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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

THE EFFECT OF USING CONCEPT MAPPING TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION IN ESP

FATEMEH FAZLALI

Abstract

Since concept mapping has been proposed by Joseph D. Novak in the early 1970's, many aspects of his implications have been studied. Concept mapping technique is based on cognitive structures and Ausubel's meaningful learning. Concept mapping provides logical relationship between concepts in the learner's mind by creating an active teaching context and providing learners with meaningful learning. This study was done to investigate the effect of using concept mapping on the reading comprehension of physical education students in English for Specific Purpose (ESP). In order to collect data, purposive sampling was used. Participants were 60 university students majoring in Physical Education at University of Farhangian, Nasibeh Campus in Tehran. They were placed in two groups, experimental and control groups. To teach reading, traditional teaching was used for the control group and concept mapping was taught to the experimental group. The effect of using this technique on the reading comprehension of the students was measured by administrating a pretest and a post-test. To analyze the data, SPSS 21 was used. Results showed that using concept mapping had a significant effect on the improvement of the reading comprehension of the physical education students in ESP.

Key words: concept mapping, concept map structure, reading comprehension.

1-Introduction

Reading as a critical aspect of literacy is regarded as an interaction between the reader and the text (Alderson & Urquhart, 1984). Reading comprehension is the basis for student performance in all subjects (Mohan, 2002). However, reading to learn is a struggle for many students. (RAND,

Reading study Group, 2002). Among the variety of techniques and skills of teaching reading, five of them were identified as essential by the National Reading Panel (2000) which were phonemics awareness, phonics, comprehension, fluency and vocabulary. Comprehension, in particular, plays a key role as a reading skill that EFL learners are required to master.

Reading comprehension is crucial in Iran as an EFL context as well. There is a vast range of research in this scope to find the learners' difficulties and to find some solutions to them. Gorjian, Hayati, and Sheykhiani (2009) claimed that in the Iranian educational system, learners have difficulties in comprehending a text and there is no special policy in order to teach them some strategies for better comprehension. In this educational system, there are just some activities and questions after reading passages (post-reading activities) to check learners' comprehension; it seems strategy instruction is missing.

As teachers can teach strategies to improve the reading comprehension of their students, Zipp, Maher, and D'Antoni, (2011), by emphasizing this role, stated that teachers are unable to teach students how to think. They believed that teachers' obligation is to help their students, and that teachers should try to trigger the cognitive processes in the students' mind with ever increasing power and clarity as they grow and learn. Thompson (2000) stated that applying reading strategies would enhance the students' rate of comprehension and change them from passive readers to active ones. As Ness (2009) argued, the instruction of reading comprehension strategies is highly beneficial in all the levels and as Javdan Faghat and Zainal (2010) restated, these strategies help the reader to interact with the text. Therefore, teachers must provide students with the correct tools in reading. Teacher strategy instruction associated with improved comprehension (NRP, 2000: RAND Reading Study Group, 2002) consists of teaching students to monitor comprehension.

As a result, based on *the idea of learning how to learn* and investigating *the process of students' learning*, the idea of concept mapping (CM) was emerged in the educational context.

1-1-Theoretical Framework of Concept Mapping

Cognitive, affective and psychomotor are the distinct domains of learning which do not occur in isolation, but work together to make one whole. The cognitive domain includes aspects of thinking, knowing and problem solving (Mohan, 2002). In constructivist view, these tasks occur as a "process of personal cognitive construction, or invention, undertaken

by the individual who is trying, for whatever purpose, to make sense of her social or natural environment" (Taylor 1993, cited by Duit 2007).

Concept maps were developed in 1972 in the course of Novak's research program at Cornell University where he sought to follow and to understand changes in children's knowledge of science (Novak & Musonda, 1991). Novak (1972) said by the age of 30 months a child recognizes the concept labels by concept formation. He also believed that meaning making is a concept assimilation that never finishes in a life time. During the course of that research, it became clear that concept maps were useful to represent the change in children's understanding of a topic. At present, they can be used as an excellent tool for participating graduate students to express their understanding of their courses. Concept maps have a strong psychological and epistemological foundation, based on Ausubel's Assimilation Theory (Ausubel, 1968, 2000) and Novak's Theory of Learning, which explain that people learn new things by using their current knowledge and, more or less, by seeking ways to integrate new knowledge and related knowledge which is already known. In meaningful learning, the integration of new concepts into our cognitive knowledge structure takes place through linking new knowledge to the concepts we have already understood.

The popularity of concept mapping has spread. Recently, it is used all over the world as a means to represent a person's knowledge about a domain of knowledge, by users of all ages and in all domains of knowledge. It has subsequently been used as a tool to increase meaningful learning in the sciences and other subjects as well as to represent the expert knowledge of individuals and teams in education, government, and business.

According to Novak & Canas, (2006) "concepts are the building blocks of knowledge in all fields" and this can be triggered in individuals either for "static thinking (surface or rote thinking) or dynamic thinking (deep or meaningful thinking)". Concept map is defined as "a graphical tool for organizing and representing relationships between concepts indicated by a connecting line linking two concepts" (Novak &Canas, 2007, p.1). In another definition, Novak (2010) described it as a new model for education. Concept maps are "visual road maps" to show pathways in a specific knowledge domain. Concept maps define the relationship between the concepts. Concept maps represent "meaningful relationships between concepts in the form of propositions" (Novak & Gowin, 1984, p.25). Novak (2006) explains "propositions as two or more concept labels linked by words in a semantic unit". In concept maps, the concepts are seen in boxes or bubbles and there is a link line with a

connecting verb. Concept maps show hierarchy with the most inclusive concept at the top and the subtopic comes down a line which can have cross links. Concept maps have a structure and they can be in different types such as hierarchical, focus question and cross-links.

1-2- Characteristics of Concept Maps

Novak (2006) specifies the characteristics of concept maps as follows:

1 - Concept maps include concepts usually enclosed in circles or boxes of some type, and relationships between concepts or propositions, indicated by a connecting line between two concepts. Words on the line specify the relationship between the two concepts.
2 - The concepts are represented in a hierarchical fashion with the most inclusive, most general concepts at the top of the map and the more specific, less general concepts arranged hierarchically below.
3 - Concept maps contain the cross-links. These are relationships (propositions) between concepts in different domains of the concept map. Cross-links help us to see how some domains of knowledge represented on the map are related to each other.
4 - Concept maps have specific examples of events or objects that help to clarify the meaning of a given concept.

2- Statement of the Problem

Researchers have found that teaching reading strategies is important in developing increased student comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2005). Concurrently, researchers have identified teachers often lack a solid foundation for teaching reading comprehension strategies (National Reading Panel, 2005). Therefore, teachers need to be prepared, through professional development to teach comprehension strategies to students effectively.

3- Purpose of the Study

This study aims to investigate the effect of concept mapping and examining the effectiveness of using concept mapping as a supplemental tool to improve reading comprehension of the students majoring at physical education in ESP.

4- Research Question

Is there any significant difference between concept mapping and traditional strategy of reading in improving reading comprehension ability of the physical education students at University of Farhangian ; Does concept mapping have any impact on improving students' reading comprehension?

5- Methodology

Participants
The subjects of this study were selected among 60 university students from four classes of the University of Farhangian, Nasibeh Campus in Tehran. The students were majoring in Physical Education. All of them were girls and the age range was about 18 to 23 years old. Afterwards, they were divided into two groups each consisting of 30 subjects.

Materials
Reading Comprehension Pretest
To conduct this study, a reading comprehension test as a pretest was administered to measure the comprehension ability of the students before applying the treatment. The pretest involved five passages of comparable length (average of 500 words) with the same readability level along with a total of 30 multiple choice questions. The pretest included five passages from a course book which was "English for Specific Purposes" by SAMT Publication (1388).

Teaching Passages
Five passages from this book were selected to be practiced in the classroom, which were the same for both groups and contained an average of 500 words for each passage.

Reading Comprehension Posttest
A parallel reading comprehension test similar to the pretest was used as a post-test to assess the efficacy of the treatment on the students. The post-test contained 30 multiple choice questions. The passages used were selected from the same book as those used for the pretest and teaching passages.

6- Procedure

Pretest

To determine the reading comprehension ability of the subjects, before conducting the treatment, the mentioned pretest was administered to both groups. Subjects were supposed to answer all questions in 40 minutes. The procedure which was used in administering the pretest was exactly the same for both groups.

Treatment

The whole study was conducted within three months. The selected strategy for the experimental group was two versions of CM including learner-constructed CM and fill in the map CM. For the control group, a traditional reading comprehension strategy (i.e. summarizing strategy, or translation) was applied. Once the pretest was administered to both groups, a treatment procedure involving five-session instructions and practice of the particular strategy for a period of 20 minutes for each session was assigned to each group.

Experimental Group
Concept Map Drawing Instruction

In this group, subjects were going to learn how to draw CMs for the five passages. The first step in CM training was to introduce to the participants with the ideas of CM and its advantages. Participants were provided with handouts that included the definition of CM and its applications, the procedure of drawing a CM and a passage with a drawn CM as a model. The strategy was taught explicitly step-by-step. Then, students were taught the reading passages and they were asked to draw a CM of their own at home and to submit them to their teacher. Every two sessions, the subjects' drawn CMs were collected and were read and some feedback was provided for them. The purpose of the evaluation of CM and provision of feedback was to help the students learn how to create a good CM progressively up to the last session. A holistic method of scoring with a scale of good, fair, and weak was applied to assess the students' CM and to provide them feedback. At the end of the course, they would receive a complete feedback report including the reviewing of the important points.

Fill in the Map Concept Map Instruction

Instead of creating a concept map, participants were provided with the drawn CMs of their passages in which some concepts or linking lines were left out and students were asked to fill in the maps based on the passages

they had been taught. Students were provided with the same handouts about CM as the first group. The difference was in the way they should do their assignments. A holistic method of scoring with a scale of good, fair and weak was applied to assess the students' process of filling CMs and to provide appropriate feedback. In each of the five sessions, students had to submit their assignments. Some useful comments and feedback, based on the students' filled maps, were provided orally.

Control Group: Traditional methodology

Participants of this group were asked to translate the passages that they had been taught before. The reading passages were taught in each session and subjects were asked to translate the passages and do the exercises in the class. Based on the participants' translations, questions and problems, some comments were prepared orally in each session.

Post-test

At the end of the treatment, a post test was administered to both groups. Based on the property of this study, there was a difference between the administration of the pretest and the post-test. The difference between the pretest and the post-test was that for the pretest, all of the groups answered reading comprehension questions without employing the strategies; whereas, on the post-test, they employed the strategies that they had learned, and then, they had to answer the reading comprehension questions in the multiple choice form.

7-Results

To answer the research question a paired sample t-test was applied by using SPSS 21.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	CpTest2	22.40	30	5.184	.946
	CpTest1	17.43	30	4.614	.8

Fig.1

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 CpTest2 & CpTest1	30	.924	.000

Fig-2

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
PairCpTest2 - 1 CpTest1	4.967	1.991	.364	4.223	5.710	13.663	29	.000

Fig.3

A Paired-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the treatment on the students' scores. There was a statistically significant increase in scores from time 1 (M=17.43, SD=4.61) to time 2 (M=22.40, SD=5.18), T (29) = 13.66, P<.001(two-tailed).

The mean increase was 4.97 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 4.22 to 5.71.

Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 TradTest2	19.70	30	3.344	.611
TradTest1	17.83	30	3.659	.668

Fig.4

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 TradTest2 & TradTest1	30	.855	.000

Fig.5

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 TradTest2 - TradTest1	1.867	1.907	.348	1.155	2.579	5.361	29	.000

Fig.6

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to evaluate the traditional method. There was a statistically significant increase in scores from time 1 (M=17.83, SD=3.65) to time 2 (M=19.70, SD=3.34), T (29) = 5.36, P<.001(two-tailed). The mean increase was 1.87 with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 1.15 to 2.58. Comparing the means of both groups showed that the concept map technique was higher than the traditional method in improving the reading comprehension in ESP. Actually, the students had an improvement in their reading comprehension, but the mean score of concept map technique was significantly higher than the traditional method.

