducted a study with an aim to investigate to what extend a course management system would enhance learner

autonomy in a Thai university setting. The findings of the survey and the learning journals indicated that the CMS helped enhance learner autonomy in four aspects as perception, behavior, strategy and interdependence. The results also indicated that in contexts where learner independence is traditionally restricted due to cultural factors, the use of such platforms could bring additional benefits regarding learner autonomy. The findings of another study conducted in Thailand with a similar purpose suggested that, once the content management system was successfully introduced to learners, they could easily manage the resources independently, adopt different roles and finally develop autonomous attitudes as a result of using the platform.

### 2.5. Self-Assessment

Discussing learner autonomy without the effects of self-assessment on it would be an incomplete effort. Self-assessment is a technique in which instead of teachers, learners evaluate their language competence. It can be done through checklists or different assessment tools designed with the cooperation of teachers and learners. Self assessment can be done in two ways: summative self-assessment, formative self assessment. Since the reliability of the summative one has always been a concern in language teaching, a greater significance was given to the formative self-assessment. According to Oscarson (1989), formal self assessment encourages learners to check the efficiency of their communication, help learners become aware of their learning process by prompting them to critically review the course content, inform them about various language learning objectives, broadens the range of assessment criteria. The accuracy of self-assessment, however, seems to vary depending on several factors such as the kind of assessment, linguistic competence, career goals and the level of training. For the learners, to engage in self-assessment process is considered as more significant than the validity of their assessment because during this process learners gain great experience by reviewing their course content, reflecting on their learning methods and becoming aware of language learning objectives. Natri (2007) supports this idea by suggesting that learners have a higher control over their learning when they participate in the evaluation. In his study, he observed that there was a significant correlation between self-assessment levels and formal scores in reading.

Various instruments such as progress cards, self-constructed tests and portfolios are developed and have been used for self-evaluation. With the help of these tools learners are able to review their progress and take responsibility in self-evaluation. In addition to these instruments, some technology-based tools were also devised. In an attempt to allow learners to compare their self-assessment scores with their formal results, an Internet-based diagnostic tool DIALANG was developed based on Common European Framework Standards. It was observed that the results of self-assessment ratings were similar to formal testing scores in reading. Providing self-assessment opportunities is one of the most significant purposes of learning management systems. These platforms allow learners to track their own progress via some diagnostic tools and progress reports they provide. Error correction option also gives learners a chance to review their work without the need of a teacher and improve their language competence. Another self-assessment tool the LMS provides is a checklist prepared for each module with respect to different language skills. Learners have the chance to evaluate their progress by completing and reviewing these self-assessment instruments.

### 2.6. Motivation

Since the integration of technology into language learning, how it affects language motivation has always been discussed. The development of more advanced, more user friendly and more flexible technology systems and their successful adaptation into language teaching made it possible for the technology-based systems to enhance language motivation. For this reason, enhancing learner motivation has been regarded as one of the main motives for integrating technology into language learning and the relationship between technology and language motivation has always interested researchers in ELT field. Since technology-oriented language teaching promoted individualized instruction and allowed learners to control their learning by having valuable feedback, it has been widely suggested that technology enhances learner motivation.

In its early stages, CALL activities were mainly composed of drill-based structure and vocabulary activities which lacked communication and interaction. Learners used to study in isolated environments and this caused most learners to lose motivation after certain period of studying. However, improvements in Internet

technologies provided an opportunity to re-design these resources and create language learning environments which encouraged communication with other learners. The communicative aspect of these new environments had some significant benefits enhancing learner motivation. Hoffman (1994) suggests that Internet-based communication tools enhanced motivation as they allowed learners to interact with a real audience. They also had the chance to get rid of isolation by being the part of a community and meeting people from different backgrounds which could lead to another level of motivation. The mentioned benefits mostly stem from the nature of the resources and activities rather than the technology itself. As for the inherent effects of technology, the "novelty effect" of learning via technology stands out (Murray, 1998). Learners are automatically impressed with the new technology they come across and this causes a temporary increase in their motivation. However, depending on what they expect from technology, they tend to lose interest as they are used to new technologies and be aware of their limitations. Especially nowadays, the Internet, computers, digital tablets, mobile phones and smart devices are an indispensable part of learners lives, therefore we can suggest that the novelty effect of technology has disappeared to a great extend. This reminds us to focus on the effective design and implementation of learning environments benefiting from technological improvements more than focusing on technological tools.

A great number of studies regarding the potential of technology to increase motivation in language learning have been conducted. A study about the sustained use of technology in language learning indicate that learners tend to lose motivation without the supervision of a teacher and give up studying when they are out of the campus (Appel, Mullen 2002). In another study about e-learning courses, Jung (2011) discovered that online interaction with other learners and teachers was the most significant cause of motivation. Warschauer (1996) found that learners who wrote essays online felt they learned more efficiently and independently as they could interact with real people making learning more authentic and relevant. It is obvious that when learners notice the connection between their language environment and the speakers of the target language, they have a higher level of language achievement and they are better motivated to communicate. Strambi and Bouvet (2003) suggest that technology could enhance motivation in long-term as long as it meets the expectations of learners from different learning styles, interests

and language skill levels. On the other hand, there are some contexts in which technology might have some negative effects on learners' language motivation. For instance, in a study conducted by Chen and Cheng (2008) learners in a writing class expressed their disappointment when they had to perform writing tasks using a writing evaluation application without the intervention of their teacher. There are also examples of depleted motivation in learners when they are exposed authentic language more than they can take care of. Overwhelmed by the intensity of the content, learners feel insecure and tend to avoid participating in language tasks. Thinking of the adverse effects technology can produce on learners' motivation, it is quite essential to make sure learners are equipped with sufficient skills and language competence in order to handle potential linguistic and technical problems.

The influx of communication and social technologies including mobile devices created great opportunities for learners to exchange information with other learners and speakers of English language. Ranging from instant messaging tools and video-conferencing tools to social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, these technologies allow learners to communicate with real people regardless of time and location. Since learners' self-expression and interconnection with social world are among the factors that shape their motivation, (Ushioda, 2011) it can be suggested that communicative and social technologies are instrumental in contributing to learner achievement. In a research about the potential benefits of bog-writing, Bhattacharya and Chauhan (2010) found that blogging helped learners assume responsibility for their learning process and enhance their independent learning skills. Multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs) such as Second Life are interactive examples of social technologies through which learners can socialize, engage in group activities and communicate with people from all over the world. As they can be used both individually and institutionally, these environments enable learners to engage in authentic interaction in different settings. The feedbacks suggest that learners eagerly participate in the activities in these environments and their opinions of them are quite positive.

The use of mobile technology is another practice that is believed to enhance language motivation. Nowadays, almost each learner owns a mobile phone or a digital tablet and thinking of the attraction of the applications either specifically

designed for language learning or indirectly contributing to language learning, it can be easily suggested that mobile learning has been an indispensable aspect of language learning. One of the potential concerns about mobile learning could be that, since learners use mobile applications without teachers' supervision, they can lose motivation when they face difficulties in terms of the content or technology. Another consideration should be that some learners might regard compulsory mobile learning tasks as interference in private life so they may show reluctance to mobile learning. The slow decline in the number of students using their mobile devices for educational purposes could be the proof of this reluctance (Stockwell, 2010).

It has been widely suggested that blended learning solutions increase motivation as they provide individualized learning experience, make learning more flexible and provide diverse learning environments. However, this presumption might be negated by the poor design and careless implementation of these platforms. Since it is known that for a learning environment to enhance motivation it should present authentic and exciting materials and create opportunities for communication and interaction, there is very little chance of success for blended learning systems that fail to supply these needs. Learning management systems which are developed based on the right methodology considering the authenticity and the relevance of the content and sufficiency of language practice opportunities have the potential of increasing learner motivation.

## 2.7. Language Skills

In this section four major language skills and vocabulary skills will be reviewed with respect to technological contributions including online resources and blending learning environments.

### 2.7.1. Reading

Online resources provide learners great opportunities for extensive reading by enabling them to access authentic content according to their needs and interests. Websites, wikis and blogs are among the authentic resources learners can benefit both by improving their reading comprehension skills and improving their writing skills by contributing to the construction of these resources. As it would be tiring to read in front of a monitor for a long time, mobile versions of these resources gain

extra importance as they provide flexibility and comfort. RSS reader mobile applications such as Flipboard and Bundle allow learners to read an individualized magazine by customizing the content into different categories according to their interests. These applications are extremely beneficial for learners since they help them save time and gain the habit of extensive reading. EBooks, interactive books and magazines which are specifically developed for mobile devices have also brought a new dimension to reading. While reading these resources, learners are introduced audios, videos, images and infographics making the reading process more attractive. Learners can also click on the unfamiliar words and see the definition of them through the built-in dictionaries in eBooks.

With respect to intensive reading, although there is a wide range of intensive reading resources on the Internet and digital platforms, there are some considerations about their use. First of all, some users who do not enjoy spending too much time in front of a monitor or a screen could quickly get tired of doing intensive reading activities. For online and digital intensive reading materials to be effective, they should be designed considering the requirements of digital material development such as integrating visuals into reading activities. Learning management systems offer valuable resources to help learners improve their intensive reading strategies such as skimming, scanning and reading for the gist. Depending on their technical features, these activities include drag and drop, matching, gap-filling, multiple-choice and sentence or paragraph ranking. A consideration about these resources is that, engaging in monotonous drill-based activities; learners may gradually regard intensive reading as a dull task. Therefore, employing creative strategies such as problem-solving, critical thinking and simulation and integrating reading with other language skills could improve the efficiency of learning management systems.

### 2.7.2. Writing

The integration of digital tools and online platforms into language learning enabled language learners to engage in meaningful written communication. With their built-in spelling and grammar checking options, offline software tools such as word processors and presentation software allow learners to write more accurately using a wider range of vocabulary. However, there is some criticism of these tools as they would encourage careless writing by giving too much support to learners during

their writing process (Dudeney and Hockly, 2007). TrackChanges tool allows writers and readers of a document to edit and review changes in each step. TrackChanges is particularly useful for writing and evaluating assignments such as essays, articles or stories and besides, it provides an opportunity for creative writing.

Viewed as valuable tools to enhance learner autonomy and motivation, creating blogs and wikis is a very effective and personalized way of writing. Learners may develop such websites themselves according to their interests or contribute to others' websites by posting comments or articles. Internet-based projects help learners improve their critical thinking skills by involving in tasks as researching, analyzing, indexing, writing and presenting. These projects may include simple projects such as writing an essay about the effects of global warming or writing about the plot of a popular movie. As the cognitive levels and linguistic competence of learners increase, more sophisticated tasks such as simulations or webquests may be preferred. Internet-based simulations allow learners to virtually experience real-life situations. The difference between webquests and other Internet-based projects is that webquests have more rigid structure. Engaging learners in these projects can be particularly useful for task-based approaches. It has been known that the most efficient way to teach language skills is integrating them with other language skills. The tasks mentioned above successfully enable the integration between reading and writing.

Considering that one of the most significant aspects of blended learning is saving valuable classroom time, it can be claimed that encouraging learners to involve in online writing activities serves a lot to this purpose. Learning management systems prepared by publishers include some writing modules and tasks with self-correction and common mistakes tools, however most of them lack authenticity and critical thinking skills.

### 2.7.3. Listening

Bearing the abundance of audio-visual materials in mind, it can be claimed that one of the language skills that benefit most from blending learning environments is listening. Either prepared specifically for language learning or for other purposes, a wide range of listening resources has been presented to language learners.

Integrating podcasts, videos and radio programs into a language course not only enables learners increase the amount of listening, but it also saves time and allows teachers to allocate more time to communication in the classroom. Although most of online listening resources are more appropriate for extensive listening, through a careful design they can easily be adapted to study intensively. Since exposure is the key for better listening comprehension, learners should be encouraged to do listening anytime anywhere. Mobile phones provide amazing opportunities for listening. Even though advanced learners can access more online listening resources, podcast applications or audio channels specifically developed for ELT can be useful for less competent learners. Teachers are advised to guide learners to choose listening resources evaluating the usefulness and quality of them (Sharma and Barret, 2007).