8-Implication of the study

The findings of the present study might offer some practical implications for the work of classroom teachers who are highly motivated to welcome challenge and novelty in their classrooms.

Using concept map techniques in improving writing is suggested for the future research.

9-Limitations and delimitations of the study

Owing to the practical limitation regarding doing assignments, the present study focused on a small sample of female participants. However, another study can be conducted with a larger sample and with both genders to examine whether such possibilities will provide different results. Furthermore, it should be interesting if future research focuses on the two other versions of CM which are expert constructed and cooperative CM.

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THE IMPACT OF CONTEXTUAL CLUES ON ORAL PERFORMANCE OF EFL LEARNERS

NAZLINUR GÖKTÜRK

Abstract

This study reports the results of an experimental action based research conducted in an EFL classroom to investigate the impact of the presence and absence of contextual clues with speaking tasks on learners' oral performance. Specifically, it aims to explore the relative contribution of contextual clues presented with tasks to the content development and composite scores of learners. It also investigates learners' perceptions of the tasks presented with and without contextual clues. Sixty-two EFL learners divided into control and experimental groups participated in this study. A speaking test consisting of open-ended questions presented with and without contextual clues was used for the assessment of learners' performances. The test scores assigned to the learners through analytic rating were statistically analyzed through *SPSS Version 20.0*. An analysis of the test takers' discourse was undertaken to determine whether measures of content in participants' output differ according to the tasks presented with and without contextual clues. A focus group interview was conducted to obtain learners' perceptions of the tasks presented with and without contextual clues. Quantitative analysis of the data showed that learners did not perform significantly differently in the tasks presented with and without clues. A detailed analysis of the learners' performance discourse indicated that the measures of content in terms of quantity in participants' output did not significantly differ according to different task types. However, the analysis of the qualitative data revealed that learners given the tasks presented with contextual clues felt more relaxed and free to express themselves in the assessment sessions.

Keywords: Speaking testing, content, task type

Introduction

With the increasing value attached to speaking as part of one's language competence within the communicative language teaching paradigm, the assessment of the speaking skill in second language learning has become a burgeoning area of research over the past two decades. However, assessing the speaking skill is essential, yet challenging in nature since there are so many factors influencing our impression of how well someone can speak a language (Luoma 2004). As pointed out by Bachman and Palmer (1996), the measurement of oral performance continues to be "one of the areas of most persistent difficulty in language testing" (p.154). Several studies have been conducted to investigate the validity of scores and rating scales (Meredith 1990, Halleck 1992, Reed 1992), the rater's behavior and its impact on the learner's performance (Barnwell 1989, Thompson 1995), the interviewer's variation (Brown 2003), and the interviewee's individual differences, e.g. proficiency level (Young 1995), the ability to self-adjust (Ross 1992, Cafarella 1994) and differences in linguistic backgrounds (Young and Halleck 1998). While there is now a considerable amount of research on the discourse produced within oral language interviews, more than half of the analyses pertain to characterizing interviewer and candidate discourse in general (Brown 2003).

Recently, there has been a keen interest in the detailed analysis of discourse features of test-taker's oral performance and various studies have been carried out in both language pedagogy and experimental contexts (e.g., Skehan and Foster 1997, Bygate 1999, Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth 2000, Iwashita et al. 2008). Skehan (1998), among numerous others (Foster and Skehan 1996, 1999, Porter and O'Sullivan 1994, 1999, Wigglesworth 1997), has attempted to manipulate psycholinguistic aspects of tasks in order to modify or predict task difficulty.

Foster and Skehan (1996) investigated the effects of planning time and three different tasks (i.e., personal information exchange, narrative, and decision-making) on the variables of fluency, complexity, and accuracy. They found that planning time had more influence on narrative and decision-making tasks than on personal information exchange tasks. The researchers argue that personal information exchange task is the easiest one as the information is familiar to all learners, and is well-structured. In a similar vein, Foster and Skehan (1999) explored the effects of inherent task structure and processing load of a narrative retelling task. They suggested that more structured tasks elicited more fluent language, and complexity of language was influenced by processing load. Likewise,

Tavakoli (2009) investigated the impacts of storyline complexity and task structure of narrative tasks on second language oral performance. The researcher found that structured tasks elicited more accurate and fluent language than less-structured tasks, and storyline complexity enhanced syntactic complexity of L2 oral performance; however, no clear impact on the lexical diversity of the language produced was found, which is congruent with the findings of the study conducted by Skehan and Foster (1999). Yet, Iwashita, McNamara and Elder (2001) appear to cast doubt on the possibility of categorizing tasks in terms of difficulty following this approach. The researchers conducted a study (following Skehan 1998) to explore if cognitive demands of tasks influence L2 oral performance. They tried to manipulate task difficulty by increasing the cognitive demands of tasks through task design and performance conditions, and analyzed the oral performance data through both specifically constructed scales and detailed discourse measurements. They surprisingly found that task performance conditions failed to influence task difficulty and task performance.

Of relevance to the present study is also the research on the effects of task types and structures on oral performance, in particular on the content development or elaboration of test-taker. Content that examinees attempt to convey is not always included in the construct definition of speaking tests and analytic scales as a feature of performance, though the linguistic components of oral performance (e.g., pronunciation, grammatical accuracy and vocabulary) are commonly assessed. McNamara (1996) points out that most general-purpose proficiency tests assess speaking with a great focus on the linguistic quality of test-takers' oral performances, rather than assessing their performances based on real-world criteria or task fulfillment. As such, test-takers' oral performances are simply evaluated on the basis of their linguistic ability, rather than their ability to communicate effectively.

Regarding the inclusion of speech content in rating scales, Sato (2012) explored the relative contribution of linguistic criteria (i.e., grammatical accuracy, fluency, vocabulary range, and pronunciation) and the elaboration of speech content, that is to say, how well the examinees developed ideas on given topics, to scores on a test of speaking proficiency. He asked nine raters to rate 30 students' monologic performances on three different topics. The findings indicated that content development substantially contributed to the intuitive judgments of raters and composite score of test-takers. He suggested that the quality of ideas that examinees attempt to convey should be involved as a criterion in oral assessments on the grounds that relying solely on linguistic features may

lead to incorrect inferences with regard to L2 learners' oral communication skills.

One of the most often cited studies on the effect of task types on the quality and quantity of content, as well as the other features (e.g., fluency, grammatical accuracy) of test-takers' oral performances is that of Brown, Iwashita and McNamara (2005). They used a discourse-analysis based methodology to investigate the relationship between test scores and actual performance discourse across two integrated speaking tasks of the TOEFL IBT, reading-speaking and listening-speaking, along with the independent speaking task. They found that test takers' performances did not significantly differ across task types, except for the listening-speaking integrated task, which proved to be significantly more difficult than both the integrated reading-speaking task and the independent task. As mentioned earlier, they examined content as a feature of performance, measured it in terms of quantity and schematic structure. While they found that most performance features examined were not task specific, a notable exception was the finding that learners produced more ideas in the integrated tasks than in the independent tasks, which leads them to suggest that content category tended to be task specific.

The suppliance of stimulus materials with speaking tasks is theoretically intended to provide the examinee with a stimulant to trigger the intended speech. Butler et al. (2000) highlighted that, "… speech cannot exist in a vacuum; the examinee must receive input in some form, either spoken or written, in order to know what task he/she is being required to perform" (p.16). Concerning this matter, Akhondi, Malayeri and Samad (2010) conducted a study to examine the impact of the length of the input given prior to the interview on the overall speaking performance of test-takers, including their use of target vocabulary and grammatical structures in speech. They compared the interviewees' performances in two experimental groups receiving different lengths of the same prompt with the performances of a control group who had an impromptu interaction with the interviewers in the absence of any prompt. They found that providing interviewees with prompts noticeably affected the test takers' performances, which leads the researchers to claim that longer prompts provide more "fruitful floor for the participants to ground their discussions and responses on".

Although a number of studies have focused on task design and the impact of task types on oral performance of examinees, few attempts, if any, have been taken on researching alternatives to open ended question types which are currently used to assess speaking in most EFL classroom based assessment contexts. Besides, little empirical research has been

conducted to see the relative contribution of the presence of contextual clues with speaking tasks to both the overall oral performance and content development of low proficiency L2 learners. Thus, the present study attempts to explore the impact of the presence and absence of contextual clues with two monologue types of open ended speaking tasks (i.e., narrative and descriptive) on test-takers' oral performance. In particular, it aims to find out how the suppliance of contextual clues in narrative and descriptive tasks affect the content development/elaboration of learners. By relying on in-depth analyses of the actual performance discourse and scores assigned through analytic rating, this study will seek to contribute to our understanding of L2 speech performance, and further offer implications for designing speaking tests in EFL classroom based assessment contexts.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are:

1. Do L2 learners' oral performance scores on narrative and descriptive tasks with and without contextual clues differ?
   - Does providing contextual clues influence the composite scores, in particular the content development of the learners?
2. What are the learners' perceptions regarding the task demands of narrative and descriptive oral assessment tasks with and without contextual clues?

Hypotheses

In accordance with the previous studies conducted on the impact of different task types on oral performance (Skehan and Foster 1996, 1999, Tavakoli 2009), the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. Both speaking tasks (i.e., narrative and descriptive) presented with clues will facilitate better development of content in test-taker's oral performance as compared to the ones presented without clues.
2. Learners are expected to perform significantly differently on narrative and descriptive tasks presented with and without contextual clues.
3. Learners are expected to favor the tasks with contextual clues over the tasks presented without contextual clues.

Methodology

Context of the Study

The study was carried out in the School of Foreign Languages at Hacettepe University where each student enrolled is required to have a certain level English proficiency to be eligible for the freshman year. In the curriculum, four hours a week is devoted for speaking which is integrated with listening in all levels. Although the assessment of speaking is not included in general proficiency tests administered in the school, it is assessed as a part of achievement tests throughout the quarters. The contribution of speaking scores of learners to their overall grades is %10. All the speaking exams conducted at the preparatory school include similar tasks. The exam consists of two parts. In the first part, the learners are asked a few warm-up questions. In the second part, they are asked to talk about the topic that they pick up from a box for 1-2 minutes on their own. The questions given to the learners are open-ended questions eliciting different discourse types (e.g., descriptive, narrative, explanatory and predictive). For instance, the learners are asked to describe something that is familiar to them, such as their home or favorite friend. The learners' performances are evaluated using the public version of IELTS speaking scale, which is an analytic scale.

Participants

62 Turkish-speaking adult L2 learners of English enrolled in preparatory classes at Hacettepe University participated in this study. 36 of them are female while 26 of them are male with an age range of 19 to 25. The proficiency level of the learners is A2 according to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001). The learners were divided into two groups as experimental and control groups based on their average scores on the level achievement test conducted by preparatory school to ensure that both groups have similar language abilities. The first group has a mean score of 78.17 (out of 100) whereas the second group has a mean score of 77.96 (out of 100). When the two mean scores were compared through an independent samples *t*-test, it was found that the significance of the difference between them is p=.91 (The alpha level was set as p=.05). According to this result, it can be concluded that the difference between the means scores of both groups is not statistically significant, and the groups are very identical in terms of their language abilities.

Instruments

A speaking test consisting of open-ended questions was used for the assessment of learners' oral performances (Appendix-A). The open-ended questions presented with and without contextual clues were designed to elicit two different monologue types of discourse (i.e., narrative and descriptive) from learners on a par with their proficiency level and regular activities in class. For each task type, narrative and descriptive, a set of five prompts of equal difficulty were developed by the researcher who was also the teacher of both groups in question as she was quite familiar with the teaching and learning process in class. This task format was chosen because it is a common format used in classroom based assessment contexts, and test-takers need to demonstrate their ability to use language effectively at some length (Underhill 1987). To further ensure the content validity of the test, a group of expert judges, namely the head of the testing unit of the department and two coordinators, were asked to evaluate the speaking test. Thanks to the researcher's and experts' judgments, the content validity of the test was tried to be secured. With regard to the reliability of the test, Underhill (1987) suggests that "the classical measures of test reliability have little relevance for oral tests because they are designed for rigid, pre-planned tests consisting of a fixed number of individual questions" (p.106). As such, more useful information could be gathered by comparing each marker's scores with her/his own scores, or with the scores of other markers. Based on this, the inter-rater rater reliability of the scores assigned to the learners by two raters was examined in this study.

As for the rating scale used for the assessment of learners' oral performances, the public version of IELTS speaking scale was adapted. As the main focus of the study was to investigate the impact of the presence and absence of contextual clues with the tasks on learners' content development/elaboration, the criterion of (a) *Fluency and Coherence* in the IELTS scale was divided into two separate criteria as (a) *Fluency* and (b) *Content Development*. A concise definition of *Content Development* as a criterion was given as "the degree to which the test-taker is conveying relevant and well-elaborated/developed ideas on given topics" (Sato 2012, 226). Besides, brief descriptors for each level were developed to achieve high inter-rater reliability (Appendix-B).

In addition to the speaking tasks and adapted scale, a focus group interview was conducted to be able to investigate the learners' perceptions regarding the task demands of narrative and descriptive oral assessment tasks presented with and without contextual clues. Focus group interview was chosen as a method of data collection for it elicits rich qualitative data

efficiently (Dörnyei 2007). Homogenous sampling technique was adopted to select the participants for "… the dynamics of the focus group works better with homogenous samples" (Dörnyei 2007, 144). As the researcher's main aim was to create a supportive atmosphere in which discussion was promoted by giving chance to the participants to explain their points of views, she asked more general questions such as "What do you think about the oral assessment type you were involved?", "Do you think you could be more successful if you were in the other group?", "Do you find it useful to have contextual clues?". According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), focus group interviewing generally includes 7 to 10 participants, but the size of the group can change. In this study, 10 learners participated in the focus group interview.

Procedure

The purposes of the assessment of speaking at Hacettepe University Preparatory School were to evaluate the learners' oral performance in English, and to provide learners with useful feedback in the process of learning. The learners were required to answer the given prompts presented with or without contextual clues by narrating or describing them. They were given one minute planning time before they started to talk about the topics given. They were randomly given the tasks, and thus they fell into the groups of descriptive and narrative tasks presented with and without clues in the study. The time allotted for each learner was 5 minutes, including the warm-up session. The conversations were recorded on a tablet for transcription and analysis.

In order to ensure valid and reliable scoring, a second rater with two years of experience in both teaching and assessing the speaking ability was involved in the assessment procedure together with the researcher. The second rater also worked as an instructor in the same school with the researcher, and both raters had the formal training on the use of IELTS speaking scale. Prior to the oral assessment, the second rater was informed about the adapted version of scale to be used in the assessment. Two weeks after the oral assessment, 10 learners were interviewed together by using focus group method, through which the researcher aimed to get detailed information on which task type the learners favored and why.

Data Analysis

The test scores assigned to the learners by two raters using an analytic scale were statistically analyzed through *SPSS Version 20.0*. First, Pearson

correlation coefficient was computed between two sets of *composite* scores assigned to the learners by two raters to confirm inter-rater reliability. Next, to see if there was a significant difference between experimental and control group with regard to their composite scores and scores from the content development/elaboration criterion in the scale, an independent samples *t*-test was run on the data. This analysis was intended to explore the relative contribution of providing contextual clues with tasks on learners' oral performance and content development. A one-way ANOVA was also performed to investigate the effects of descriptive and narrative tasks presented with and without clues on the learners' composite scores.

In addition the statistical tests employed in the study, an analysis of the test takers' discourse was undertaken to determine whether measures of content in participants' output differ according to the tasks presented with and without contextual clues. After transcribing the recorded performances, T-units and clauses were counted as measures of content in terms of quantity in the participants' oral performance data. Segmentation of learners' utterances into T-units and clauses was done according to guidelines applied by Brown, Iwashita, and McNamara (2005) for a study of a detailed analysis of test-takers' discourse. According to these guidelines, a T-unit is defined as an independent clause and all of its dependent clauses (Hunt 1970); a clause is a unified predicate containing a finite verb, a predicate adjective, or a non target-like predication in which the verb or part of the verb phrase is missing (Berman and Slobin 1994, cited in Brown, Iwashita, and McNamara 2005). On the basis of this approach, coordinated clauses are treated as separate T-units while subordinated clauses together with the main clause are counted as a single T-unit. Besides, coordinated verb phrases with the same subject are treated as part of a single unit (Foster, Tonkyn and Wigglesworth 2000). To see whether there was a significant difference between groups with regard to the number of the T-units and clauses, an independent samples *t*-test was run on the data. Besides, Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the number of clauses as a measure of content in terms of quantity and composite scores assigned to the learners by two raters.

Finally, data collected through a focus group interview regarding the learners' perceptions of the tasks presented with and without contextual clues was categorized qualitatively.

Results

Inter-Rater Reliability

Since this is a test of production where raters' judgments affect the decision to be made about the performances of learners, the reliability of the test scores assigned to the learners by two raters was examined by calculating the correlation coefficient of the scores.

Table-1. The Correlation Coefficients of Raters' Ratings

		First Rater	Second Rater
First Rater	Pearson Correlation	1	,951**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	62	62
Second Rater	Pearson Correlation	,951**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	62	62

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As presented in Table 1, the correlation coefficient obtained for two raters is .951, indicating a quite high inter-rater reliability. Besides, it was found that the correlation coefficient for first and second rater was statistically significant with a *p*-value smaller than .05, which means that test scores assigned to the learners by two raters are reliable.

Comparison of Tasks and Task Types

The main intent of the present study is to empirically investigate the impact of the presence and absence of contextual clues with narrative and descriptive tasks on learners' performances in a classroom based assessment context. My first hypothesis was that both speaking tasks (i.e., narrative and descriptive) presented with clues will facilitate better development of content in test-taker's oral performance as compared to the ones presented without clues.

Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of Learners' Performances

	N	Composite Score		Content Development	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Descriptive (-)	15	29,00	5,78	6,26	1,53
Narrative (-)	16	29,37	5,27	6,37	1,20
Descriptive (+)	15	27,33	4,45	6,06	1,22
Narrative (+)	16	26,68	5,36	5,81	1,47

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics of the scores assigned to the leaners by two raters using the adapted version of IELTS speaking scale. In terms of the composite scores given by raters, learners got the highest mean scores (M= 29,37; M=29) (out of 45) in the narrative tasks and descriptive tasks presented without contextual clues respectively, followed by descriptive and narrative tasks presented with contextual clues. With regard to the scores obtained from content development criterion in the scale, learners got the highest mean scores (M=6,37; M=6,26) (out of 9) in the narrative and descriptive tasks presented without contextual clues respectively, followed by descriptive and narrative tasks presented with clues.

To compare the scores from the content development criterion in the scale and the composite scores between experimental and control groups, an independent samples t-test was conducted. The results revealed that learners in experimental (M=27, SD=4.87) and control (M=29.19, SD=5.43) groups did not differ significantly in their composite scores, $t(60)=1.67$, $p>0.05$. The results also showed that there was no significant difference between experimental (M=5.93, SD=1.34) and control (M=6.32, SD=1.35) groups in their scores from the content development criterion in the scale, $t(60)=1.13$, $p>0.05$. These results show that learners in the experimental group who were given the test tasks with contextual clues obtained scores which were quite similar to those learners in the control group who were given the test tasks without contextual clues, which provides little evidence to support my first hypothesis.

My second hypothesis was that learners are expected to perform significantly differently on narrative and descriptive tasks presented with and without contextual clues. To determine if there were any significant differences in the learners' composite scores with regard to the effect of different task types, a one-way *ANOVA* was performed. According to the results of the test, the learners' composite scores did not differ significantly in the narrative and descriptive tasks with $F(3,58)=.957$,

$p>0.05$. In addition, a *MANOVA* was employed to see if the learners' scores from each criterion such as "fluency", "lexical resource", "grammatical range and accuracy" and finally "content development" differ in terms of the narrative and descriptive tasks presented with and without contextual clues. The results showed that task types did not seem to affect the learners' "fluency" scores with $F(3,58)=.037$, $p>0.05$; "lexical resource" scores with $F(3,58)=.077$, $p>0.05$; "grammatical range and accuracy" scores with $F(3,58)=.172$, $p>0.05$ and "content development" scores with $F(3,58)=.159$, $p>0.05$. Taken together, these results suggest that different task types do not significantly influence the learners' oral performance in a classroom based assessment context. Thus, this data fails to provide evidence for my second hypothesis.

The Analysis of Learners' Performance Discourse

The learners' actual performance discourse was further analyzed to determine whether measures of content in terms of quantity in participants' output differ according to the tasks presented with and without contextual clues. As measures of content in terms of quantity, T-units and clauses were counted in the participants' oral performance data. Table-3 demonstrates the descriptive statistics of the numbers of T-units and clauses in the learners' oral performance.

Table 3. The Descriptive Statistics of Learners' Performances

	N	T-Unit		Clause	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Control Group	31	11,83	4,25	14,93	5,80
Experimental Group	31	12,22	5,05	14,67	5,47

To compare the means of T-units and clauses between experimental and control groups, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. The results of the test indicated that there was no significant difference between experimental and control groups with regard to the means of T-units and clauses with $p>0.05$. Thus, it can be concluded that the presence and absence of contextual clues with the tasks did not affect the quantity of content conveyed by the learners.

Besides, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the number of clauses as a measure of content in terms of quantity and composite scores assigned to the learners by two raters. There was a positive correlation between the two variables, $r=.556$,

n=62, p=.000. Overall, there was a relatively strong, positive correlation between the number of clauses as a measure of content in terms of quantity and composite scores assigned to the learners by two raters. In other words, the scores assigned to learners by raters were correlated with the number of clauses in the learners' actual performance discourse.

Learners' Perceptions on Task Types

In order to find out the learners' perceptions regarding the task demands of narrative and descriptive oral assessment tasks presented with and without contextual clues, a focus group interview with 10 learners was conducted. With regard to the task type they had in the oral exam, five of the participants took tasks presented with contextual clues while the other five took the tasks presented without the contextual clues. The data collected through focus group interview was coded by the researcher. The emerged themes were "Advantages of the tasks presented with contextual clues", "Limitations of the tasks presented without contextual clues", and "Preference of descriptive or narrative tasks".

Advantages of the Tasks Presented with Contextual Clues

The codes under this theme were "producing ideas", "comfortable" and "recalling words". The learners in the experimental group pointed out that tasks presented with contextual clues were more advantageous than the others in that they could generate more ideas without feeling nervous as the contextual clues helped them elaborate the content and form an overall discourse plan on what they were going to speak. Besides, they stated that contextual clues helped them recall relevant words and phrases to use in their speech, which in turn leads them to perform well. One of the participants stated that "I could not effectively make use of the clues given with the task in my speech; however, the moment I saw some clues on the card I picked up, I felt less stressed". Another participant also suggested that the contextual clues would be more useful if they were presented as pictorial clues rather than words since he did not know the meanings of some words presented with the tasks as contextual clues.

The Disadvantages of the Tasks Presented without Contextual Clues

The codes under this theme were "stressed" and "not being able to develop topic". The learners in the control group who were given the tasks

without any contextual clues stated that they could not satisfactorily develop the topics given in the oral assessment as they just had the prompts without any clues. Further, they added that they felt stressed and nervous for they had no clues which would help them recall a few words to use in their speech. They stated that they had some hesitations and long pauses while speaking since they could not appropriately organize the content of their speech during their planning time. One of the learners from the control group even stated that "I am sure I would hit 19 instead of 15 out of 20 if I were in the other group". The other participants also made similar comments in that they could have been more successful if they were assessed with the tasks presented with contextual clues as they would have an idea on what to talk about, and thus feel less stressed.

The Preference of Tasks Types

When participants were asked which task type, descriptive and narrative tasks presented with and without clues, they would prefer for their oral assessments, they showed a tendency towards the tasks presented with contextual clues over the ones without any clues, which supports my third hypothesis. Also, they stated that they would prefer descriptive tasks over narrative ones for they were not restricted by a specific tense or a grammar rule in descriptive tasks and they could freely speak on the prompts given.