One of the biggest strengths of learning management systems is their ability to present well-organized listening activities and the function of assessing them systematically. According to a case study aimed to assess the achievement and attitudes of language learners in a blending learning context (Banditvilai, 2016), listening stood as the skill which benefited most from a blended learning environment.

### 2.7.4. Speaking

Compared to the times when the only speaking practice possibility was during the class hours, learners now have lots of chances to practice the target language online. One of the main problems of classroom speaking activities is that learners mostly find them irrelevant since learners mostly know each other very well and unless it is a multi-cultural environment their native language is the same. It is widely known that for meaningful communication, information gap is a necessity and it can be best provided by meeting new people. Online speaking platforms provide amazing opportunities for learners to have authentic and meaningful communication. Online voice chat rooms, video conferencing tools and virtual environments allow for synchronous communication and are extremely useful platforms to exchange information and practice language. Recording podcasts and videos are some popular ways of asynchronous communication. During the preparation phase of these podcasts learners have a chance to rehearse the language.

Language exchange websites are designed with the aim of facilitating communication. Different from most of other social media platforms, these websites have educational objectives. They give learners the option of choosing friends with the appropriate language level. Although most of them are not developed with linguistic purposes, interactive computer games contribute to learners' language production a lot. Engaging in collaborative problem-solving and simulation tasks, learners have substantial interaction.

However while encouraging learners to engage in online speaking, some pedagogical and methodological considerations should not be neglected. First of all, it should be questioned whether these practice opportunities match with the aims of the language course. Secondly, it should be checked whether the communication environment is appropriate for learner's personality development. Another thing that should be considered is whether learners have the chance to receive valuable feedback that will enable them to use the language more accurately.

In practice, however, the majority of blended learning environments fail to provide sufficient communication opportunities. Banditvilai's study (2016) prove this statement by indicating that learners were not satisfied with the e-learning environment they used with regard to improving speaking skills.

### 2.7.5. Vocabulary

Even though vocabulary is not regarded among the four major language skills mentioned above, it is strictly related to all of them. Furthermore, vocabulary acquisition is arguably the most significant aspect of language learning since "lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence and to the acquisition of a second language" (Schmitt, 2000). It should also be noted that there is a mutual relationship between vocabulary knowledge and language use. Vocabulary competence facilitates language use and, conversely, language use enables an increase in vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2001). The language practice opportunities blended learning platforms provide contributes to vocabulary acquisition to a large extent. These environments allow learners recycle the vocabulary in different contexts which is the key for successful vocabulary

acquisition. Through reading digital content such as websites, blogs, wikis and eBooks a great deal of incidental word learning takes place.

Electronic dictionaries designed for students not only simply give the definitions of words; they also include example sentences, corpus examples and collocations. Using the built-in pronunciation tools, learners have the chance to pronounce words accurately in different accents. Besides, numerous websites have been designed for language learners with the aim of helping learners facilitate their vocabulary acquisition. Although most of them consist of drill based vocabulary activities, there are some valuable resources which successfully teach vocabulary in a contextualized way. One of the main considerations for blended learning environments with respect to vocabulary learning should be providing opportunities to activate passive vocabulary of language learners. They can contribute to learners' lexical competence as long as they provide meaningful recycling tasks and activities.

# PART III: METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Research Model

This descriptive study aims to investigate learners' perceptions towards using a learning management system (LMS) in language learning. In order to collect data, both quantitative and qualitative research designs were used. The main reason why mixed methods design has been preferred is that using only a quantitative or a qualitative method may not be sufficient in social sciences (Creswell, 2003, p 4). Obtaining richer data and triangulating the findings of the quantitative study by comparing them with the findings of the qualitative study were the researcher's motives for choosing a mixed design.

Mixed methods design is the type of research where the researcher efficiently "combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study or set of related studies (Johnson, 2004). Collins, Onwuegbuzie, and Sutton (2006) identify the main rationale and purposes for conducting mixed methods as: participant enrichment (diversifying the sample by increasing the number of participants), instrument fidelity (optimizing utility of the research instruments), treatment integrity (assessing dependability of intervention) and significance enhancement (strengthening the interpretation of significant findings).

In order to implement the mixed methods design in an effective and principled way, the sequential explanatory strategy was adopted by the researcher. In this approach, the collection and analysis of quantitative data is followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data and finally these two designs are integrated during the interpretation phase (Creswell, 2003).

The research tool forming the basis of the quantitative study was a 25 five-point Likert scale item survey and the research tool of the qualitative study was a series of learner interviews which were made both individually and in focus groups. The survey was designed by the researcher taking some previous studies into consideration along with consulting the advisor and some colleagues. The interviews which were organized around eight questions were addressed to learners in order to explore their perceptions towards the use of an LMS in depth.

## 3.2. Setting and Participants

### 3.2.1. Setting

This study was conducted at a foreign language preparatory school of a private university in Turkey. At the time of the study, the institution had 980 learners, of whom 50 were international and 62 teachers of whom 9 were native. The language school primarily aimed to improve language skills of its learners in order to help them comprehend what they listen and read, express their opinions fluently both in speaking and in writing and follow the classes offered in English at the departments they were admitted to.

The language curriculum of the preparatory class was designed according to A1, A2, B1, B1+, B2+ modules regarding the academic program requirements of the university. The admission of learners to the next level depended on successfully completing the previous level by reaching a module achievement grade of at least 60 over 100. A1 level of the language curriculum consisted of 16 hours of main course where learners studied the target language through the integration of language skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, speaking and listening, 6 hours of grammar which aimed to teach grammar forms and structures in a communicative and contextualized way, 4 hours of productive skills with the aim of developing learners' speaking and writing skills, 2 hours of reading circle where learners discussed in small groups about the stories they read and an hour of online speaking session in which learners had the opportunity to practice online with mostly native teachers. A2 level of the language curriculum was very similar to the A1 curriculum with the only difference of increasing writing skill to 4 hours per week. B1 level curriculum was more skill-based with 12 hours of reading and writing skills, 8 hours of listening and speaking skills, 2 hours of reading circle, 6 hours of grammar and an hour of online speaking. Finally, B2 level curriculum included 12 hours of reading and writing skills, 6 hours of grammar, 8 hours of IELTS practice, an hour of online speaking and 2 hours of department visits in order to help learners familiarize with the departments they would be studying the following term. For the mentioned levels, the main course-book was 'Speak-Out' which has been published by Pearson with an LMS component that learners were required to study.

#### 3.2.1.1. The Implementation of the LMS

The language school used Pearson's 'MyEnglishLab' as an LMS in its foreign language preparatory class with an aim to increase the study hours of the learners, assign and check homework more practically and provide a deeper understanding of the weaknesses and strengths of each learner through the progress reports the platform generates. With the help of this learning management system, students were able to study where and when they wanted. Teachers could choose the activities and tests to meet the specific requirements of each individual. Tasks could be set to be completed by a certain date or students can be allowed to practise at their own pace. Since the LMS 'MyEnglishLab' was integrated into the language program, the assignments set by the teachers in this LMS were compulsory and were a part of assessment at the institution.

The ideal way of benefiting from the LMS for the learners was periodically doing the activities in parallel with the school curriculum rather than completing them at the end of the course however this could only be sustained if the teachers systematically checked the learners' progress. In practice most of the teachers checked it only at the end of the course and this led the majority of the learners to complete the activities and tasks towards the end of the course all at once. Although the LMS gave teachers the option of choosing tasks and activities for the whole class, groups of learners or individually, in the context this research was done, the teachers assigned all the learners the same amount of tasks basically the ones automatically presented to the students by the LMS.

#### 3.2.1.2. The Features of the LMS

The LMS has two different interfaces, one for the teacher and the other for the learner. The teacher interface consists of five main sections; the home page where teachers can see assignments and events on a calendar, the course section that contains all the course content at multiple language levels, the gradebook section which contains lots of useful diagnostic tools and allows teachers to view learners' scores and follow their progress, the messages section through which teachers can remind learners of assigned tasks and respond to their questions and finally the settings section where teachers can manage students, resources, courses and grades.