Discussion

The results of the statistical and discourse analyses suggest that the presence and absence of contextual clues with open-ended tasks did not significantly influence the composite scores and content development of L2 learners in a classroom based assessment context. The lack of significant difference may result from the fact that the participants of this study were low proficiency learners who had a lack of linguistic resources, to which the immaturity of ideas in open-ended tasks presented with and without contextual clues may be attributed (Brown 2007). It is also worth noting that there are two types of knowledge as defined by Alderson (1967): Declarative knowledge is the knowledge of facts or about things while procedural knowledge is the knowledge about how to do things. In this case, the contextual clues presented with the tasks were used just as a stimulus to activate students' schemata on that real-life event and to give them ideas on what to talk about, which in turn enhances their declarative knowledge. However, it is the examinee's language ability and communication

strategies, that is to say procedural knowledge, which play the most essential role in the test-taker's oral performance.

Although no significant differences were found both in the learners' composite scores and actual performance discourse measured in terms of the quantity of the content, it was found out that learners had different perceptions regarding oral assessment tasks presented with and without contextual clues. According to the results of qualitative data, the learners stated that they felt more comfortable and less nervous with the prompts presented with contextual clues as compared to the ones presented without any contextual clues. Moreover, they added that contextual clues aided them to generate more ideas and to elaborate the content on the topic given. The learners in the control group pointed out that they could not effectively develop the content that they attempted to convey due to their hesitations and false starts, which accords with the findings of the research by Akhondi, Malayeri, and Samad (2010). Thus, it can be concluded that contextual clues presented with the tasks reduce the test anxiety and communicative stress that most EFL learners have during oral performance assessments.

As for the non-significant difference in the learners' composite scores and scores from each criterion (e.g., fluency, grammatical range and accuracy, lexical resource) in the scale with regard to descriptive and narrative tasks presented with and without contextual clues, this study does not confirm with the existing research (Tavakoli 2009, Foster and Skehan 1999, Skehan 1998). In this study, the task structure was manipulated by the presence and absence of the contextual clues which serve as an input to elicit two different discourse types, narrative and descriptive, through open-ended tasks. This was an attempt to render cognitive complexity and task difficulty, which was concerned with the dimension of *Adequacy*, a task characteristic related to the suppliance of input with the tasks, developed by Iwashita et al. (2001) based on the framework of task difficulty suggested by Skehan (1998). Accordingly, the learners in this case would be expected to be more accurate and fluent in narrative tasks presented with contextual clues than the ones presented without any contextual clues; however, their scores from "fluency" and "grammatical range and accuracy" criteria in the scale did not change significantly across all task types. A similar result was also reported by Iwashita et al. (2001) who concluded that different task performance conditions failed to influence task performance in a pedagogical context.

An alternative explanation for the overall lack of agreement between the results of this study and those reported previously (Tavakoli 2009, Foster and Skehan 1999, Skehan 1998) is that the current study was

conducted in a classroom based assessment context which has a lot of different dynamics at work as opposed to real testing contexts.

Apart from the aforementioned results of the study, this study provides evidence for the relative contribution of content development criterion in the scale to the overall performance (Sato 2012). Quantitative data showed that there was a strong correlation between the measures of content in terms of quantity and learners' overall scores; that is, a learner who achieved a high composite score obtained a high score for *Content Development /Elaboration*, and vice versa. This result indicates that *content development/elaboration* is an important criterion underlying in the evaluation of overall performance quality for it "forms a major part of the non-linguistic components affecting rater judgments of the quality of second language oral performance" (Sato 2012, 237). Therefore, it may be included in construct definition of speaking and as a criterion in scales with the aim of increasing the validity of scales.

Conclusion

The present study investigates the impact of the presence and absence of the contextual clues with two open-ended tasks (i.e., descriptive and narrative) on learners' oral performance in a classroom based assessment context. Specifically, the study attempts to explore the relative contribution of contextual clues presented with tasks to the content development of learners. It also investigates the perceptions of learners towards having contextual clues with the tasks in oral assessment.

Quantitative analysis of the data showed that learners did not perform significantly differently in the tasks presented with and without clues. A detailed analysis of the learners' performance discourse also indicated that the measures of content in terms of quantity in participants' output did not significantly differ according to the different task types. These results may be due to the low proficiency level of learners, as they had limited knowledge of language at their disposal, they could not effectively make use of the contextual clues given with the tasks. Analyses of the qualitative data revealed that learners had positive perceptions about the tasks presented with contextual clues as they felt less stressed and nervous in the assessment thanks to the contextual clues.

By providing empirical evidence of speaking assessment tasks, the study can shed light on our understanding of the assessment of speaking in a classroom based context and offer implications for designing a valid and reliable test, which will improve test quality in the assessment of speaking.

Limitations

Due to constraints of time, this study was conducted on low proficiency L2 learners; however, it would yield more informative and contributing scores if the participants were both low and high proficiency learners. In addition, the current study focused only on open-ended tasks eliciting descriptive and narrative discourse from learners. It would be interesting to see the effects of contextual clues presented with task types different in nature (e.g., discussion, picture description, and interview) on learners' oral performance. Finally, having more participants would provide more precise results.

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Appendix-A

a) Descriptive Task Prompts Presented without Contextual Clues
  ▪ Can you describe your best friend?
  ▪ Can you describe your neighbor/favorite teacher?
  ▪ Can you describe one of your family members?
  ▪ Can you describe your hometown?
  ▪ Can you describe a city you visited?

b) Narrative Task Prompts Presented without Contextual Clues
  ▪ What did you do in your last holiday?
  ▪ What did you do last weekend?
  ▪ What did you do last Saturday?
  ▪ How did you celebrate your last birthday?
  ▪ What did you do last New Year?

c) Descriptive Task Promps Presented with Contextual Clues
  ▪ Can you describe your best friend?
    - Personality
    - Appearance
    - Lifestyle
    - Interests/Habits
    - Other

  ▪ Can you describe your neighbor/favorite teacher?
    - Personality
    - Appearance
    - Lifestyle
    - Interests/Habits
    - Other

  ▪ Can you describe one of your family members?
    - Personality
    - Appearance
    - Lifestyle
    - Interests/Habits
    - Other

- Can you describe your hometown?
    - Historic places
    - Weather
    - Food
    - People
    - Other

- Can you describe a city you visited?
    - Historic places
    - Weather
    - Food
    - People
    - Other

d) Narrative Task Prompts Presented with Contextual Clues
- What did you do in your last holiday?
    - In a different city/ country
    - With friends/family/alone
    - In summer/Winter
    - Why (not) like
    - Other

- What did you do last weekend?
    - At home/outside
    - With friends/family/alone
    - e.g., theatre, cinema, shop
    - Other

- What did you do last Saturday?
    - At home/outside
    - With friends/family/alone
    - e.g., movies, games, party
    - Other…

- How did you celebrate your last birthday?
    - At home/outside
    - With friends/family/alone
    - e.g., party, presents, cake
    - Other

- What did you do last New Year?
    - At home/outside
    - With friends/family/alone
    - e.g., party, games, dance
    - Other…

Appendix-B

Adapted Version of IELTS Speaking Scale

Band	Fluency	Content Development/ Elaboration	Lexical resource	Grammatical range and accuracy	Pronunciation
9	• speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar • speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features	• presents fully extended and well supported ideas using clear and appropriate statements	• uses vocabulary with full flexibility and precision in all topics • uses idiomatic language naturally and accurately	• uses a full range of structures naturally and appropriately • produces consistently accurate structures apart from 'slips' characteristic of native speaker speech	• uses a full range of pronunciation features with precision and subtlety • sustains flexible use of features throughout • is effortless to understand
8	• speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language	▪ presents a sufficiently developed and extended response to the question with relevant and supported ideas	• uses a wide vocabulary resource readily and flexibly to convey precise meaning • uses less common and idiomatic vocabulary skilfully, with occasional	• uses a wide range of structures flexibly • produces a majority of error-free sentences with only very occasional inappropriacies or basic/non-systematic errors	• uses a wide range of pronunciation features • sustains flexible use of features, with only occasional lapses • is easy to understand throughout; L1 accent has minimal effect on intelligibility

The Impact of Contextual Clues on Oral Performance of EFL Learners

	Fluency and Coherence		Lexical Resource	Grammatical Range and Accuracy	Pronunciation
(8)			inaccuracies • uses paraphrase effectively as required		
7	• speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence • may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility	■ presents and extends relevant main ideas although some ideas or points may not be fully developed	• uses vocabulary resource flexibly to discuss a variety of topics • uses some less common and idiomatic vocabulary and shows some awareness of style and collocation, with some inappropriate choices • uses paraphrase effectively	• uses a range of complex structures with some flexibility • frequently produces error-free sentences, though some grammatical mistakes persist	• shows all the positive features of Band 6 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 8
6	• is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation • uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately	■ presents relevant main ideas although conclusions may become unclear or repetitive	• has a wide enough vocabulary to discuss topics at length and make meaning clear in spite of inappropriacies • generally paraphrases	• uses a mix of simple and complex structures, but with limited flexibility • may make frequent mistakes with complex structures, though these rarely cause comprehension	• uses a range of pronunciation features with mixed control • shows some effective use of features but this is not sustained • can generally be understood throughout,

			successfully	problems	though mispronunciation of individual words or sounds reduces clarity at times
5	• usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self-correction and/or slow speech to keep going • may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers • produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems	■ presents some main ideas but these are not sufficiently developed	• manages to talk about familiar and unfamiliar topics but uses vocabulary with limited flexibility • attempts to use paraphrase but with mixed success	• produces basic sentence forms with reasonable accuracy • uses a limited range of more complex structures, but these usually contain errors and may cause some comprehension problems	• shows all the positive features of Band 4 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 6
4	• cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction • links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence	■ presents a few ideas, which are largely repetitive and undeveloped	• is able to talk about familiar topics but can only convey basic meaning on unfamiliar topics and makes frequent errors in word choice • rarely attempts paraphrase	• produces basic sentence forms and some correct simple sentences but subordinate structures are rare • errors are frequent and may lead to misunderstanding	• uses a limited range of pronunciation features • attempts to control features but lapses are frequent • mispronunciations are frequent and cause some difficulty for the listener

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3	• speaks with long pauses • has limited ability to link simple sentences • gives only simple responses and is frequently unable to convey basic message	▪ may attempt to present a few ideas, but there is no content development	• uses simple vocabulary to convey personal information • has insufficient vocabulary for less familiar topics	• attempts basic sentence forms but with limited success, or relies on apparently memorised utterances • makes numerous errors except in memorised expressions	• shows some of the features of Band 2 and some, but not all, of the positive features of Band 4
2	• pauses lengthily before most words • little communication possible	▪ answer is completely unrelated to the task	• only produces isolated words or memorised utterances	• cannot produce basic sentence forms	• speech is often unintelligible
1	• no communication possible • no ratable language				
0	• does not attend				

THE EFFECT OF SHIP ON TEACHING VOCABULARY TO EFL STUDENTS

İBRAHIM TOPAL

Abstract

This study tries to prove that the proposed technique for teaching vocabulary, which is Stories Hidden in Pictures (SHIP), has a crucial effect on learning foreign vocabulary items in terms of retention and language production. In order to collect the required data, the researchers of this study conducted a research with 60 Elementary Turkish EFL students from the College of Foreign Languages at a major state university in Ankara for four weeks during the Fall Term of 2014-2015. The students were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups and post-tested. Upon each week, they were taught the target words and they were given a story building task. At the end of the treatment, the students took a post-test. The data were analyzed through descriptive and inferential analysis. The findings of the study indicated that students who learned vocabulary through SHIP performed better on vocabulary tests than those who learned through other techniques such as synonym-antonym and that learning words through the proposed technique had a significant effect on written language production. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that students retained more words through the proposed technique. Since this is a pilot study, further research is needed to find out whether the proposed technique would work with higher level students and is effective as well in the long run and to make sure that the findings of the study are valid in order to make a generalization in the Turkish educational context.

Keywords: vocabulary, retention, stories, language production, pictures.

1. Introduction

Teaching vocabulary has always been one of the most problematic areas in foreign language teaching. When the fact that learners should be familiar with 95 percent of the words in the text at any level in order to comprehend a text is taken into consideration (Hirsh & Nation, 1992), the significance of teaching vocabulary becomes more evident, just like the fact that traditional methods for teaching vocabulary bears hardly any importance compared to teaching vocabulary through multimedia.

A great number of scholars (Raimes, 1983; Hilda, 1990; Chu, 1996; Plass, Chun, Mayer & Leutner, 1998; Hu, Deng, 2007; Dimpere, 2009) suggested the usefulness and effectiveness of visual aids in teaching lexical items in that they are considered to be authentic and bring reality into the classroom which harbors an unnatural environment for learning. Akbari (2008) investigated the effectiveness of teaching vocabulary items through pictures and contextualization, and revealed that both picture and context enhanced the vocabulary development of learners. Taking into consideration the effectiveness of contextualized visual aids, it is plausible to assert that learners have a better chance of vocabulary acquisition in a more meaningful context when compared to the presentation of lexical items with a picture.

Apart from the acquisition of lexical items, various types of media including pictures were proven to foster richness of recall cues and increase the likelihood of retention (Chun and Plass, 1996). According to Paivio's dual-coding theory (1971, 1976), words are coded dually in two modes - both verbally and imaginably - and they are learned better than those coded only in one mode. However, it is also necessary that learners repeat vocabulary items at segmented intervals. Spaced repetition of vocabulary items is more effective than massed repetition (Nation, 2001).

As Hee-Jeong Ihm (2006) stated that the useful teaching methodology to assist learners to efficiently learn vocabulary has been rarely developed, which is the result of having the least number of action research about ELT in vocabulary instruction despite the recognition of the importance of vocabulary instruction (Kwon, 1995; Lee, 1996). Thus, it is reasonable to put forward the idea that we are now face to face with a lack of methodologically beneficial means of teaching vocabulary, but with an abundance of recognition and studies implying the significance of vocabulary teaching.

Bearing this consequence in mind, the researchers have formulated a novel technique called *SHIP (Stories Hidden in Pictures)* which aims to teach lexical items through stories that are formulated based on the

relevant pictures with the target words. This study aims to find out the effectiveness of the proposed technique in terms of retention and language production by giving students story building assignments each week throughout a four-week period and applying a pre- and post-test design before and after the students are introduced the vocabulary items through SHIP. In line with the pedagogical objectives of this study, the researchers formulated the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant change in students' vocabulary achievement following the introduction of SHIP?
2. Does the use of SHIP create a significant effect on the students' written language production?
3. Is there any difference in the retention of vocabulary items upon the instruction given through SHIP?

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Vocabulary

The word "vocabulary" generally represents a summary of words or their combinations in a particular language. However, we should bear in mind, as Ur (2000:60) remarked, that one item of vocabulary can consist of more than one word. E.g. the word 'post-office' consists of two different words and still expresses one idea. It is known that vocabulary teaching is one of the most important components of any language class. The main reason for this is the fact that it is a medium which carries meaning, and learning to understand and express the meaning is what counts in learning languages. There has been increased focus on teaching vocabulary recently, partly as a result of "the development of new approaches to language teaching, which are much more 'word-centered'" (Thornbury 2004: vi).

2.1.1. Knowing what a word includes

What does teaching vocabulary actually involve? Is it enough for the learner to know the form of the word and one or more of its meanings? In fact, teaching vocabulary is more of a complex matter: Ur (2000: 60-62) and Harmer (1993: 156-157) agree in listing the fundamental features, which need to be included within vocabulary teaching: Besides knowing the form of the word, learners also need to be familiar with its grammar. Learners need to know e.g. irregular forms of verbs or plural nouns, the

position of adjectives etc. Another aspect in teaching vocabulary is the word formation. Learners should know how to change a word form and when to use it (gerund, the past form…). Teaching the meaning includes mainly connecting a word with its equivalent in the real world. It is called denotation. Apart from denotation, connotation of the word (associations and feelings, which arise when the word is heard) should be taught. Many vocabulary items have several meanings depending on context. To make it even worse, "word meaning is frequently stretched through the use of metaphor and idiom" (Harmer 1993: 157). Furthermore, learners need to be provided with the word sense relations to other words. There are various relationships such as synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms etc.

2.1.2. What vocabulary to teach

Every language teacher must make a difficult choice on what and how much vocabulary to teach. Furthermore, they must consider what vocabulary items to teach first (during the early stages of the course) and what vocabulary to leave for later on. The teacher's choice of vocabulary is influenced into some extent by the course book and supplementary materials they use.

2.1.2.1. Usefulness
When making a decision about what vocabulary to teach preferentially, the teacher should mainly take the usefulness of the words into consideration. Yet, what words are actually useful? To be able to answer this question, it might be helpful to look into several aspects.

In the first place, the teacher should consider the learner's needs. Allen (1983) pointed out that it is useful to provide the learner with words for 'classroom language' just at the early stages of the course. One of the criteria affecting the teacher's choice is the frequency in which the particular item is used in common language. In general, "The words which are most commonly used are the ones we should teach first" (Harmer 1993:154). Another aspect to consider is coverage. As Harmer (1993:154) stated, the words covering more things are likely to be taught before words with only one specific meaning.

2.1.2.2. Learnability
Besides usefulness, "learnability" is another factor influencing the order in which chosen vocabulary will be taught. There are a lot of reasons why words might be easy or difficult to learn. Of them all, let us mention that complicated spelling, pronunciation or meaning might be a reason for

a word to be difficult to remember. Generally, concrete things are more learnable than abstract ones; therefore, they are always taught first (McCarthy 1992:86).

2.2. Vocabulary teaching

2.2.1. To make vocabulary teaching and learning effective

Unlike learning grammar, which is a system based mainly on rules, vocabulary is generally a matter of remembering (Thornbury, 2004). To be able to teach as effectively as possible, it is important to know how words are remembered and stored in students' minds and how long-term memory is organized. Several authors agree that vocabulary is stored in a highly organized and complex web-like system in the mind, the so-called 'mental lexicon'. In the mental lexicon, words are stored, categorized and interconnected in many ways, according to their features such as meaning, form, collocation, syntactic properties, cultural background etc. Consequently, a word being retrieved is looked up through several pathways at once, which is extremely economical in terms of time needed. (Thornbury, 2004; McCarthy, 1992; Gairns and Redman, 1992). One of the important roles of the language teacher is to help their students find the easiest way of conveying new information into the already existing system of mental lexicon. (Thornbury 2004: 93). Moreover, students need to acquire the ability to store the information for as long as possible. To sum it up, the teacher should help students build up and use a mental lexicon in such a way that they will be capable of storing, keeping and retrieving words when needed.

2.2.2. Techniques in vocabulary teaching

Learners acquire vocabulary in various ways. Students are exposed to a lot of new vocabularies during lessons: by the teacher, by texts or other materials they work with. A lot of this vocabulary is automatically absorbed. (Harmer 1993: 159) Beside this incidental acquisition, there are "pre-planned lesson stages in which learners are taught pre-selected vocabulary items" (Thornbury 2004: 75). Various techniques and activities are aimed directly at learning vocabulary, which is usually put into sets of somehow related words, often by topic or meaning. As McCarty (1992) suggests, before presenting new language, pre-teaching activities might be beneficial "to activate existing knowledge to make the encounter with new words more   meaningful" (McCarthy 1992:108). Pre-teaching activities

often arouse students' attention and desire to explore a particular topic or subject in greater detail.

2.3. Pictures in foreign language teaching

As Hill (1990) pointed out, "the standard classroom" is usually not a very suitable environment for learning languages. That is why teachers search for various aids and stimuli to improve this situation. Pictures are one of these valuable aids. They bring "images of reality into the unnatural world of the language classroom" (Hill 1990:1). Pictures bring not only images of reality, but can also function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising how pictures may change a lesson when even employed in additional exercises. Pictures meet with a wide range of use not only in acquiring vocabulary, but also in many other aspects of foreign language teaching. Wright (1990:4-6) demonstrated this fact with an example where he used one compiled picture and illustrated the possibility of its use in five very different language areas. His example shows employing pictures in teaching structure, vocabulary, functions, situations and all four skills.

There are many reasons for using pictures in language teaching. As Wright (1990:2) pointed out, they are motivating and draw learners' attention. This fact will be repeatedly demonstrated in the Practical Part of this thesis. Furthermore, Wright (1990: 2) refers to the fact that they provide a sense of the context of the language and give a specific reference point or stimulus.

2.3.1. Pictures in vocabulary teaching

2.3.1.2. Picture flashcards
David A Hill (1990) classified pictures according to their size into three 'key' categories:

- "Large (20x30 cm): useful for whole-class work"
- "Medium (10x15 cm): useful for group-work"
- "Small (5x5 cm): useful for games and other group-work activities" (Hill 1990: 5).

This classification applies to picture flashcards as well. We have simplified Hill's classification and divided them into two groups only. The first group covers "big picture flash cards" (about 15x20cm or larger), typically used by the teacher for whole-class activities such as presenting

new language, controlled practice or as prompts for speaking activities. The second group then covers "small picture flash cards" (smaller than about 15x20cm), usually used by students for working individually or for games and activities in pairs or groups.

2.3.1.3. Drawing

Although some teachers may not be very proficient in drawing, they are eventually bound to find a way of drawing simple pictures for classroom use. Wright (1990) stated that drawings "provide an immediately available source of pictorial material for the activities. Students' and teachers' drawings also have a special quality, which lies in their immediacy and their individuality" (Wright 1990:203). The element of individuality might have a significant impact on remembering, whether it is a unique expression of the teacher or even better, the expression of students when creating the pictures themselves.

2.3.1.4. Wall pictures and posters, compiled pictures

Wall pictures are another valuable visual material for language classes. In the first place, they can be displayed in the classroom to set an "English (or foreign in general) environment" and then, they function as another source of language to be absorbed by students in the process of natural acquisition. Furthermore, students will find their use both in the presentation of new language and in controlled practices. Wright and Haleem (1996:45) specified in their characteristics of wall pictures that these are often complex pictures, illustrating a scene and containing lots of objects and details. They are big enough to be seen by the whole class and they can be used instantly and repeatedly. Due to their character, they are obviously suitable for the presentation of new language. They put vocabulary into context and; therefore, make the presentation meaningful, which is highly recommended for successful retention of new words.

2.3.1.5. Semantic maps

Semantic maps, also known as word diagrams, are not exactly what people usually imagine under the heading 'Pictures'. Nonetheless, they are visuals and they are very closely related to pictures. When looking into this matter, it is even possible to claim that they actually are pictures - pictures of sense relations of words. In any case, they are very valuable and highly beneficial not only in learning vocabulary, but also, as Gairns and Redman (1992) pointed out, as a tool for storing lexis already learned. Semantic maps can contribute with various functions in classes. For instance, they can be used in presentations of vocabulary for a particular

topic, making this vocabulary organized, withdrawing the relations.

Summary

There are various types of pictures to be used for language learning, practicing and organizing. They differ regarding their size, form, and origin, which make them fit for a number of activities depending on their type. For several reasons, they help students remember the words better and they help the teacher to make the lesson more interesting and beneficial.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study utilizes a pre- and post-test experimental design. Two classes were randomly assigned to the experimental and the control group. They were post-tested to figure out which vocabulary items they've already learned in the vocabulary list of Speak Out Starter course book. After the target words were determined through a post-test, the experimental group was taught the vocabulary items through SHIP in a four-week period; whereas, the control group was taught the same target vocabulary items through techniques other than SHIP such as definition, synonym-antonym or connotation. Each week students were taught 10 words at the beginning of the weekday and they were asked to complete a story building assignment which consisted of the target words of the week at the end of the weekday. In the fifth week, they were post-tested with a multiple-choice test consisting of 40 questions including the target vocabulary items of the four weeks.