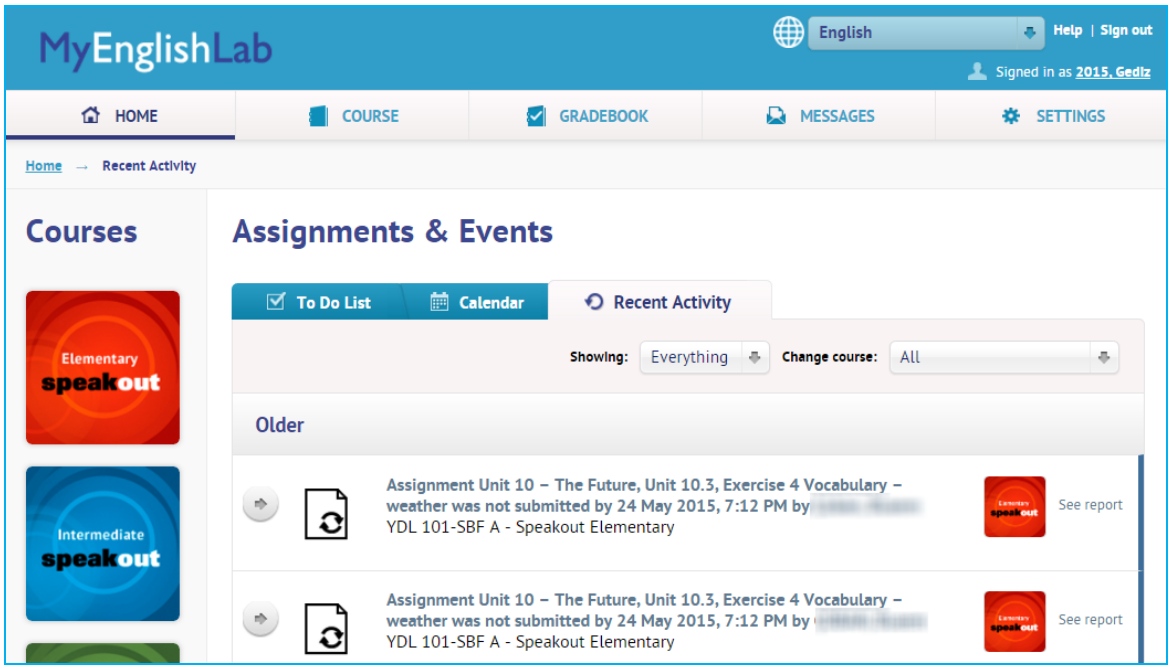


Figure 3-1: The Teacher Interface of the LMS

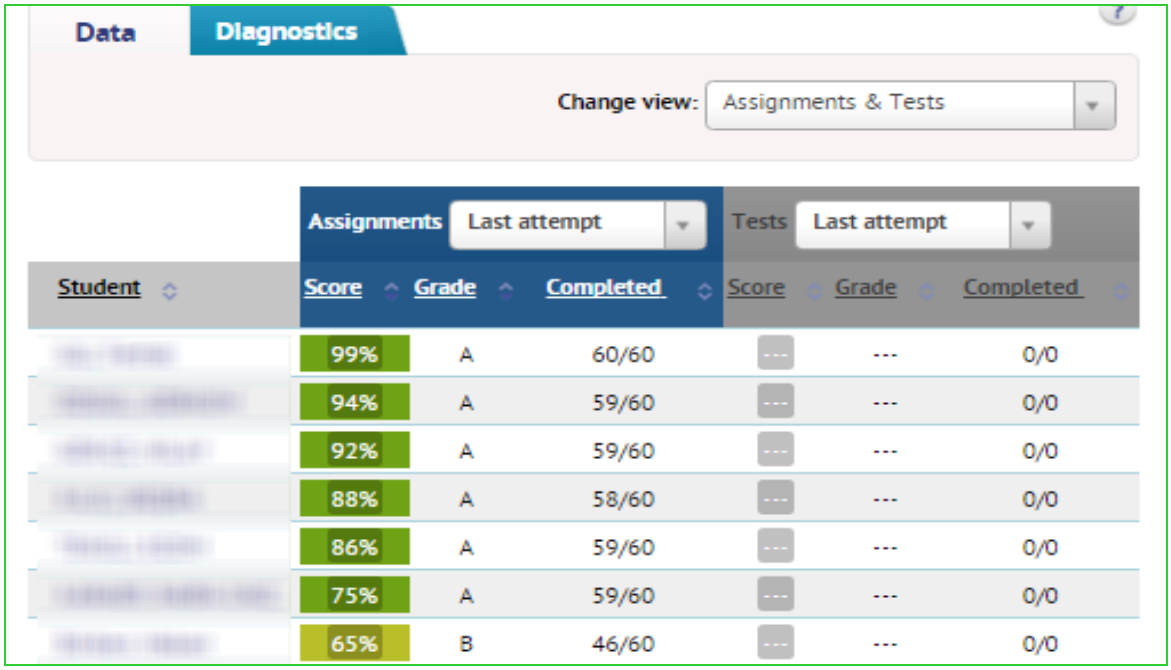


Figure 3-2: The assignment & Test Section of the Teacher Interface

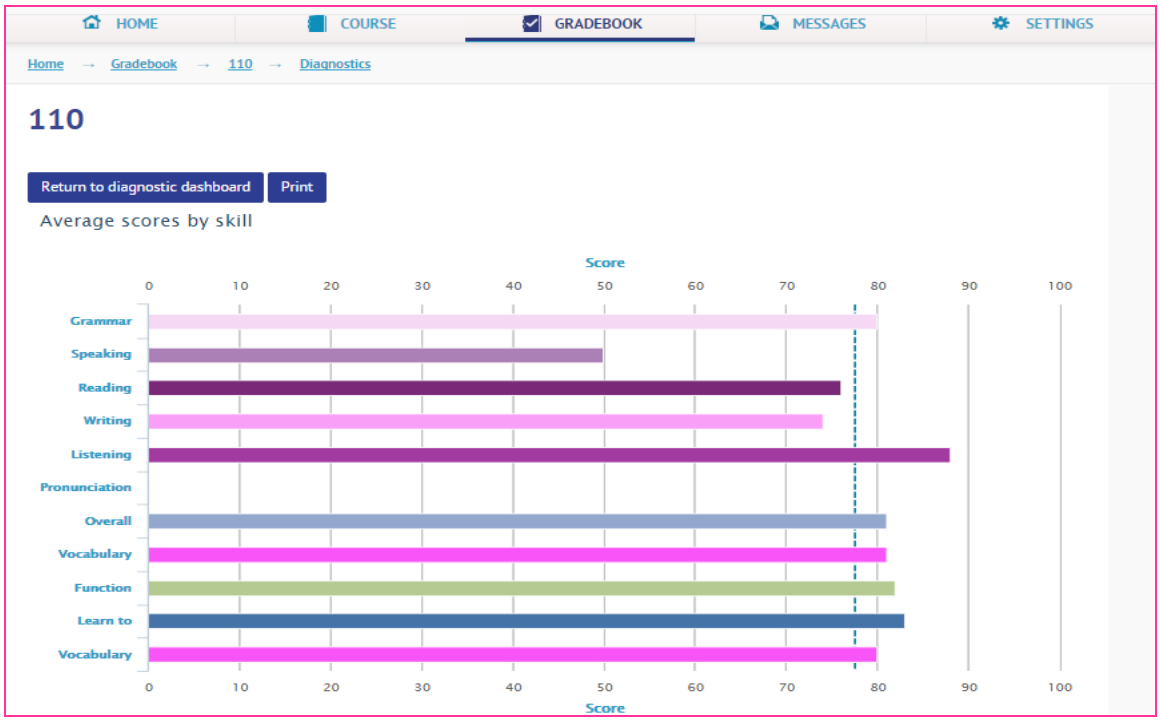


Figure 3-3: The Gradebook Section of the Teacher Interface

On the other hand, the student interface which consists of the same sections with the teacher interface has a relatively simpler design and has different functions. The content part in the course section includes activities and tasks in the areas of vocabulary, grammar, reading, listening, writing and language functions. It also presents video podcasts, revision tests such as quick check tests, progress tests, mid-course tests and end of course test. The activities are mostly designed in the forms of matching, gap-filling, drag and drop and sentence-completion so that they can easily be graded automatically by the computer. There are open ended tasks in writing and language function parts; however they are not graded by the system.

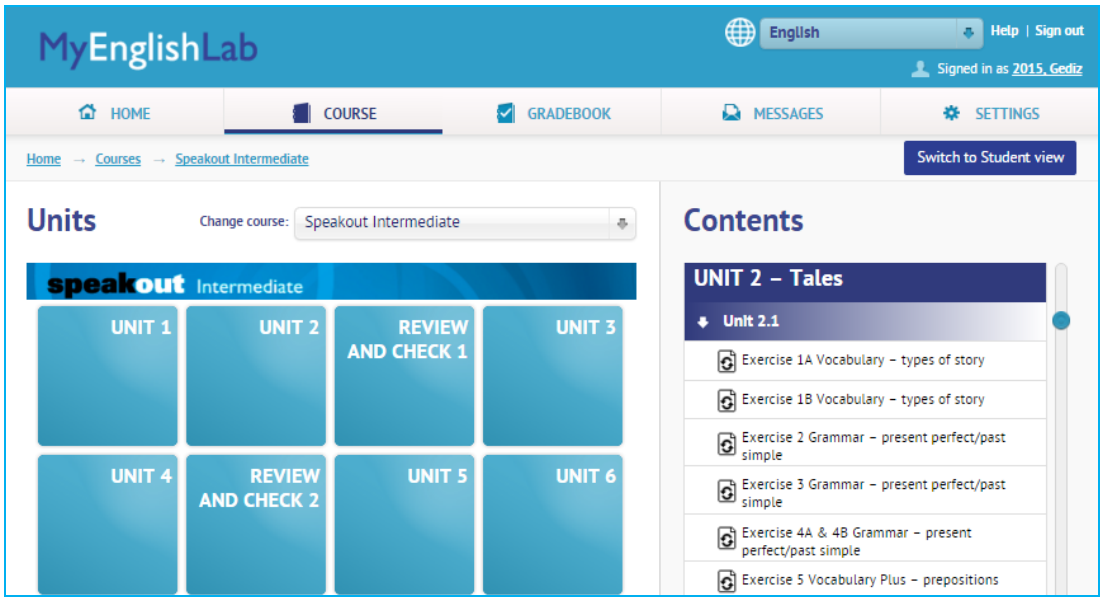


Figure 3-4: The Student Interface of the LMS

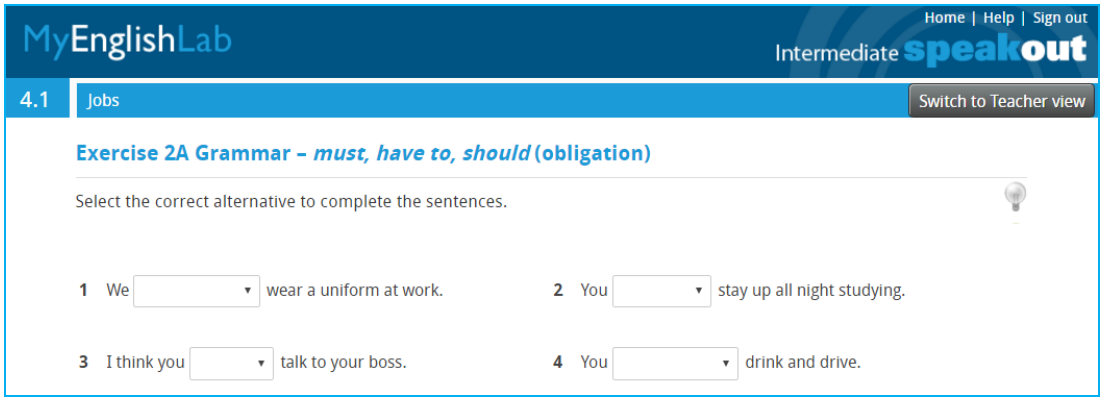


Figure 3-5: The Grammar Activities in the Student Interface

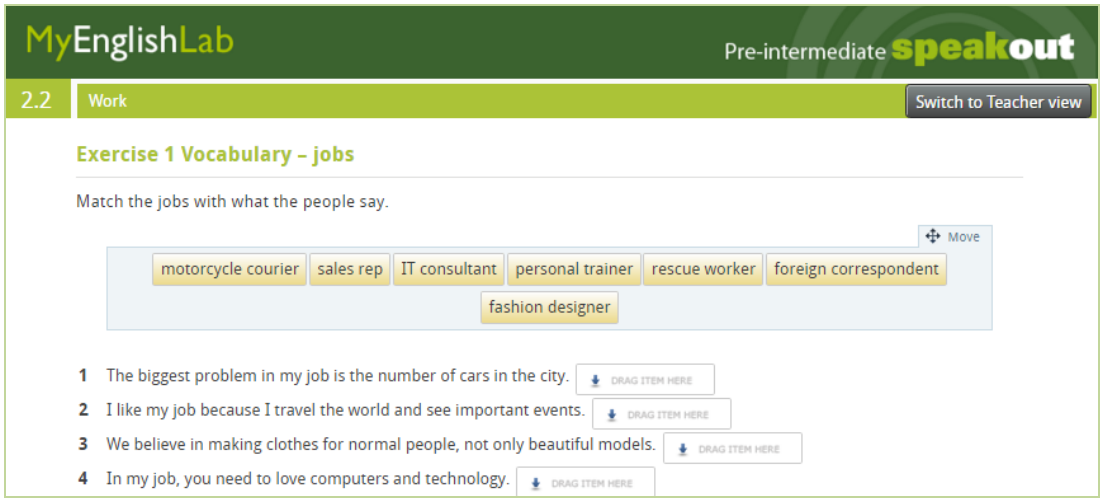


Figure 3-6: The Vocabulary Activities in the Student Interface

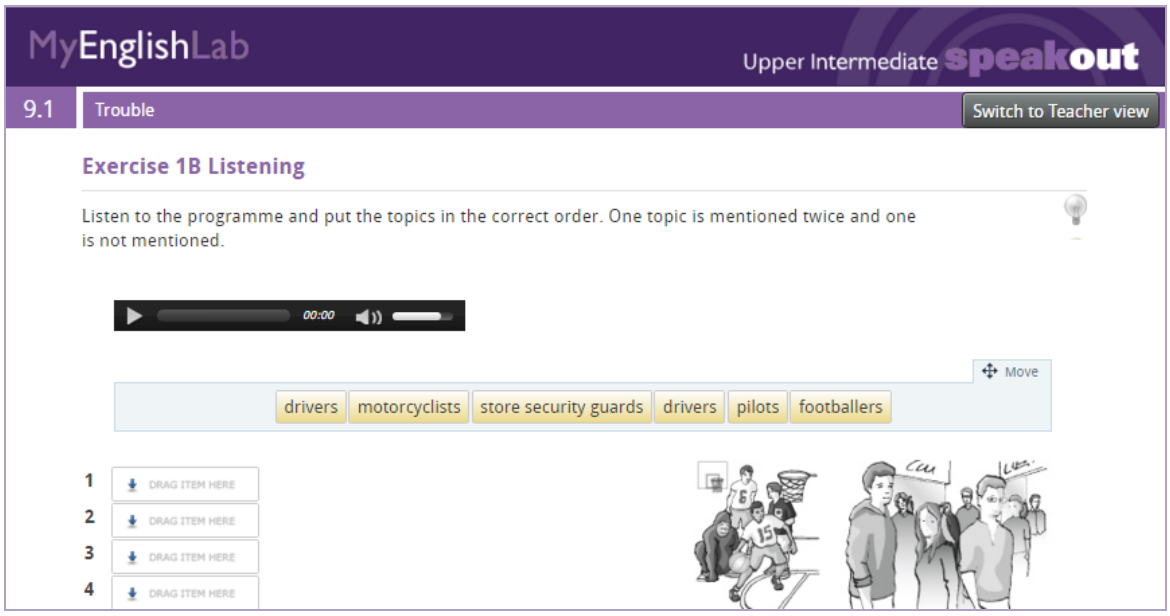


Figure 3-7: The Listening Activities in the Student Interface

Even though the LMS has mobile support and can be used in digital tablets and smart phones, it has not been designed considering the characteristics and dynamics of mobile devices and mobile learning.

The LMS has a common errors tool and each time a learner makes an error, the LMS responds with feedback specific to that learner and this feature is believed to help learners correct their mistakes instantly and improve their grammar knowledge. The common error report also provides teachers with the opportunity to be aware of the most common error types learners make and to help them improve by focusing more on these errors in face-to-face teaching time.

### 3.2.2 Participants

The target population of this study is the EFL learners at a foreign language preparatory school of a private university in Turkey. A total of 248 learners participated in the study. 220 of these learners completed a survey and 28 learners joined the interviews. The learners were chosen through convenience sampling for the sake of practicality and overcoming administrative procedures. The 220 learners who took the survey were studying in four different levels. 49 of them were elementary (A1) level, 69 were pre-intermediate (A2) level, 35 were intermediate

(B1) level and 67 were upper-intermediate (B2) level. Female population of the participants was slightly higher than male population with 116 to 104. As for the ages of the participants, 184 of them were between 17-20, 31 were between 21-25, 2 were between 26-30 and 3 were over 30 years old. While the majority of the learners were of Turkish nationality, 18 of them were from different countries. The overall achievement marks of the 220 participants for the level completed were also questioned and according to the responses, 59 of them scored between 60-70, 94 of them scored between 71-80, 62 of them scored between 81-90 and only five of them achieved over 90. However, these responds couldn't be verified by the school administration. When they were asked how many hours per week they studied with the LMS, 153 of them responded they studied between 0-2 hours, 40 of them between 3-4 hours, 13 of them between 5-6 hours and 14 of them responded they studied over 7 hours per week. Finally their computer competence was also investigated in the survey. 8 of them stated they were very bad, 9 of them bad, 81 of them average, 84 of them good and 38 of them very good in terms of computer competence. The participant information stated above only belongs to 220 participants who took the survey. To help them feel more relaxed and express their opinions more freely, no demographic information of the 28 randomly selected interviewees was recorded.

Table 4-1: Demographic Information of the Participants

| **Groups** | | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | 17-20 | 184 | 83,6 |
| | 21-25 | 31 | 14,1 |
| | 26-30 | 2 | ,9 |
| | 31+ | 3 | 1,4 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |
| **Gender** | Female | 116 | 52,7 |
| | Male | 104 | 47,3 |
| | Total | 220 | 100 |
| **Nationality** | Turkish | 202 | 91,8 |
| | Other | 18 | 8,2 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |
| **Course Level** | Elementary | 49 | 22,3 |
| | Pre-Intermediate | 69 | 31,4 |
| | Intermediate | 35 | 15,9 |
| | Upper Intermediate | 67 | 30,5 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Achievement mark for the level completed** | 60-70 | 59 | 26,8 |
| | 71-80 | 94 | 42,7 |
| | 81-90 | 62 | 28,2 |
| | 91-100 | 5 | 2,3 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |
| **Period of LMS use** | 1-2 months | 40 | 18,2 |
| | 3-4 months | 55 | 25,0 |
| | 5-6 months | 80 | 36,4 |
| | 7+ months | 45 | 20,5 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |
| **Study duration per week** | 0-2 hours | 153 | 69,5 |
| | 3-4 hours | 40 | 18,2 |
| | 5-6 hours | 13 | 5,9 |
| | 7+ hours | 14 | 6,4 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |
| **Computer competence** | very bad | 8 | 3,6 |
| | bad | 9 | 4,1 |
| | average | 81 | 36,8 |
| | good | 84 | 38,2 |
| | very good | 38 | 17,3 |
| | Total | 220 | 100,0 |

## 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Two different instruments were used to collect data for this study. Firstly, a survey on learners' perceptions of using a learning management system (LMS) was conducted, and then semi-structured interviews were carried out both in focus groups and individually.

### 3.3.1. Survey on Learners' Perceptions of Using an LMS

Since the use of learning management systems (LMS) in language learning systematically can be considered as quite a recent practice, sufficient research has not been conducted in order to explore the perceptions of learners towards using these platforms. Therefore a valid and reliable survey investigating language learners' perceptions towards using an LMS has not been found in previous studies. Therefore, a survey of 25 questions with a five-point Likert scale was designed by the researcher. In the survey, 1 represented strongly disagree, 2 represented disagree, 3 represented neutral, 4 represented agree and 5 represented strongly agree. The survey consisted of items constructed to explore learners' perceptions of using an LMS with regard to language skills (items 1-5), technology use and support (items 6-9),

motivation (item 10), learner autonomy (items 11-12), the content used (items 13-16), communication and interaction (items 17-18), learning styles (item 19), self-assessment (items 20-21), and learner satisfaction (items 22-25).

Since the survey was prepared by the researcher and it had never been subjected to piloting before, it was crucial to pilot it with the target population. A pilot study was conducted with the participation of 50 learners of the same institution the study would be conducted so that the reliability of the survey could be measured. The reliability test of the pilot study indicated that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the survey was 0,785 which is regarded as acceptable and very close to good in terms of internal consistency (George and Mallery, 2003). When each item was analyzed to check if it caused a significant decrease in the survey's overall reliability, no problematic item was observed. Besides, no survey item was reported to be vague or contradictory by the participants. After the survey proved to be reliable in terms of internal consistency, it was handed out to 220 participants at the language preparatory school in paper format.

### 3.3.2. Interviews with Learners

In order to further explore learners' perceptions towards using an LMS in language learning and scaffold the findings obtained through the survey, semi-structured interviews were held with the learners of the language preparatory school. During the study, 28 learners who were randomly chosen were interviewed. While twenty of these students were interviewed in four focus groups each consisting of five students, eight of them were interviewed individually. Each of the focus group interviews lasted for about half an hour whereas each of individual interviews lasted for about 20 minutes. Except one of them, which was in English, the interviews were made in the learners' native language which was Turkish and each of them was successfully audio-recorded. The interviews were mainly based on eight questions (See Appendix 2) that aimed to encourage the learners to freely express their views about the use of an LMS in language learning. The questions were different from the questions of the survey in that, the interviews required more critical thinking and broader responses. However, since the questions were mostly open ended, the risk of deviating from the focus of the research was always a concern during the interviews and the researcher made considerable effort to keep the learners on track.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

In this study two different data collection instruments were used; a 5 point Likert scale survey and semi-structured interviews. In order to analyze the data acquired from the survey, SPSS 23 was used. Frequency analysis of the items was conducted to see the medians, differences and percentages. As for the interviews, although it has widely been accepted that verbatim transcription is beneficial for data analysis, there is some counter argument stating that taking notes during an interview or while listening to the recordings can be more efficient and practical in some cases (Fasick, 2001; Wengraf, 2001). For the sake of time and convenience, verbatim transcription of the interviews was not made for this research. Each interview was audio-recorded and after a meticulous note taking procedure, the data which was collected through the learners' responses was indexed into some main themes with relevance to the research topic. The main themes which emerged through the interviews were The LMS as a Recycling and Reinforcement Instrument, Learner Autonomy and the LMS, Learner Satisfaction with the LMS, Learners' main Concerns about the LMS and Aspects of Improvement.

# PART IV: FINDINGS

## 4.1. Reliability of Instruments

To measure the reliability of the survey prepared to explore learners' perceptions of using a learning management system (LMS) in language learning, Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient was used in SPSS. The results indicated that the reliability of the survey which consists of 25 items is .887.

## 4.2. Findings of the Survey on Learners' Perceptions of using an LMS

The frequencies and percentages of the survey items were given in the same order with the survey and the medians for these items were given in a descending order in each of the nine sections.

### 4.2.1. The Survey Items with Regard to Language Skills

In order to learn to what extend the learners agreed using an LMS helped them improve their language skills, the researcher asked five questions specific to language skills in the survey. The results indicated that 60% of the learners agreed that the LMS helped them improve their vocabulary skills, 47% of them agreed that it helped them improve their listening skills, 44% of them agreed that it helped them improve their reading skills, 22,2% of them agreed that it helped them improve their speaking skills and only 17,8% of them agreed that it helped them improve their writing skills. When the medians of the same survey items were calculated, it was seen that the median of the statement about vocabulary skills was the highest with 4, the medians of the statements about reading and listening skills were the same with 3, the median of the statement about writing skills was 2,5 and the median of the statement about speaking skills was the lowest with 2.

Table 4-2: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Language Skills

| | **Strongly disagree** | | **Disagree** | | **Neutral** | | **Agree** | | **Strongly agree** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. The LMS helps me improve my speaking skills. | 57 | 26 | 62 | 28 | 53 | 24 | 41 | 19 | 7 | 3,2 |
| 2. The LMS helps me improve my writing skills. | 30 | 14 | 80 | 36 | 72 | 33 | 34 | 16 | 4 | 1,8 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. The LMS helps me improve my listening skills. | 20 | 9,1 | 37 | 17 | 60 | 27 | 75 | 34 | 28 | 13 |
| 4. The LMS helps me improve my reading skills. | 18 | 8,2 | 36 | 16 | 69 | 31 | 69 | 31 | 28 | 13 |
| 5. The LMS helps me improve my vocabulary skills. | 10 | 4,5 | 24 | 11 | 56 | 26 | 87 | 40 | 43 | 20 |

Table 4-3: The Survey Items with Regard to Language Skills and the Medians in Descending Order

| **Statements** | **Overall Median** |
|---|---|
| 5. The LMS helps me improve my vocabulary skills. | 4 |
| 4. The LMS helps me improve my reading skills. | 3 |
| 3. The LMS helps me improve my listening skills. | 3 |
| 1. The LMS helps me improve my writing skills. | 2,5 |
| 2. The LMS helps me improve my speaking skills. | 2 |

### 4.2.2. The Survey Items with Regard to Technology Use and Support

Another point that was inquired in the survey was related to the learners' perceptions towards the LMS with regard to technology use and support. According to the results 58,7% of the participants agreed with the statement "I have sufficient Internet access to use the LMS off campus" and only 21,8% disagreed with it. When the learners were asked whether they believed the design of the LMS was user-friendly, 43,2% agreed and 29,6% disagreed with the statement. 23,4% of the participants agreed with the statement "I have had enough training about how to use the LMS" and almost one third of them remained neutral. They were also asked whether they needed technical support while using the LMS and only 19,5% agreed that they needed technical support. The 9$^{th}$ statement which was about the Internet access had the highest median in this group with 4. The 6$^{th}$ statement which was about the design of the LMS and the 8$^{th}$ statement which was about the LMS training had the same medians with 3. The 7$^{th}$ statement "I need technical support while using the LMS" had the lowest median with 2.

Table 4-4: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Technology Use and Support

| | **Strongly disagree** | | **Disagree** | | **Neutral** | | **Agree** | | **Strongly agree** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 6. The design of the LMS is user-friendly. | 29 | 13,2 | 36 | 16,4 | 60 | 27,3 | 59 | 26,8 | 36 | 16,4 |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. I need technical support while using the LMS. | 62 | 28,2 | 61 | 27,7 | 54 | 24,5 | 26 | 11,8 | 17 | 7,7 |
| 8. I have had enough training about how to use the LMS. | 51 | 23,2 | 44 | 20,0 | 74 | 33,6 | 37 | 16,8 | 14 | 6,4 |
| 9. I have sufficient Internet access to use the LMS off campus. | 20 | 9,1 | 28 | 12,7 | 43 | 19,5 | 51 | 23,2 | 78 | 35,5 |

Table 4-5: The Survey Items with Regard to Technology Use and Support and the Medians in Descending Order

| **Statements** | **Overall Median** |
|---|---|
| 9. I have sufficient Internet access to use the LMS off campus. | 4 |
| 6. The design of the LMS is user-friendly. | 3 |
| 8. I have had enough training about how to use the LMS. | 3 |
| 7. I need technical support while using the LMS. | 2 |

### 4.2.3. The Survey Item with Regard to Motivation

The learners' perceptions on the LMS with regard to motivation were among the points inspected through the survey. The results indicated that 25,9% of the learners agreed the LMS has increased their motivation towards language. The 10$^{th}$ statement had a median of 3.