3.2. Participants

This study was conducted with 60 EFL students from the College of Foreign Languages at a major state university during the academic year 2014/2015. They were all elementary level students selected randomly with their ages ranging from 17 to 24. The students are mostly from the Department of Engineering; whereas, some of them are from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning. All of them were equally assigned to the experimental and the control groups.

3.3. Instruments

The researchers used a post-test consisting of three parts, the first part of which includes writing Turkish definitions of 20 words. The second part includes the synonyms of 10 words and the last part consists of 14 questions consisting of matching the picture with the most appropriate word. All the vocabulary items were selected from the word list of the course book called Speak Out Starter.

The students were asked to complete a story building assignment at the end of each weekday. Each assignment consisted of target vocabulary items of the week. The students were asked to write a story using the words provided. The assignments were graded according to the rubric provided in the Appendix section. The rubric consists of several parts which are task completion, vocabulary, grammar, range, linking words, mechanics and unity. The assignments were graded on a scale of 25, which then was multiplied by 4 and equaled to 100 in total.

In the post-test, the students were put to a multiple choice test consisting of 40 questions using the target words taught during the four-week period. The reliability of this post-test was ensured with the administration of this test to a sample group consisting of 30 students. The same test was re-administered to the same sample group two weeks later to check its stability over time. The coefficient determination is 0.86 which means there is a strong positive correlation.

3.4. Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

This study was conducted in the College of Foreign Languages at a major state university in Ankara during the Fall Term of 2014-2015. The target vocabulary was taught in a class hour of 50 minutes on Mondays in a four-week period. The writing tasks were performed on Fridays within the same week. The treatment group was taught ten vocabulary items through stories told via pictures, and then, these words were practiced; whereas, the control group was taught the same words through different techniques such as definitions of the words, synonyms-antonyms, etc. The words were also practiced with the control group. They were also taught the target words on Mondays and given writing tasks on Fridays.

This process continued for four weeks and the students both in the control and treatment groups were given a 40-question multiple choice test in the fifth week to measure how much they've learned of the target words.

4. Results

RQ-1: Is there a significant change in the students' vocabulary achievement following the introduction of SHIP?

Table 1: Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	**Pretest**	32,3667	30	11,69286	2,13481
	Post-test	46,4000	30	14,88716	2,71801

It can be deduced from Table 1 that there is an observable increase in the pre-test and post-test means of the experimental group. The difference between the mean scores escalated after the introduction of the manipulation. In other words, the students in the experimental group who were taught target vocabulary items through the proposed technique performed better than those in the control group who were given the same target words through different techniques such as synonym-antonym or definition.

Table 2: Paired Samples T-test

Paired Differences		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			f	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	**Pretest - Post-test** 14.03333	-	18.2898	3.33924	-20.8625	-7.20382		- 4.23	29.000

As presented in Table 2, a paired samples T-test was administered between pre-test and post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. The post-test results demonstrated that p value is less than .05 (.000<.05). From this data, it can be concluded that the introduction of the proposed technique had a profound effect on the vocabulary learning of the students who were taught through SHIP.

RQ-2: Does the use of SHIP create a significant effect on the students' written language production?

Table 3: Group Statistics Regarding Written Language Production

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WR	CG	30	70,6333	1,92055	,35064
	EG	30	81,5667	1,50134	,27411

As can be deduced from Table 3, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the control and experimental group concerning the story building tasks for written language production. The difference is around 11, which could suggest that students who were taught the target lexical items through the proposed technique developed their written production as they continued to perform these tasks during a period of four weeks.

As indicated in Table 4, the significance value is less than .05 which enables us to suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between the story building task scores of the control and experimental groups. It also helps us to state that students who received vocabulary instruction through the proposed technique did better in written language production than those who studied the target lexical items through other techniques and methods.

Table 4: Independent Samples T-test scores regarding written language production

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
WR Equal variances assumed	1,822	,182	- 24,566	58	,000	-10,93333	,44507	- 11,8243	- 10,04244
Equal variances not assumed			- 24,566	54,806	,000	-10,93333	,44507	- 11,8253	- 10,04133

RQ-3: Is there any difference in the retention of vocabulary items upon the instruction through SHIP?

Table 5: Group Statistics regarding pretest & post-test scores

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	**Control Group**	30	23,80000	13,631606	2,488779
	Experimental Group	30	32,36667	11,692861	2,134815
Post-test	**Control Group**	30	31,1000	10,29345	1,87932
	Experimental Group	30	46,4000	14,88716	2,71801

As illustrated in Table 5, there is a considerable difference between both the pre-test and post-test mean scores of the control and experimental groups. When pre-test and post-test scores are compared, it can be seen that both groups displayed a great increase in their test scores. The increase in the control group is around 8; whereas, it is about 14 in the experimental group, suggesting that the introduction of the proposed technique played a crucial role in the vocabulary achievement as well as retention of the target lexical items. In other words, it could be claimed that those who were exposed to the manipulation retained more vocabulary items than those who were not.

When Table 6 is examined, it can be stated that the mean scores of both groups in both pre-test and post-test were statistically significant. This table proves that the suggested technique through which students in the experimental group learned the target vocabulary items had a profound effect on the retention of the target lexical items since there is an observable increase in the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test.

Table 6: Independent Samples T-test scores concerning pre-test & post-test scores of both groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Pre-test	Equal variances assumed	1,588	,213	-2,6	58	,011	-8,566	3,278	-15,13	-2,003
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,6	56,011	,011	-8,566	3,278	-15,13	-1,999
Post-test	Equal variances assumed	,170	,682	-4,6	58,000	,000	-15,30	3,304	-21,91	-8,68
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,6	51,000	,000	-15,30	3,304	-21,93	-8,66

5. Conclusion

Teaching vocabulary is one of the widely researched areas in the realm of ELT. Several methods and approaches were devised in order to better vocabulary teaching. Therefore, there is a substantial body of research on this issue. On the other hand, suggested methods or techniques proved unsatisfactory specifically in the particular context of Turkey. The low level of proficiency in the effective use of vocabulary as well as the retention of more lexical items in Turkish context was the primary factor that inspired the current study.

Therefore, the present study aimed to reveal whether the use of SHIP is effective in foreign vocabulary teaching to Turkish EFL learners as well as to find out the relationship between the use of SHIP and language production. The study was conducted with 60 Turkish EFL students from the College of Foreign Languages at a major state university in Ankara during a four-week period in the 2014/15 Fall Term. The students were randomly assigned to the control and experimental group equally. They were then post-tested with a test that consisted of three parts. Later, the experimental group was taught foreign vocabulary items through SHIP; whereas, the control group was taught the same items through different techniques other than SHIP. In the fifth week, both groups were post-tested and each group was given a 40-question multiple choice test consisting of the target words.

One major finding of the study was that students who were taught vocabulary through the suggested technique did well in each of the writing assignment with reference to the third research question of the study. It was unearthed that the use of SHIP in vocabulary teaching has a positive effect on written language production. Both paired samples and independent samples T-tests revealed that the means of the control and experiment groups are statistically significant, implying the fact that SHIP-driven vocabulary teaching had a concrete relationship and profound effect on language production.

Another significant finding of the present study was that students in the experimental group retained more target vocabulary items considering the results provided by the paired and independent T-test as well as descriptive statistics. It is assumed that the pictures, which are considered to promote retention, along with the stories hidden in them reinforced the chance of retention. The study also attempted to find out whether the use of SHIP had an influence on the success in vocabulary tests. It was revealed that the students who were subjected to SHIP-driven vocabulary teaching performed better on vocabulary tests than those who were taught

the target words through various other techniques, which can be proven with the post-test results of both groups. However, further research is required so as to make a generalization for different levels of proficiency and contexts.

6. Limitations of the Study

There are two limitations to this study. First, the study was restricted to the Elementary level Turkish EFL students at a major state university in Ankara. It may be conducted with higher level students from other nationalities. Second, the research was conducted during a four-week period, which may be extended to a longer period of time during which the effectiveness of the proposed technique could be observed.

7. Suggestions for Further Research

Students at other levels such as intermediate or advanced can be participants for another experiment. The same experiment can also be done with students from certain departments such as Medicine, ELT, etc. Future researchers can also focus on teaching other components of the language such as grammar through SHIP. Moreover, this study was conducted with Turkish students, so it can be done with students from other nationalities in the future.

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A Critical Analysis of Oral Interviews and Guided Role Play Activities in Assessment of Speaking

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to find out the attitudes of students towards the two speaking test types: "oral proficiency interviews" and "guided role plays" respectively, and reveal the differences between them. Additionally, it was aimed to unearth the opportunities that these two tests provide in assessing speaking proficiency. For this study, 40 students from a preparatory program at a public university were recruited. The oral interview and guided role play performances of the students were recorded, transcribed and analyzed. Following this, a questionnaire was utilized to get the opinions of the participants related to these two test types. The study concluded that guided role play activities were more conversational and collaborative in nature, allowing the participants to claim turns of talk. On the other hand, interviews were asymmetrical in terms of interaction patterns. Role plays presented a relaxed atmosphere for some students, while some students preferred being assessed individually.

Keywords: Speaking test, conversation, oral interview, guided role play, assessment of speaking.

Introduction

The ability to speak effectively whether for employment or for personal needs is seen as one of the most important skills in a language (Cram, 1994). Speaking skill is even defined as the real meaning of knowing the language from time to time (Luoma, 2004). Having the inherent requirements of communication, speaking involves knowing the sound system of a language, having an instant access to vocabulary of that

language, understanding what is being said to them and putting the words correctly to form sentences. Therefore, speaking ability includes the knowledge of phonology, lexis, syntax and grammar as well as other language skills.

Today, the importance given to the communicative aspect of language has increased significantly in EFL teaching. The grammar, which was traditionally seen as the most crucial aspect of language in EFL lessons, has shifted to be recognized as another component of language. In accordance with this shift, the lessons decreased being grammar centered, giving way to increased speaking activities. Although speaking gained the importance in language lessons that it deserved, "it is not the skill which is taught and tested to the satisfaction level" (Lowe, Liekin Gasparro & Judith, 1982, p. 3). There are several reasons to cite for the problem of assessing speaking. The main difficulty stems from the reality that speaking proficiency involves a combination of sub skills. For instance, it is quite difficult to separate listening skill from speaking skill. Since speaking requires understanding the spoken input, it is difficult to determine to what extent speaking ability is purely assessed (Kitao & Kitao, 1996). Additionally, speaking tests bring some administration problems along with them. Foot (1999) refers to the issues of reliability, validity, its live nature, the presence of an examiner, cost and time considerations as the problematic parts of the speaking exams (as cited in Birjandi, 2011). There are also several other variables that should be taken into consideration in speaking assessment. "The nature of the interaction, the sorts of tasks that are presented to the candidate, the questions asked, the topics broached, and the opportunities that are provided to show his or her ability to speak in a foreign language will all have an impact on the candidate's performance" (Luoma, 2004, p. 10). Building on what Luoma suggested, it is worthwhile to analyze the different speaking assessment types and their effects on speaker performance. Parallel to the concerns stated above, in the current study the practices used for testing speaking in a public university will be analyzed.

Research Questions / Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the following questions were addressed:

1. What are the differences between "oral interviews" and "guided role play activities" in terms of providing students with opportunities to show their speaking proficiency?

2. What are the opinions of students related to these different oral proficiency testing practices?

Oral proficiency Interviews

In the assessment of speaking ability, several types of tests have been used. In their descriptive report, Kitao & Kitao (1996) give us an overview of the tests that are used in the assessment of speaking. Among the several individual performance-oriented tests that were mentioned in the report, the first one, reading aloud, includes testees' reading some passages aloud. Since it doesn't have the inherent features of speaking, this test could only be used in testing the pronunciation of the students. Speaking proficiency can also be tested via using visual materials, which includes narrating the visual. Oral interview is another test type that is mentioned in the report. It is one of the most well-known and widely used means of assessing speaking and will be given special attention in this section.