Table 4-6: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Motivation

| | **Strongly disagree** | | **Disagree** | | **Neutral** | | **Agree** | | **Strongly agree** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 10. The LMS increases my motivation towards language learning. | 40 | 18,2 | 59 | 26,8 | 64 | 29,1 | 43 | 19,5 | 14 | 6,4 |

Table 4-7: The Survey Item with Regard to Motivation and its Median

| **Statement** | **Overall Median** |
|---|---|
| 10. The LMS increases my motivation towards language learning. | 3 |

### 4.2.4. The Survey Items with Regard to Learner Autonomy

The learners' perceptions on the LMS with regard to learner autonomy were also investigated through the survey. The results indicated that only 25,3% of the learners agreed that the LMS helped them improve the language independently. On the other hand, 30,4% of the learners agreed they would prefer studying with an LMS on their own to studying in the class with a teacher. The 11th statement had a median of 2,5 while the 12th statement had a higher median of 3.

Table 4-8: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Learner Autonomy

| | **Strongly disagree** | | **Disagree** | | **Neutral** | | **Agree** | | **Strongly agree** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 11. The LMS helps me improve the language independently. | 60 | 27,3 | 50 | 22,7 | 52 | 23,6 | 37 | 16,8 | 21 | 9,5 |
| 12. I would prefer studying with an LMS on my own to studying in the class with a teacher. | 56 | 25,5 | 52 | 23,6 | 45 | 20,5 | 39 | 17,7 | 28 | 12,7 |

Table 4-9: The Survey Items with Regard Learner Autonomy and the Medians in Descending Order

| **Statements** | **Overall Median** |
|---|---|
| 12. I would prefer studying with an LMS on my own to studying in the class with a teacher. | 3 |
| 11. The LMS helps me improve the language independently. | 2,5 |

### 4.2.5. The Survey Items with Regard to the Content of the LMS

The items between 13 and 16 in the survey aimed to explore the learners' opinions towards the content of the LMS. A considerable number of the learners (57,8%) agreed with the 15th statement suggesting that the content of the LMS was in accordance with the classroom content while only the minority of them (16,8%) disagreed with it. 47,2% of the learners agreed with the 16th statement “The LMS helps me recycle and reinforce what I learn in the classroom” and only 22,3% disagreed with the statement. In response to the 13th statement, 42,2% of the learners agreed that the LMS provided them with sufficient audio-visual materials, 23,7% disagreed with the statement and 34,1% remained neutral. Interestingly, nearly half of the participants (44,1%) remained neutral with the 14th statement "The LMS provides me with sufficient authentic materials", and 23,7% of them agreed with it.

The median of the 15th statement was the highest with 4 and each of the other statements had a median of 3.

Table 4-10: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to the Content Used

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 13. The LMS provides me with sufficient audio-visual materials. | 16 | 7,3 | 36 | 16,4 | 75 | 34,1 | 65 | 29,5 | 28 | 12,7 |
| 14. The LMS provides me with sufficient authentic materials. | 21 | 9,5 | 49 | 22,3 | 97 | 44,1 | 36 | 16,4 | 17 | 7,7 |
| 15. The content of the LMS matches well with the content in the class. | 10 | 4,5 | 27 | 12,3 | 56 | 25,5 | 80 | 36,4 | 47 | 21,4 |
| 16. The LMS helps me recycle and reinforce what I learn in the classroom. | 16 | 7,3 | 33 | 15,0 | 67 | 30,5 | 74 | 33,6 | 30 | 13,6 |

Table 4-11: The Survey Items with Regard to the Content Used and the Medians in Descending Order

| **Statements** | **Overall Median** |
|---|---|
| 15. The content of the LMS matches well with the content in the class. | 4 |
| 13. The LMS provides me with sufficient audio-visual materials. | 3 |
| 14. The LMS provides me with sufficient authentic materials. | 3 |
| 16. The LMS helps me recycle and reinforce what I learn in the classroom. | 3 |

### 4.2.6. The Survey Items with Regard to Communication and Interaction

The 17th and the 18th statements of the survey targeted to investigate the participants' perceptions on the LMS with regard to communication and interaction. Almost half of the learners (45,4%) agreed that they would prefer to interact and collaborate with their friends via the LMS, 23,6% remained neutral and 30,9% disagreed with the statement. When the learners were asked whether they would prefer to communicate with their teachers via the LMS 41,4% stated that they would, while 30,9% disagreed. Both the 17th and the 18th items had the same medians of 3.

Table 4-12: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Communication and Interaction

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 17. I would prefer to interact and collaborate with my friends via the LMS. | 29 | 13,2 | 39 | 17,7 | 52 | 23,6 | 65 | 29,5 | 35 | 15,9 |
| 18. I would prefer to communicate with my teacher via the LMS. | 24 | 10,9 | 44 | 20,0 | 61 | 27,7 | 64 | 29,1 | 27 | 12,3 |

Table 4-13: The Survey Items with Regard to Communication and Interaction and their Medians in Descending Order

| Statements | Overall Median |
|---|---|
| 17. I would prefer to interact and collaborate with my friends via the LMS. | 3 |
| 18. I would prefer to communicate with my teacher via the LMS. | 3 |

### 4.2.7. The Survey Items with Regard to Learning Styles

In order to understand to what extend the learners agree the LMS is suitable with their learning styles, the 19th statement was included in the survey. 41,4% agreed with the statement, 27,7% remained neutral and 30,9% disagreed with it. The median of this statement was calculated as 3.

Table 4-14: Frequencies of the Survey Item with Regard to Learning Styles

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 19. I think the LMS is suitable for my learning style. | 24 | 10,9 | 44 | 20,0 | 61 | 27,7 | 64 | 29,1 | 27 | 12,3 |

Table 4-15: The Survey Item with Regard to Learning Styles and its Median

| Statement | Overall Median |
|---|---|
| 19. I think the LMS is suitable for my learning style. | 3 |

### 4.2.8. The Survey Items with Regard to Self-Assessment

The results of the 20th and the 21th statements were very similar. 31,9% of the participants agreed that the LMS gave them enough opportunity to check their progress and 30,4% disagreed with this statement. On the other hand, 34,1% agreed that the LMS provided them with useful feedback and helped them correct their mistakes whereas 33,2% of the learners disagreed. Both items had the same medians of 3.

Table 4-16: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Self-Assessment

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Statements** | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 20. The LMS gives me enough opportunity to check my progress. | 26 | 11,8 | 41 | 18,6 | 83 | 37,7 | 56 | 25,5 | 14 | 6,4 |
| 21. The LMS provides me with useful feedback and helps me correct my mistakes. | 29 | 13,2 | 44 | 20,0 | 72 | 32,7 | 56 | 25,5 | 19 | 8,6 |

Table 4-17: The Survey Items with Regard to Self-Assessment and their Medians in Descending Order

| **Statements** | **Overall Median** |
|---|---|
| 20. The LMS gives me enough opportunity to check my progress. | 3 |
| 21. The LMS provides me with useful feedback and helps me correct my mistakes. | 3 |

### 4.2.9. The Survey Items with Regard to Learner Satisfaction

The last four items of the survey were prepared in order to check to what extend the learners were satisfied with using an LMS in language learning. Interestingly, although 42,3% of the learners agreed with the 22$^{nd}$ statement suggesting that the LMS was useful in language learning, only 21,4% of them agreed that they would like to take a course with an LMS component in the future. When the participants were asked whether the LMS made the course more interesting, less than one fourth of them (23,6%) agreed with the statement. Finally 37,3% of the learners agreed with the 25th statement suggesting that their current attitude towards the LMS was more positive than their first experience with it. Each of the items in this category had the same median of 3.

Table 4-18: Frequencies of the Survey Items with Regard to Learner Satisfaction

| | Strongly disagree | | Disagree | | Neutral | | Agree | | Strongly agree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 22. I think using an LMS is useful in language learning. | 26 | 11,8 | 36 | 16,4 | 65 | 29,5 | 75 | 34,1 | 18 | 8,2 |
| 23. The LMS made this course more interesting. | 42 | 19,1 | 48 | 21,8 | 78 | 35,5 | 39 | 17,7 | 13 | 5,9 |
| 24. I would like to take a course with an LMS component in the future. | 49 | 22,3 | 46 | 20,9 | 78 | 35,5 | 35 | 15,9 | 12 | 5,5 |
| 25. My current attitude towards the LMS is more positive than my first experience with it. | 29 | 13,2 | 40 | 18,2 | 69 | 31,4 | 55 | 25,0 | 27 | 12,3 |

Table 4-19: The Survey Items with Regard to with Regard to Learner Satisfaction and their Medians in Descending Order

| Statements | Overall Median |
|---|---|
| 22. I think using an LMS is useful in language learning. | 3 |
| 23. The LMS made this course more interesting. | 3 |
| 24. I would like to take a course with an LMS component in the future. | 3 |
| 25. My current attitude towards the LMS is more positive than my first experience with it. | 3 |

## 4.3. Findings of the Interviews with the Learners

The notes meticulously taken through the recordings of learner interviews were carefully scanned and reviewed to discover some recurrent themes. After this process, some main themes such as The LMS as a Recycling and Reinforcement Instrument, Learner Autonomy and the LMS, Learner Satisfaction with the LMS, Learners' main Concerns about the LMS and Aspects of Improvement emerged and the learner's perceptions regarding these themes were revealed.

### 4.3.1. The LMS as a Recycling and Reinforcement Instrument

Based on the learners' comments it can easily be claimed that the LMS aspect the learners are mostly satisfied with is that it provides learners with sufficient materials to recycle the course content they study in the classroom thus reinforcing language learning. 22 of the interviewed learners are quite pleased with the concordance between the LMS content and the course content. They state that this harmony helps them review the language items taught and succeed in the achievement tests. According to learners' statements, in the LMS, the target vocabulary which is almost the same as the vocabulary in the course book is recycled in different contexts and this recycling enables learners to better internalize the target vocabulary. A learner emphasized how she benefited from the LMS before the achievement tests saying "*I usually prepare for the achievement tests via the LMS. Especially the grammar and vocabulary activities are very similar to those of the achievement tests*".

### 4.3.2. Learner autonomy and the LMS

Although research widely suggests that blended learning and using an LMS significantly improve learner autonomy, the feedback received through the interviews contradicted with it. When they were asked whether the LMS helped them take more responsibility for their learning process, none of them replied positively. A learner's statement "*When something is compulsory, it does not help me become an independent learner. After all I depend on somebody else's choices*." clearly suggested that the she did not think the current practice of the LMS fostered learner autonomy. 7 learners stressed that if they had been given the opportunity to customize the content according to their preferences in a flexible way, they would have thought it contributed to their independent learning.

### 4.3.3. Learner satisfaction with the LMS

It has been believed that using an LMS greatly increases learner satisfaction and motivation. During the interviews, learners were asked whether the LMS increased their motivation towards language learning. Surprisingly, the response was mostly negative and even the ones who said they were highly motivated in the initial stages of the LMS, admitted that their motivation faded away during the process. Although 15 of the interviewed learners suggested that the LMS is useful both in practicing vocabulary, grammar and listening and in terms of the support it provides while preparing for the achievement tests, 22 of them stated that they did not eagerly use the LMS. Only 6 learners expressed their satisfaction for the LMS.

### 4.3.4. Learners' main concerns about the LMS

When the interviewees were inquired about the reasons for their general dissatisfaction towards the use of the LMS, the following factors were mentioned.

#### 4.3.4.1. The Issues of Assessment and Reliability

Although the teachers have the option of observing the learner's progress in the LMS periodically, in practice it has only been checked once at the end of the course. The teachers mark the learner's work according to the completion percentage

of the tasks, not considering the accuracy of them. It can be interpreted from the interviews that this practice in assessment causes most of the learners to procrastinate and leave most of their LMS work to the end of the semester causing a great deal of anxiety and extra pressure on them. One of the interviewed learners sincerely expressed his current mood with the following words: "*I have been doing the LMS work for the last few nights and I only aim to complete it anyway. Studying effectively or learning is not my focus at the moment because if it is incomplete I will have a low mark*." Another concern of the learners is reliability in assessment. It was inferred from the interviews that, since the LMS was studied individually out of the campus, it was almost impossible to check whether the learners really did the tasks themselves or they just simply received the answers from their friends in the form of screenshots and then completed the tasks with the help of them. 3 of the interviewed learners confessed that they usually share the activities and send the screenshots to each other so that they can finish earlier. The following statement of a learner clearly demonstrates her lack of trust towards the assessment of the LMS. "*I don't think the LMS is assessed fairly because the teacher cannot know whether we really do the tasks ourselves*".

#### 4.3.4.2. Technical Issues

While some of the learners complained from some technical problems such as being have to do some activities more than once due to saving problems, 4 students expressed their discontent over studying in front of a monitor for a long time. The following statement which is an example of this discontent belongs to an interviewed learner: "*Although I have no sight impairment, looking at the screen for too many hours hurts my eyes. I would prefer doing paper-based activities*."

#### 4.3.4.3. The issues regarding the content

18 of the interviewed learners criticized that the LMS mainly consisted of mechanical activities that aim to review grammar and recycle target vocabulary, so it lacked communicative aspects of the language such as interaction and collaboration with others, discussions and authentic tasks. The survey results based on the questions about the LMS content also support this finding. 14 learners pointed out that the LMS mostly served as an online workbook and it hardly grabbed their attention since it was made of exercises such as gap-filling, matching or sentence

completion. During the interviews one of the learners uttered "*I sometimes start doing it (LMS) eagerly, but after about half an hour I start to lose my motivation as I do not find the content interesting*." Another point mentioned by some learners was that, as the level increased so did the length of the reading texts and they thought it was hard to concentrate on reading a long text on the screen.

#### 4.3.5. Aspects of Improvement

Either directly stating or implying, during the interviews the learners suggested that the LMS should be improved in many different aspects. Their comments were outlined through the following headings.

##### 4.3.5.1. Improvements to the practice of the LMS

An important suggestion that was put forward by the learners during the focus group interviews was the LMS to be studied in the campus during the school hours. The learners in general stated they did not believe the LMS was studied properly by all the learners and the assessment was not made fairly as the current practice of the LMS was available to cheating. To overcome the reliability issues and sustain a real learning environment some learners proposed the administration to grant the learners access to the system only during school hours and design adequate number of computer labs where learners could do their LMS work. However 7 students opposed the idea of studying with the LMS in the campus and argued that the LMS should be fully optional and whoever desired to study should be able to do it regardless of time and venue free from the anxiety of assessment and marking.

##### 4.3.5.2. Improvements to the Content of the LMS

Although most of the learners thought grammar and vocabulary tasks of the LMS were helpful for them to review what was learned at school and prepare for the achievement tests, they also indicated that most of them were in the form of mechanical exercises. 8 learners suggested that would they prefer to study grammar and vocabulary in context rather than through isolated sentences. Another point the interviewed learners mentioned was that they wanted to see more authentic and exciting content such as videos, songs, discussions and games that could draw the attention of the young generation and help them engage in language learning. The

following statement of a learner was a clear expression of what learners expected from an LMS: "*I do not want the LMS to be like an online homework, I want it to be an interesting language learning platform with lots of exciting content*."

Some learners stated that they would like to see interactive language games in the LMS through which they could compete with learners using the same platform and practice language in an entertaining and exciting way. Based on the learners' suggestions the content of the games can be both related to the topics learned and interesting general knowledge questions. Pronunciation was another skill that learners believed it was neglected in the LMS. 4 learners suggested that it would be quite beneficial for them to practice their pronunciation skills through a speech recognition tool built in the platform.

#### 4.3.5.3. Improvements Regarding Flexibility and Customization

5 of the interviewed learners suggested that the LMS work should not be bulky, instead the content should be flexible and customizable according to their strengths and weaknesses. For instance, if a learner believes he needs to focus more on vocabulary, he should have the option of doing more vocabulary practice or if a learner feels she needs to improve listening, she should have the opportunity of doing listening activities extensively. A learner expressed her request for more listening content with the following words: "*I have difficulty in listening comprehension especially when it comes to dialogues and daily speech. I wish there were more listening activities in the LMS where we could get used to different accents*". Another suggestion proposed by some learners was to have an adaptive approach**.** They advocated that it would be more beneficial for them to do the activities and tasks according to the completion and accuracy rate rather than doing them in a linear fashion. They believed that if the tasks grew gradually more difficult it would bring an element of challenge and motivation for them.

#### 4.3.5.4. Improvements Regarding Communication and Interaction

It was observed during the interviews that learners mostly felt the LMS was rather dull and monotonous since it lacked communicative, interactive and collaborative elements. 8 learners suggested that they would like to see a speaking component in the LMS through which they could have the opportunity to

communicate either with learners using the same platform or with native people specifically trained to help them improve their speaking skills. One of the learners mentioned about the online speaking class where they could communicate with teachers from abroad through the platform "http://en.ispeakbetter.com" and stated "*I wish there was a similar tool in the LMS where we could have speaking practice whenever we wanted*". It was noted that a great number of the learners wanted to exchange ideas, discuss and collaborate with learners from different cultures via an instant messaging tool or through a talking application like Skype built in the LMS. When they were asked whether the practice of instant communication would cause distraction for them while they were studying, they suggested the option of appearing offline when they did not want to communicate.

#### 4.3.5.5. Improvements Regarding the Mobile Support

When the learners were asked whether they could use the LMS with their mobiles devices only 2 students replied positively and even they admitted that it was not so practical. Most of the learners stated that since they spent a lot of time in public transport, it was essential that an effective LMS should be designed to be used in mobile devices satisfactorily.

# PART V: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

## 5.1. Discussion

In this section, the findings of both the qualitative and the quantitative study with respect to the main research question "What are the learners' perceptions towards using a Learning Management System (LMS) at a university language preparatory school?" will be discussed and how it relates with the literature and past studies will be explained by elaborating the consistent, unexpected or controversial points. The findings of the survey and the interviews will also be compared by revealing the similarities and the differences between them.

Checking the learner's perceptions of the LMS with regard to language skills was one of the priorities of the researcher since very little data had been found in the past studies about how learners regarded the implementation of blended learning, specifically the LMS in improving language skills. As it can be interpreted both from the survey and the interviews, helping learners improve their vocabulary skills is one of the most outstanding features of the LMS. Nevertheless, the findings of the interviews indicate that the learners want to see more contextualized vocabulary exercises rather than mechanical ones. Though not reaching the same satisfaction level as vocabulary, listening and reading were the language skills the learners thought the LMS helped them improve. It can be inferred from the interviews, being have to read long reading texts on a screen might have affected their views about reading activities. The study conducted by Bilgin (2013) also reveals learners' dissatisfaction with reading long texts on screen and a preference to paper passed materials. This could give material developers an insight into the way they design their reading tasks.

It is evident that the learners think they benefit the least from the LMS while studying the productive skills such as speaking and writing. The quantitative findings indicate that only about one fifth of the learners think the platform helps them improve their speaking and writing and the qualitative findings validate it. These findings match with the findings of Felix's (2001) and Banditvilai's (2016) studies which showed the LMS used in those contexts lacked speaking practice. This deficiency could stem from the fact that writing and speaking are the language skills

that are the most difficult to assess. Comparing with the assessment of reading and listening, the assessment of productive skills requires the implementation of a more advanced technology with highly complex tools. The teachers' involvement in the assessment which requires a tremendous effort is an option however bearing in mind the burden on their shoulders, this doesn't seem to be a feasible one. In order to fully meet learners' expectations in terms of language skills, LMS designers and material developers should brainstorm for possible solutions.

Another purpose was investigating learner's perceptions of the LMS with regard to learner autonomy. As stated earlier in the literature review, Tomlinson and Whittaker (2013), Neumeier (2005) learner autonomy has been regarded as a significant aspect of blended learning platforms. In order to sustain it, learners need to be able to participate in the decision making process in choosing the modes and levels of the learning platform besides taking different degrees of responsibility while using it. However, it was discovered that the learners in this research context had not been engaged in these steps, so as it can be revealed through the survey and the interviews, their perceptions of the LMS with respect to learner autonomy was substantially negative. This negative attitude probably stemmed from the fact that studying with the LMS was compulsory in their learning context and was regarded as homework which was controlled and strictly assessed by the teachers. Considering that learning autonomy is mostly about taking initiative and making choices, learners' comments imply that obligatory tasks may not really encourage and support learner autonomy. These findings matched with the cautious views of researchers such as Benson (2001), Stracke (2007) and Waller (2007) about the link between blended learning and learner autonomy suggesting that sustaining the development of autonomy through using blended learning platforms cannot be taken for granted. Another interesting finding of the survey which might indicate the lack of independence in learners was that almost one-third of the learners wanted to study with the LMS in the presence of a teacher. This could mean that these learners feel insecure while using the platform individually and want to have the comfort of a teacher as a guide and facilitator. It can be stated that the findings of this study contradict the Dang and Robertson (2010) and Sanprasert's (2010) findings which suggest that using an LMS enhances learner autonomy in language learning.

Motivation has been regarded as "one of the key determinants of foreign language achievement" Dörnyei (1994) and it can easily be claimed that no learning platform can be beneficial without providing a satisfactory level of motivation. Although researchers such as Shaw and Igneri (2006) suggest that learner motivation is one of the elements that blended learning platforms contribute a great deal, the findings of both the quantitative and the qualitative aspects of this study contradicts with it. Only one-fourth of the learners thought the LMS helped them increase their motivation towards language learning and the majority of the interviewed students showed their negative views towards the use of the LMS with regard to motivation. Even some initially motivated learners expressed the decrease in their motivation level in time. It might mean that if the research had been conducted during the initial stages of their learning process, the findings would have been more positive with respect to motivation. When it comes to investigate into the reasons behind this lack of motivation, considering the study of Jung (2011) which indicated that the most significant cause of motivation was online interaction among teachers and learners, we might guess that lack of interaction and the monotonous nature of the activities could be the main reason. Another reason for the lack of motivation could be related with the level of reliability in assessment.

When it comes to technology use, it was observed through the survey and the interviews that the majority of the learners had sufficient internet access and technical competence to be able to use the platform on and off the campus. This highlights the harmony between the presented platform and the learners' qualifications which is essential for an effective learning. However, although the study was conducted at least several months after they started to use the platform, a considerable amount of the learners, almost one-fifth of them, suggested that they needed technical support and training. As previously highlighted by Graham (2006), this emphasizes how essential it is for learners to receive necessary training both from publishers and language institutions while the system is being introduced.

Particularly during the qualitative study, some opinions about the LMS with respect to learning styles were received. Although the learners did not generally have a deep knowledge of learning styles, the ones that had some information about their own learning styles made some comments. Learners who regard themselves as

visual learners asserted that the platform was extremely text-based and did not include adequate images that would draw their interest and help them engage in the activities. A few learners who diagnosed themselves as kinesthetic learners complained from being have to study in front of the computer for hours. These findings validate the studies of Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2008) which indicate that the perceptions of learners differ according to their learning styles. It can be concluded that using learning management systems may not cater for each learning style unless an extensive approach is adopted by publishers and material developers.

One of the potential shortcomings of many blended learning platforms is that they lack essential language learning elements such as communication, interaction and collaboration, thus they cause learners to feel isolation (Poon, 2013). The LMS used in this research's setting also lacked any form of communication and collaboration among the learners, the only communication tool was the option of sending messages to the teacher. According to the survey results, almost half of the students expressed they would like to interact and collaborate with others via the LMS. Some interviewees yielded further insights by suggesting that an online speaking tool through which they could practice English with native speakers could be integrated into the LMS.