Oral interview was first used in the 1950s by the U.S. Department of State to verify the foreign language skills of its employees. Subsequently, it attracted the interest of academic circles. It has become one of the most common means of assessing speaking (Lowe, Liekin-Gasparro, & Judith, 1982). Oral Proficiency Interview includes a face-to-face conversation between two or more participants. The non-native testee is interviewed by the trained testers whose aim is to assess the testee's ability to speak the language (Young, 1995). Generally, oral proficiency interviews (OPI) consist of 4 phases. Lowe (1988) and Clark & Clifford (1988) describe the phases as Warm up, Level Check, Probes and Wind down. "Warm up" phase, as its name suggests, is used to put the test taker at ease; when this phase is over, the tester checks the level of the test taker to determine the highest level of the speaker. In "Probes", the interview goes on and it is the general ceiling of the speech. Lastly, in "Wind Down" the testee is left in a sense of achievement, and generally it is used as the last chance to assess the incomplete parts (as cited in Johnson and Tyler). Interview is cited as the most common and authentic oral test for normal purposes by Underhill (1987) and as the most appropriate tool for measuring oral proficiency by Lazaraton (1992). Although it is possible to say that the part of the expression in which the common use of oral proficiency interview (OPI) is stressed, as agreed upon by scholars, there are some criticisms in terms of its authenticity and aspects related to its nature. Bachman and Palmer (1996) point out that two of the most important aspects of good language tests are authenticity and interactiveness.

Authenticity is expressed as the correspondence between the test task and the real life tasks. The importance of authenticity lies in the fact that it makes it possible to make generalizations on the competence of the speaking in the language community (as cited in He & Young, 1998). However, some characteristics of OPI are divergent from real authentic conversations. Researchers like Bachman (1988 et. al) note some of those lacking points of oral proficiency interviews. The most striking deficit of OPIs is that there are unequal social statuses between the tester and the interviewee. In OPI, the controlling party is the interviewer. Van Lier (1989) suggests that due to the superiority status of the interviewer, OPI is not conversational in nature. Therefore, rather than assessing general oral proficiency, it shows the grammatical, lexical and phonological performance of the testee in context (as cited in Birjandi, 2011). There are several other features which occur in interviews in different ways from naturally occurring conversations. Moder and Halleck (1998) point that interviewees accept their roles as the speaker who does not seek information or nominate the topics. Therefore, their ability to obtain and keep the conversation floor is not reflected in this test type. Similarly, Young (1995) and Johnson (200) stress the inadequate opportunities that interviews present in terms of negotiation (as cited in Gan, Davison, & Hamp-Lyons, 2008).

Interaction patterns

"Interactional competence" is an important component of speaking ability. The term is highlighted by Kramsh (1986). She focused on the "interaction" which is the dynamic component of speaking in her studies. The concept of "co-construction", which is coined by Jacoby and Ochs (1995), is the basis for this component. Co-construction includes collaboration, cooperation, and coordination (as cited in May, 2009). Since oral interviews exclusively focus on individual performance, co-construction constitutes the problematizing part of this test type. This competence is obscured in interview types of tests. Co-construction happens between at least two speakers and cannot be evaluated as an individual characteristic. The patterns of co-construction are specified by Galaczi (2004) as collaborative, parallel, asymmetric, and blended interaction (as cited in May 2009). In collaborative interaction, both speakers have the chance to introduce a topic, develop on each other's ideas and they show high degrees of mutuality. However, parallel interaction signifies two solo performances happening at the same time. Asymmetric interaction includes a dominant speaker, who decides on topic

changes, and has more active role in speaking. This interaction type is the most common in interview types of test. Because of the unequal roles and statuses of tester and test taker, test takers accept a more passive role, answering the questions directed to them. Therefore, this test is not satisfactory in terms of giving a clear picture related to the interactional competence of the test takers. Lastly, blended type shows the features of the ones listed above. Galaczi (2008) studied the effects of these interaction patterns and the findings suggested that test-takers received higher median scores in collaborative conversations and lower scores when they had the parallel interaction pattern (as cited in Brooks, 2009). Interactional patterns are not static and are not always directly proportional with proficiency. May (2009) exemplifies this as follows: a candidate who is given a score of two by a rater when involved in an asymmetric interaction with a partner of a similar level can be given a score of four when this candidate interacted with a candidate of a higher level in a collaborative way. These finding also supports the notion that co-construction has an influence on performance.

The paired format

Taylor & Wigglesworth (2009) comment that communicative movement in 1970s was a breakthrough in language testing in that broader conceptualizations of communication started to be recognized. Communicative-sociolinguistic models of assessment valued pragmatic, contextual and strategic aspects of proficiency. Language testing, which used to leave out these issues before, started to be shaped differently (as cited in Birjandi, 2011). It is highlighted that in interviews, the conversational floor is managed by the interviewer; therefore, the ability to gain and keep conversational floor of the test takers goes unnoticed (Young, 1995). However, the paired format aims to elicit conversational performance. Different from oral interviews, in paired format tests "turn size, turn order and turn distribution aren't fixed" (Johnson & Tyler, 1998, p. 31). Therefore, the sequence of talk is unpredictable and the duties of the speakers are more equally distributed. The new understanding of communication and other concerns of teachers helped this format to thrive. One of the advantages that this test provides for teachers is that it enables testers to evaluate two test takers at the same time; therefore, "it results in time savings compared to an individual interview format" (Davis, 2009, p. 368). However, the avails of using paired format are far beyond its being time and source efficient. This test is a good way of measuring conversational competence, which was not always possible in interviews.

According to Young (1995), "it is a test type which obscures discourse differences between learners" (p.167) (as cited in Kormos, 1999). Peer-to-peer tasks have potentially a vast array of functional and interactional moves. Additionally, according to Hildson (1991) and Messick (1996), peer based assessment has positive washback effect on classroom activities, and they represent the communicative activities that take place in classroom better (as cited in Ducasse & Brown, 2009). The results of the study conducted by Gan, Davison and Hamp-Lyons (2008) demonstrate that they are authentic since they "seem to share some features of ordinary conversations" (p. 331). This authenticity characteristic highlights that students should display extra qualities such as affective factors, which require them to be responsive to and interested in the other person's speech (Johnson & Tyler, 1998). The use of paired format in oral proficiency exams and social dimension of interaction bring some concerns along. The increased variables that affect the performance and difficulty of individual grading constitute the challenging aspects of this test. The gender is considered as one of these variables. The studies on paired testing show that gender has an effect on performance. Norton (2005) proposes that same gender pairs show more equal distribution in the conversation (as cited in Birjandi, 2011). The review of Brown and McNamara (2004) concludes that even though gender does not have any deterministic or clear influence, it definitely affects the performance (as cited in Davis, 2009).

Familiarity also influences speaking tests in paired format. Katona (1998) pointed that knowing the person in the pair influenced discourse in Hungarian Oral Proficiency Interview (as cited in Lazaraton, 2006). Brjandi (2011) claims that familiarity of interlocutors helps them to share anxiety. However, there are some studies which do not support the effect of familiarity on performance. The study of Porter (1991), carried out with 13 Arab learners, is an example of the exams in which familiarity is not a variable (as cited in O'Sullivan, 2002).

Data collection

The current research setting was a preparation program at a public university. The study was conducted with 40 elementary level students who were studying at the same preparatory program at a public university. The students took part in two different oral proficiency tests. The first test was in the form of an oral interview. In this test, the students were interviewed by a native speaker with duration of two and a half minutes. The rater was another teacher who was present in the interview room. The

interviews of the students who gave consent (22 students) were recorded and transcribed. The second test was a guided role play, and it was conducted two weeks later than the first test. In the guided role play, the students were taken into the interview room as pairs, and they were given situations. After a preparation phase which lasted 5 minutes at most, the students had a conversation about the situation according to their specified roles. The conversations were also recorded and transcribed. In the second oral exam, there was no interaction between the rater and the students. The raters only listened to the performance and took notes. Therefore, the students decided on the duration of their conversation themselves. After the completion of the two tests, the students were given a questionnaire about their opinions of these two tests (See Appendix 1). The profile of the students who gave consent for recording their performances was provided below. Instead of using students' actual names, a number was given to each student in order to protect anonymity. Consecutive numbers were paired together in the role play activity.

Table 1 Student profile

Name	Gender	Department	Prof. Level
1	Female	P. Science and Public Administration	Elementary
2	Female	P. Science and Public Administration	Elementary
3	Female	International Relations	Elementary
4	Female	International Relations	Elementary
5	Male	Economics	Elementary
6	Female	Economics	Elementary
7	Female	Economics	Elementary
8	Female	Economics	Elementary
9	Female	Economics	Elementary
10	Male	Economics	Elementary
11	Male	International Relations	Elementary
12	Male	Economics	Elementary
13	Female	Economics	Elementary
14	Female	Economics	Elementary
15	Female	Economics	Elementary
16	Female	International Relations	Elementary

17	Female	P. Science and Public Administration	Elementary
18	Female	P. Science and Public Administration	Elementary
19	Male	P. Science and Public Administration	Elementary
20	Female	Economics	Elementary
21	Female	International Relations	Elementary
22	Female	International Relations	Elementary

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews and guided role plays were subjected to conversation analysis as per the interaction patterns specified by Galaczi (2004). According to these specifications, the speech excerpts were identified as asymmetrical, collaborative parallel or blended. The transcribed data then were read several times and color coded in the light of the indications of conversational micro skills. The model for conversational micro skills was taken from Riggenbach (1998). The micro skills used for coding were as follows:

Conversational Micro Skills
1. The ability to claim turns of talk
2. The ability to maintain turns of talk, once claimed
3. The ability to yield turns of talk
4. The ability to backchannel
5. The ability to self-repair
6. The ability to ensure comprehension on the part of the listener (e.g. comprehension checks such as *Does that make sense? Are you with me? Get it?*)
7. The ability to initiate repair when there is a potential breakdown (e.g. clarification request)
8. The ability to employ compensatory strategies (e.g. avoidance of structures or vocabulary beyond learner's proficiency, word coinage, circumlocution, and even shifting topics or asking questions that stimulate the other interlocutor to share the responsibility for maintaining the conversation flow) (Riggenbach, 1998, p. 57).

The third tool was a questionnaire delivered to students. It included both qualitative and quantitative items. The quantitative items were analyzed via SPSS 15.00 for Windows statistical program. The qualitative survey items were analyzed via content analysis in grounded theory. Grounded theory defends the notion that theory emerges from the data rather than it is predefined and tested. The data were coded using selective

coding, and constant comparison method was used in the interpretation of the data. Cohen et al (2007) specified constant comparison as follows:

> "… the researcher compares the new data with existing data and categories, so that the categories achieve a perfect fit with the data. If there is a poor fit between data and categories, or indeed between theory and data, then the categories and theories have to be modified until all the data are accounted for" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 493).

Findings

In this study, the oral performances of 22 students from different genders, backgrounds and departments were analyzed. The student's guided role play performances and their interviews with a native speaker were evaluated separately. The grades of both performances and the quantity of the speech in each test were compared. The gender combination of the pairs was examined in relation to the interaction patterns and conversation micro skills. In the second part of the study, 40 student questionnaires which unveil the opinions of the students related to the two test types were evaluated.

Grades and Speech quantity

The oral proficiency tests were graded by the same raters to eliminate the rater variability. The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) was rated by the interviewer and one other teacher. The performance in OPI was rated after the student left the interview room. The two raters graded the performances separately, and the average was taken as the final grade. In the guided role play, again two English teachers graded the performance. One teacher who was present at the performance graded the role play on the spot, and the second rater graded the performance later, while watching the recording. The researcher took an etic stance in the study. The students were unfamiliar to the researcher. The rubric was the same in both the evaluation of OPI and Role play. It was divided into 5 aspects: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. The maximum grade was 20 – four points for each aspect. Table 2 illustrates the grades and the duration of the tests.