So far, predominantly some unfavorable findings of the research have been discussed in this chapter. It can be claimed that the aspect of the LMS the participants were mostly positive about was the agreement between the content of the LMS and that of face-to-face materials. Only a small minority of the interviewed learners disagreed that there was a harmony between the LMS and the course books. The accordance of the online materials with the printed ones stands out as the greatest strength of the platform in the eyes of the learners and makes studying through this LMS meaningful as they thought it would increase their course achievement. We could relate this satisfaction with the importance the learners give to their course achievement marks which could influence their education life. In this context, the LMS was implemented as a successful recycling and reinforcement instrument particularly in vocabulary and grammar. The wide range of the vocabulary and grammar activities helped the learners study these vital aspects of language in different contexts. Since vocabulary competence enhances language use

(Nation, 2001), it is evident that an LMS with the appropriate approach towards practicing vocabulary definitely contributes to language use.

Another aspect of the LMS that was investigated in the study was whether the learners regarded the LMS as a means of self-assessment which is widely accepted as a key learning strategy to sustain learner autonomy (Harris, 1997, Natri 2007). One of the strengths of "MyEnglishLab" is that using its most-common errors tool, the platform gives feedback after learners make an error and this allows self-correction which is related to self assessment. However, the findings of the quantitative study revealed that the learners were not deeply satisfied with the LMS regarding the self-assessment options it provides.

However perfectly a system is designed and developed, its inappropriate implementation might hinder its success. In the case of this research, it was found out through the interviews that the way the learners' LMS works assessed was both careless and suffered in terms of reliability. Firstly, there was no focus on the accuracy and it was almost impossible to control whether the learners completed the tasks themselves. Secondly, the assessment was not made in systematic periods which caused the learners to procrastinate and leave the assignments to the final weeks of the semester resulting in unnecessary pressure. These findings could provide insights into how language institutions might plan the assessment of the LMS assignments.

Although the LMS had some flaws both in terms of content and its practice, only less than one-third of the learners stated that the platform was not useful in language learning. However, the number of the learners who suggested they would be willing to study with an LMS in the next level was very limited. As stated earlier, this might have stemmed from the rather dull nature of the content and the flaws in the assessment, yet the causes of this dissatisfaction might be deeply investigated both by the administration and the publishers.

### 5.2. Conclusion

With respect to methodological implications, it can be suggested that the researcher's preference to include both quantitative and qualitative aspects of research design has been generally beneficial. Not only did it allow the researcher to

investigate the topic from a broader perspective, but it also helped him to triangulate the quantitative findings with the qualitative ones. If the qualitative study had not been conducted, some very insightful findings regarding the practice and the assessment of the LMS would not have emerged, As for the design of the survey, although it provided fruitful results, since it was a five-point Likert scale survey, a central tendency bias which could have severed the credibility of the results was observed in the responses of some participants. To avoid the central tendency bias, a seven-point survey could have been used by the researcher.

As stated in the introduction section, the main limitation of this study was that it was conducted in a specific setting in Turkey, the sampling was convenience sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling method and the learners' perceptions towards a single learning management system were explored. Although this prevents this study from being generalized, the study could still provide insight into the effective design and implementation of an LMS. Another limitation could be that, during the survey and face-to-face interview phases of this study, the learners had only about a few weeks left to complete the compulsory tasks of the LMS which was the focus of this study. Therefore, some learners might have felt the pressure of these assignments and there a slight inclination towards negativity while responding the questions particularly during the interviews was noticed.

Even though there were some limitations, the purpose of the study has been achieved to a great extend. Investigating the perceptions of the learners towards using a learning management system was the main purpose of the study and it can be suggested that through reflecting on and discussing about the findings, these platforms can be improved in a way that they may reinforce language skills, promote independent learning, increase learner motivation and facilitate self assessment.

### 5.3. Suggestions

Considering the findings of the study, it can be suggested that the way language skills are practiced in the LMS should be revised in such a manner that the mechanical exercises are replaced with contextualized ones and long reading exercises which can be tiresome and discouraging for learners are designed more user-friendly. Besides, effective solutions to practice and assess productive skills

should be provided so that the learning platform can satisfy learners with regard to language skills. For instance, the integration of online speaking environments and online writing assistants with the learning management systems could be seriously considered by the publishers. The findings also highlight a demand for authentic and audio-visual materials. While designing a learning platform, taking these kinds of demands into consideration would prevent the platform from resembling an online workbook and make the platform more engaging and exciting. Introducing some online language games that recycle the language and build a speech recognition tool to improve pronunciation skills could also help the platform become more attractive.

The findings of the study also provided an insight into how the LMS should be improved in terms of learner autonomy. In order to foster learner autonomy through a learning management system, cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies such as analyzing, discussing, decision making and critical thinking should be integrated into the tasks and activities in that system (Benson, 2013). The learners' lack of motivation and dissatisfaction with the platform indicates that for an LMS to be effective, the material developers should include engaging activities that would draw learners' interests and boost their motivation levels.

Technical support and training are other issues that should be considered while using these platforms institutionally. To help learners use an LMS effectively, sufficient support and training should be given both by publishers and language institutions not only before starting to use the LMS but also during the school year. Bearing in mind that learners with some learning styles feel disadvantaged, it is imperative to make improvements in the platform to provide solutions for different learning styles. For instance, to meet the expectations of the kinesthetic learners', mobile version of the platform can be improved and to satisfy visual learners some impressive images may be integrated into the activities.

Further research on using learning management systems in ELT is required both to contribute to publishers for developing more efficient platforms with engaging contents and to guide language teaching institutions into effectively implementing these systems. In order to have a deeper influence, these studies should include a wide range of settings and participants to investigate learners' views on using various learning management systems. Since the majority of the ELT

learning management systems prepared by publishers lacked communicative and interactive aspects, conducting research on this topic could be quite beneficial for ELT field. Along with learners, the sample of the research could include material developers, educational technologists, language school administrators and instructors. Considering the widespread use of mobile technology, how these platforms may successfully integrated with mobile devices could also be the topic of further research.

## REFERENCES


Aborisade, P. A. (2013). Blended learning in English for Academic Purposes courses: A Nigerian case study. In Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation (pp.43). London: British Council.

Alm, A. (2009) 'Blogging for self-determination with L2 learner journals'. In M. Thomas (ed.) Handbook of Research on Web 2.0 and Second Language Learning. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference, pp. 202–22.

Akkoyunlu, B., & Soylu, M. Y. (2008). A study of student's perceptions in a blended learning environment based on different learning styles. Journal of Educational Technology & Society, 11(1), 183-193.

Alebaikan, R. A. (2012). The future of blended learning. World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, 63, 484-488.

Appel, C. and Mullen, T. (2002). A new tool for teachers and researchers involved in e-mail tandem language learning. ReCALL, 14(2):195–208.

Ayres, R. (2002). Learner attitudes towards the use of CALL. Computer assisted language learning, 15(3), 241-249.

Bañados, E. (2006). A blended-learning pedagogical model for teaching and learning EFL successfully through an online interactive multimedia environment. Calico Journal, 23(3), 533-550.

Banditvilai, C. (2016). Enhancing Students' Language Skills through Blended Learning. Electronic Journal of e-Learning, 14(3), 220-229

Beatty, K. (2010) Teaching and Researching Computer-assisted Language Learning. 2nd edn. London: Pearson.

Benson, P. (2013). Teaching and researching: Autonomy in language learning. Routledge.

Bhattacharya, A. and Chauhan, K. (2010). Augmenting learner autonomy through blogging. ELT Journal, 64(4): 376–84.

Bilgin, H. (2013). Students' CALLing: Blended language learning for students. In Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation (pp.207). London: British Council.

Blake, R. J. (2008). Brave New Digital Classroom: Technology and Foreign Language Learning. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Bonk, C. J., Kim, K. J., & Zeng, T. (2006). Future directions of blended learning in higher education and workplace learning settings. In CJ Bonk & CR Graham (Eds.), The handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs. (pp. 550-567). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.

Bury, M. (2012). Why use a Learning Management System for e-learning? Retrieved from http://matbury.com/wordpress/2012/10/07/why-use-a-learning-management-system-for-elearning/

Chen, C.-F. E. and Cheng, W.-Y. E. (2008). Beyond the design of automated writing evaluation: pedagogical practices and perceived learning effectiveness in EFL writing classes. Language Learning & Technology, 12(2): 94–112.

Chen, S., & Lu, Y. (2013). The Negative Effects and Control of Blended Learning in University. In 2013 the International Conference on Education Technology and Information System (ICETIS 2013). Atlantis Press.

Collis, B., Moonen J. (2001) Flexible Learning in a Digital World. Routledge, London.

Collins, K. M., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Sutton, I. L. (2006). A model incorporating the rationale and purpose for conducting mixed methods research in special education and beyond. Learning disabilities: a contemporary journal, 4(1), 67-100.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dang, T. T., & Robertson, M. (2010). Impacts of learning management system on learner autonomy in EFL learning. International Education Studies, 3(3), 3-11.

Dewar, T., & Whittington, D. (2004). Blended learning research report. Calliope Learning.

Dörnyei, Z. (1994). Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom. The modern language journal, 78(3), 273-284.

Dudeney, G., & Hockly, N. (2013). Reversing the blend: From online to blended. In Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation (pp.75). London: British Council.

Dudeney, Gavin, and Nicky Hockly. (2007) How to teach English with technology. Pearson Education, 2007.

Dziuban, C. D., Hartman, J. L., & Moskal, P. D. (2004). Blended learning. EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research Bulletin, 7(1), 12. Retrieve from https://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/erb0407.pdf

E. de Gregorio-Godeo, E. (2005). Blended learning as a resource for integrating self-access and traditional face-to-face tuition in EFL tertiary education. Badajoz: Formatex. Retrieved from http://www. formatex. org/micte2005/110. pdf

Eydelman, N. (2013). A blended English as a Foreign Language academic writing course. In Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation (pp.43). London: British Council.

Fasick, F. A. (2001). Some uses of untranscribed tape recordings in survey research. Public Opinion Quarterly, 41, 549–552.

Felix, U. (2001). The web's potential for language learning: The student's perspective. ReCALL, 13(01), 47-58.

Ferguson, O. (2013). The Immediate Future of eLearning. Retrieved from http://www.theinformationdaily.com/2013/05/10/the-immediate-future-of-elearning

Friesen, N. (2012). Report: Defining blended learning. Retrieved from http://learningspaces.org/papers/Defining_Blended_Learning_NF.pdf

Gardner, D. and Miller, L. (1999) Establishing Self-Access: From Theory to Practice. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2003). SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference. 11.0 update (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Graham, C. R. (2006). Blended learning systems. In CJ Bonk & CR Graham (Eds.), The handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs. (pp. 3-21). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.

Harris, M. (1997). Self-assessment of language learning in formal settings. ELT journal, 51(1), 12-20.

Harrison, L. (2013). The 5 EdTech trends of ELT part 5: Learning management systems Retrieved from http://eltjam.com/the-5-edtech-trends-of-elt-part-5-learning-management-systems/

Hirata, Y., & Hirata, Y. (2008). Japanese Students' Attitudes towards Hybrid Learning. In Hybrid Learning and Education (pp.439-449). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Hoffman, R. (1994). The warm network: electronic mail, ESL learners and the personal touch. On CALL, 8(2): 10–13.

Hurd, S., Beaven, T. and Ortega, A. (2001) 'Developing autonomy in a distance learning context: Issues and dilemmas for course writers', System, 29 (3): 341–55.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. Educational Researcher, 33(7), 14-26.

Jung, I. (2011). The dimensions of e-learning quality: from the learner's perspective. Educational Technology, Research and Development, 59(4): 445–64.

Kobayashi, K., & Little, A. (2011). Learner perceptions on the usefulness of a blended learning EFL program. JALT CALL Journal, 7(1), 103-117.

Krake, A. (2013). Lessons in blended learning: Implementing an online learning platform in the adult education sector. In Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation (pp.213). London: British Council.

Lewis, Gordon. (2009) Bringing technology into the classroom. Oxford University Press.

Littlewood, W.T. (1999) 'Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts', Applied Linguistics, 20 (1): 71–94.

Marsh, D. (2012). Blended Learning: Creating Learning Opportunities for Language Learners. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mike Levy and Glenn Stockwell. (2013) CALL dimensions: Options and issues in computer-assisted language learning. Routledge.

Mohammad, F. (2009). Blended learning and the virtual learning environment of Nottingham Trent university. In Developments in eSystems Engineering (DESE), 2009 Second International Conference on (pp. 295-299). IEEE.

Nation, I. S. P. (2001).Learning vocabulary in another language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Neumeier, P. (2005). A closer look at blended learning—parameters for designing a blended learning environment for language teaching and learning. ReCALL, 17(02), 163-178.

Oscarson, M. (1989) 'Self-assessment of language proficiency: rationale and applications', Language Testing, 6: 1–13.

Pardo-Gonzalez, J. (2013). Incorporating blended learning in an undergraduate English course in Colombia. In Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation (pp.51). London: British Council.

Peachey, Nik. (2013) A blended learning teacher development course for the development of blended learning in English Language Teaching. Blended learning in English language teaching: Course design and implementation.

Poon, J. (2013). Blended learning: An institutional approach for enhancing students' learning experiences. Journal of online learning and teaching, 9(2), 271-288.

Ross, Barbara, and Karen Gage. (2006) "Global perspectives on blending learning." The handbook of blended learning, 155-168.

Sagarra, N., & Zapata, G. C. (2008). Blending classroom instruction with online homework: A study of student perceptions of computer-assisted L2 learning. ReCALL, 20(02), 208-224.

Sanprasert, N. (2010). The application of a course management system to enhance autonomy in learning English as a foreign language. System, 38(1), 109-123.

Sharma, Pete, and Barney Barrett. (2011) Blended learning: Using technology in and beyond the language classroom. Macmillan.

Shaw, S., & Igneri, N. (2006). Effectively implementing a blended learning approach (Eedo Knowledgeware White Paper). New York: American Management Association.

Singh, Harvi, and Chris Reed. (2001) "A white paper: Achieving success with blended learning." Centra software 1.

Schmitt, N. (2000). Vocabulary in language teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sparrow, S. (2003). Blended learning makes mark. Training Magazine.

Staker, H., & Horn, M. B. (2012). Classifying K-12 Blended Learning. Innosight Institute.

Stockwell, G. (2010). Using mobile phones for vocabulary activities: examining the effect of the platform. Language Learning & Technology, 14(2): 95–110.

Strambi, A. and Bouvet, E. (2003). Flexibility and interaction at a distance: a mixed-mode environment for language learning. Language Learning & Technology, 7(3): 81–102.

Strauss, V. (2012). Three fears about blended learning. The Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/post/three-fears-about-blended-learning/2012/09/22/56af57cc-035d-11e2-91e7-2962c74e7738_blog.html

Şahin, M. (2010). Blended learning in vocational education: An experimental study. International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education, 2(6), 95-101. Chicago

Tang, X., & Pan, Q. (2008). Study on the Application of Blended Learning in the College English Course. In Future Information Technology and Management Engineering, 2008. FITME'08. International Seminar on (pp.133-136). IEEE.

Tayebinik, M., & Puteh, M. (2012). Blended Learning or E-learning? International Magazine on Advances in Computer Science and Telecommunications (IMACST), 3(1), 103-110.

Tomlinson, B. & Whittaker, C. (Eds.). (2013). Blended Learning in English Language Teaching: Course Design and Implementation. London: British Council.

Usta, E., & Ozdemir, S. M. (2007). An Analysis of Students' Opinions about Blended Learning Environment. Online Submission. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED500090

Wang, S. C. (2009). University student perceptions of effective e-learning strategies instructor used in blended courses. In Computer and Electrical Engineering, 2009. ICCEE'09. Second International Conference on (Vol. 1, pp. 586-590). IEEE.

Warschauer, M. (1996). Motivational aspects of using computers for writing and

communication. In M. Warschauer (ed.) Telecollaboration in Foreign Language Learning. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center, pp. 29–46.

Wengraf, T. (2001). Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods. London, Sage Publications.

Zapata, G., & Sagarra, N. (2007). CALL on hold: The delayed benefits of an online workbook on L2 vocabulary learning. Computer assisted language learning, 20(2), 153-171.

Zuhal, O. K. A. N., & TORUN, P. (2007). Learner attitudes towards CALL applications at YADIM. Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 3(2).

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1:

**Survey on Learners' Perceptions of Using a Learning Management System (LMS) in Language Learning**
**(Dil öğreniminde öğrencilerin Öğretim Yönetim Sistemi (LMS) kullanımına yönelik algılarıyla ilgili bir anket çalışması)**

Dear Participant,
The aim of this study is to explore the learners' perceptions towards using a Learning Management System (LMS) in English Language Learning. An LMS is a web-based platform designed for learners to study their course content online, helping them recycle and reinforce what they learn in the classroom through some activities, tests and supplementary materials. The LMS you have been using is 'MyEnglishLab'.
This study is being conducted by Tunç Atalay Oğul who is currently an MA student of ELT. If there are any questions you would like to ask about this study or if you are interested in the results of the study, please contact him through the e-mail address provided below:
atalayogul@hotmail.com

Sayın katılımcı,
Bu çalışmanın amacı, öğrencilerin İngilizce öğreniminde Öğretim Yönetim Sistemi (LMS) kullanımına yönelik algılarını araştırmaktır. Öğretim Yönetim Sistemi (LMS) öğrencilerin ders içeriklerini çevrimiçi çalışabildikleri, derste öğrendiklerini çeşitli aktiviteler, testler ve yardımcı materyallerle tekrar edip pekiştirmelerine yardımcı olması için tasarlanmış internet tabanlı bir platformdur. Sizin kullanmakta olduğunuz Öğretim Yönetim Sistemi (LMS) 'MyEnglishLab' adlı platformdur.
Bu çalışma halen İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi olan Tunç Atalay Oğul tarafından yapılmaktadır. Bu çalışmayla ilgili sormak istediğiniz sorular varsa veya çalışmanın sonuçlarıyla ilgilenirseniz lütfen aşağıda verilen e-posta adresinden kendisiyle irtibata geçiniz.
atalayogul@hotmail.com

**Demographic Information** (Demografik Bilgiler)

**Age (Yaş):** □17 – 20 □ 21 – 25 □ 26-30 □ 31+

**Gender (Cinsiyet)**: □ Female (Bayan) □Male (Erkek)

**Nationality (Milliyet):** □ Turkish (Türk) □ Other(Diğer)

**Course level you have been studying (Öğrenim görmekte olduğunuz kurs seviyesi):** □A1 □A2 □B1 □B2 □C1

**What's your overall achievement mark for the level completed?(Son tamamlamış olduğunuz kurdaki başarı notunuz nedir?)**

□ 60-70 □ 71-80 □ 81-90 □ 91-100

**How long have you been studying with the LMS? (Ne zamandır LMS ile çalışmaktasınız?)**

□1-2 months □3-4 months □ 5-6 months □7 or more

**How many hours a week do you spend studying with the LMS?**
**Haftada kaç saat LMS ile çalışmaktasınız?)**

□ 0-2 □ 3-4 □ 5-7 □ 8+□ 0-2 □ 3-4 □ 5-+

**How do you define yourself in terms of computer competency? (Bilgisayar kullanma yeterliliği açısından kendinizi nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?)**

□very bad □bad □average □good □very good

**Please check the boxes in the right column for each statement. Check only one box for each.**
**(Lütfen her ifadeye uygun düşen sadece bir kutucuğu işaretleyiniz.)**

(1: Strongly disagree 2: Disagree 3: Neutral 4: Agree 5: Strongly agree)

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | The LMS helps me improve my speaking skills.<br>(LMS konuşma becerimi geliştirmede faydalı oluyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | The LMS helps me improve my writing skills.<br>(LMS yazma becerimi geliştirmede faydalı oluyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | The LMS helps me improve my listening skills.<br>(LMS dinleme becerimi geliştirmede faydalı oluyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | The LMS helps me improve my reading skills.<br>(LMS okuma becerimi geliştirmede faydalı oluyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | The LMS helps me improve my vocabulary skills.<br>(LMS kelime becerimi geliştirmede faydalı oluyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | The design of the LMS is user-friendly.<br>(LMS kullanımı kolay bir tasarıma sahip.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | I need technical support while using the LMS.<br>(LMS'i kullanırken teknik desteğe ihtiyaç duyuyorum.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | I have had enough training about how to use the LMS.<br>(LMS kullanımıyla ilgili yeterince eğitim aldım.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | I have sufficient Internet access to use the LMS off campus.<br>(LMS'i üniversite dışında kullanmak için yeterli internet imkanım var.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | The LMS increases my motivation towards language learning.<br>(LMS dil öğrenimi konusundaki motivasyonumu artırıyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | The LMS helps me improve the language independently.<br>(LMS bağımsız bir şekilde dil öğrenmeme yardımcı oluyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I would prefer studying with an LMS on my own to studying in the class with a teacher.<br>(Kendi başıma LMS ile çalışmayı sınıfta bir öğretmenle ders yapmaya tercih ederim.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | The LMS provides me with sufficient audio-visual materials.<br>(LMS yeterince görsel ve işitsel material sunuyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | The LMS provides me with sufficient authentic materials.<br>(LMS yeterince özgün ve gerçek material sunuyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | The content of the LMS matches well with the content in the class.<br>(LMS dersteki içerikle uyumlu bir içeriğe sahip.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | The LMS helps me recycle and reinforce what I learn in the classroom.<br>(LMS derste öğrendiklerimi tekrar edip pekiştirme konusunda fayda sağlıyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | I would prefer to interact and collaborate with my friends via the LMS.<br>(LMS kullanırken arkadaşlarımla etkileşime geçmeyi, beraber çalışmayı tercih ederim.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | I would prefer to communicate with my teacher via the LMS.<br>(LMS kullanırken öğretmenle iletişim kurmayı tercih ederim.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | I think the LMS is suitable for my learning style.<br>(LMS'in öğrenme tarzıma uygun olduğunu düşünüyorum.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | The LMS gives me enough opportunity to check my progress.<br>(LMS bana gelişimimi control etme fırsatı veriyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | The LMS provides me with useful feedback and helps me correct my mistakes.<br>(LMS faydalı geri bildirim sağlıyor ve hatalarımı düzeltmeye yardım ediyor.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | I think using an LMS is useful in language learning.<br>(LMS kullanımının dil öğrenimi konusunda faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | The LMS made this course more interesting.<br>(LMS bu dersi (kursu) daha ilginç hale getirdi.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | I would like to take a course with an LMS component again in the future.<br>(İleride tekrar LMS bileşeni olan bir dersi (kursu) almak isterim.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | My current attitude towards the LMS is more positive than my first experience with it.<br>(LMS konusundaki mevcut yaklaşımım ilk tecrübe ettiğim zamana gore daha olumlu.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Appendix 2:**

**Interview Questions:**

1. How do you benefit from using an LMS in language learning?
2. What do you dislike about the LMS?
3. How did you feel when you first started using the LMS?
4. How do you think the LMS could be improved?
5. Did the LMS help you take more responsibility for your learning? How?
6. What kind of content would you like to see in the LMS that does not currently exist?
7. Are you pleased with the way your LMS work is assessed? How do you think the assessment should be?
8. What is your opinion about the option in an LMS to communicate with friends and teachers?

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Tunç Atalay Oğul was born in Switzerland in 1978. He completed his bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching at İstanbul University in 1999. He has studied at various private schools and language centers in İstanbul. Having worked for some ELT publishers, he has a significant experience in material development. He has prepared a number of ELT course books and supplementary books besides contributing to the development of their digital components. His main professional interest areas are educational technology, material development and online teaching. He has participated in a wide range of national and international ELT related conferences and seminars. Currently, he resides in İstanbul, Turkey. He is married and he has two daughters. His e-mail adress is atalayogul@hotmail.com.