Table 2 Grades and Durations of Oral Proficiency Tests

Name	Gender	OPI Grades	R. play Grades	OPI Duration	R. play Duration
1	Female	5	12	2.39 min.	00.54 min.
2	Female	9	12	2.44 min.	00.54 min.
3	Female	10	10	2.38 min.	00. 40 min.
4	Female	9	10	2.40 min.	00. 40 min.
5	Male	8	12	2.58 min.	1.24 min.
6	Female	12	12	2.36 min.	1.24 min.
7	Female	9	10	2.57 min.	00. 38 min.
8	Female	7	10	3.06 min.	00. 38 min.
9	Female	_	11	_min.	00. 59 min.
10	Male	_	11	_min.	00. 59 min.
11	Male	10	8	2.45 min.	00. 52 min.
12	Male	14	14	2.40 min.	00. 52 min.
13	Female	9	13	2.58 min.	00. 38 min.
14	Female	7	10	2.43 min.	00.38 min.
15	Female	5	7	2.56 min.	00.39 min.
16	Female	9	8	2.36 min.	00.39 min.
17	Female	6	6	2.37 min.	1.57 min.
18	Female	12	8	3.00 min.	1.53 min.
19	Male	11	13	2.43 min.	1.53 min.
20	Female	14	13	2.31 min.	1.53 min.
21	Female	_	9	_min.	1.53 min.
22	Female	_	11	_min.	1.53 min.

The comparison of the grades obtained from the two tests indicated that except the students 11, 16, and 18, the remaining participants received higher grades in the Role play test. Since the time lapse between the two oral proficiency tests was two weeks, the inherent features of the exams were taken into scrutiny rather than attributing the higher marks to the improvement in student proficiency. Kormos (1999) concluded that one of the main differences between interviews and guided role plays was that

"components of conversational competence cannot be tested in non-scripted interviews" (p. 183). However, we cannot attribute the higher marks to the measurement of conversational competence either. In the role play test, the characteristics of conversations (i.e. introducing, ratifying and rejecting new topics in the interaction etc.) were not included in the evaluation. The rubric used for the evaluation of the student performance focused on the same language aspects in both tests. Under these circumstances, the differences between the two tests were studied carefully. The duration of the speech sample was found to be one of the major differences between the two performances. Additionally, the preparation phase allocated for students in role play tasks generated the second difference. In relation with the preparation phase, the grades in the comprehension aspect were high in role play.

The relationship between the duration of the performance and the grade was calculated by correlational statistics. The correlation between the duration and grade in OPI is negative (-, 122); on the other hand, in the Role Play activity, it is positive (3, 44). However, in neither of them was the correlation significant.

Interactional Patterns and Conversational Micro skills

The transcribed spoken data were analyzed in the light of interactional patterns specified by Galaczi (2004). The data were color coded for the patterns: topic initiation, topic change, maintenance of conversational floor and duration of speech. As expected, the results indicated that in OPI, the interaction tended to be asymmetric with a dominant role of the tester. Due to the roles and the statuses of the two interlocutors in the interview, the test takers mainly answered the questions which were directed to them by the tester. The conversation was determined by the tester who had a list of topics specified before the interview. Some of the topics and questions specified for the interview are shown below.

You
Describe yourself.
Family
Describe your family.
What do you like to do together as a family?

The topic initiation was the responsibility of the tester, leaving the test taker a passive and reactive role. However, there was not a significant difference between the tester and the test taker when the duration of the speech was taken as an indication of dominance. Even in the instances of

students who got lower points, the duration of the speech was equally distributed between the tester and the test taker. In the excerpt below, the number of the words produced by the interviewer is less than the number of words produced by the interviewee, and it gives a general layout of the interaction in OPI.

I: interviewer
5: interviewee
1. **I:** 5 can you tell me about your family?
2. **5**: My family in x. Live in live (mispronounce) in x. ııııı There are---six----peoples in family.
3. **I**: hı hı
4. **5**: III-------my father is teacher ıı and mother my mother is------housewife. I I has got two sister and brother. sister ııı ------------my sister teacher name Zeynep in y.-------------my------sister second sister.
5. **I:** hıhı
6. **5**: ıııı teacher in z.-------- my brother---- young ------ııı he is studies---inaudible
7. **I:** very good,good. Can you tell me more about x?
8. **5**:X, x is beautiful--- ııı x in the in ------------in middle river in the middle river.

In OPI, the conversation micro skills, "claiming turns of talk, back channeling, self-repair and comprehension check", weren't observed in the performance of the test takers. "The ability to initiate repair in the potential communication breakdown" was observed in the following participants:

1. Participant 3: "I don't understand."
2. Participant 4:"Can I repeat it?"(Intending to say: can you repeat it?)
3. Participant 7: "I don't know." "I don't understand."
4. Participant 13: "not understand"
5. Participant 17: "Sorry" (Apologizing)
"The ability to employ compensatory strategies" was observed in the following participants:
6. Participant 12: "yani" (Turkish linking word)
7. Participant 15: "secret" (laughs) (gives it as an answer to a question-Avoidance of the topic)
8. Participant 15: "X's başkent   işte baskent is Y" (Use of Turkish words)

In the guided role play test, the conversation was co-constructed by the two interlocutors in a collaborative manner. The mutuality of the interaction and the collaboration in the development of the topics were

some of the distinctive features of guided role plays in the study. The students were equal in status. In the role play test, the students were told to choose a situation from a predetermined set of situations. Then, the students negotiated their roles and personas with their partners.

Davis (2009) specified the mutuality by "features such as developing topics over several turns, or developing topics initiated by the other speaker" (p. 377). Another characteristic of mutuality can be traced by "acknowledgement tokens (e.g. 'yeah'), statements of agreement, syntactic connectors such as 'also', and repetition of words or ideas from previous turns" (p. 377). The mutually constructed conversations of students showed these features:

1. 11: I want to something for me--- from you.
2. 12: Money?
3. 11: Yes it is very important for me.
(Developing topics over several turns)
1. 5: I'm going to ıı holiday in Ramadan. ıı you know I have got three cats.
2. 6: so?
(Connector)

Language quantity may also be an indication of dominance. In the excerpts, there wasn't a significant difference between partners in terms of quantity of speech. However, in one of them, the participant 17 dominated the conversation and the participant 18 had a passive role.

1. 17: Hello
2. 18: **Hello**
3. 18: ----- Evet a- yes (laughs)
4. 17: **I have- a problem**
5. 18: Your problem?
6. 17: **A headache**
7. 18: A headache ıııı -----some medis-- or pills
8. 17: **No**
9. 18. ------mmm --------mmmm----------------------yes ok ıııı some pills - drink – or çay drink or drink coffee ya da or --- some sleeping.
10. 17: **yes okay thank you.**
11. 17: **a headache**
12. 18: see you I am --- watcing TV my favorite (pronunciation mistake) film ---
13. 17: **ı really a headache**
14. 18: I am sorry I ----- favorite(mis pronun film no my ----- five minutes (pronunciation mistake) or fifty minutes (pronunciation mistake) then -------sleeping

15. 17: **I am very bad and sad.**

In the Guided Role Play Test, the spoken data were in the form of an informal conversation. After the analysis of student conversations with regard to conversational micro skills, the results indicated that the main difference between OPI and the role play test was in the micro skill: "ability to claim turns of talk". The students weren't able to demonstrate this skill in OPI. In the role play speech excerpts, the students were observed to have the chances of topic openings, finishing the conversation and asking questions.

1. 1: Hello 2.
2. 2: Hi
3. 1: How are you?
4. 2: I am very well. You?

1. 9:No. No sorry.
2. 10: Okay. See you.
3. 9: See you.

1. 4: Very good. 11 well grandmother 1mmm I want some Money ayyy, what give Money?
2. 3: why?
3. 4. Because I haven't got money.

Considering the resemblance of the role play test to a normal conversation, these results were expected. However, most of the micro skills specified by Riggenbach (1998) weren't observed. The fact that in the study the only difference between OPI and role plays was the emergence of the ability to claim turns of talk indicated that role plays alone weren't the solution for the assessment of the skills of conversational competence. This result supports Foot's (1999) suggestion that we shouldn't overlook the deviation of role plays from natural conversations. As Foot said, "an assessor who takes little or no part in the test but simply observes, patently offends the norms of natural conversation, and reinforces in the candidates' minds the essentially contrived nature of the event" (p.39). Additionally, the very limited duration of the conversation reduced the chances of coming across samples of conversational micro skills, thus obstructed evaluation. The proficiency level of the students and the familiarity with the functional use of language were the other possible reasons for this result.

Proficiency in Pairs

Role play is an assessment form that necessitates at least two test takers to interact together. The dependency of the performance on another testee brings out some issues along. The socio-affective factors are one of the most preeminent factors that influence the student performance. In the role play test, in six instances the people in pairs got the same grade with their partners. This indicates that co-construction affects the performance. Therefore, the fairness issue in the role play tests constitutes one of the most challenging dimensions of paired format tests. Foot (1999) explained it with these words: "the most experienced examiner can never be sure exactly how the better candidate would have performed with a different partner or on their own" (p. 38).

Student opinions of the tests

After the completion of the tests, the students were given a questionnaire about their opinions of these two tests. When the students were asked whether they were affected by the performance of their partner, five students said that their partner had no influence on their performance. Thirty-two students indicated that their partner influenced their performance, and two of them had no opinion. In the qualitative data analysis, the themes "proficiency" and "familiarity of the partner" were identified as the reasons indicated for partner influence on performance. The participants 7, 11, 18, 24 and 29 specified that the familiarity of their partner was an important determiner in their performance. In the answers of the following participants, the salient reason for their preference of a familiar partner was the relaxation they provided. Participant 24 stated that having been paired with a close friend, she was able to overcome her nervousness. Similarly, participant 29 stated that she was glad to be with a familiar person because she didn't worry about embarrassing herself. The answers of the participants 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15, 26, 28, 32, 37, and 39 proved that one of the main concerns of the students about their partner was their English proficiency. Although all of the students had elementary level English proficiency, they showed individual differences. The students indicated that this affected their performance. The participants 15 and 39 stated that they would panic if their partner couldn't perform well. Therefore, they stated that their performance would also decrease. Participant 37 indicated that she lost her courage and motivation in the dialogue since her partner was better than her. She believed that the partner's good performance highlighted her bad performance more.

The students were also asked to describe their anxiety level for each of the tests if they had any. Twelve students remarked that their anxiety was equal in each of the tests. Twenty students stated that they were more anxious in the first exam (OPI) and four students stated they were more anxious in the second exam (role play). Three students had no opinion. The students who stated that they were more anxious in the first exam justified this by stating that it was their first speaking exam experience. Participant 15, on the other hand, stated that the theatric nature of the second exam made her nervous.

The positive parts of the role plays were specified as the time allocated to think by participants 13, 17, 29, and 36, and its relaxing atmosphere by the participants 13, 16, 22, and 23. The positive points of the OPI were pointed as the topics by participants 22 and 14. Participant 11 stated that the question-answer technique was easier in terms of organizing speech. Participant 20 indicated that the dependence of the performance on another person created problems. Twenty-one students indicated that they preferred role play tests in speaking assessment. Eleven students preferred OPI, and seven students had no opinion.

Discussion

The study compared OPI and role play as test instruments in the assessment of speaking proficiency. When the spoken data were analyzed, it was found that in the OPI the interaction was asymmetrical. On the other hand, interaction was constructed more collaboratively in role play activities. The results supported Kormos (1999) stating that "in non-scripted interviews, due to the unequal distribution of power, candidates rarely have the chance to initiate a new topic and have no right to initiate the opening or the closing of the conversation" (p.183).   The predetermined roles of the interviewer and interviewee gave the responsibility to direct the conversational floor to the examiner and little chance to the interviewee to demonstrate specific conversational micro skills. The current study also showed that the spoken data obtained from role plays were different from the interviews in terms of demonstrating the ability to claim turns of talk of the interviewees. This finding is also parallel with the view that in order to measure interactional competence, interviews aren't enough as the only forms of tests. They should be complemented with tests that give the students chances to develop the conversation equally in pairs.

Employing pair based assessment, however, is not free from problems. As May (2009) suggests, separability of the performance is a big challenge

in paired format tests. If one speaker dominates the other in performance, this "causes raters difficulty in trying to unravel the impact of one candidate upon another" (p. 417). Contrary to the statement of Davis (2009), who suggests "interlocutor has little influence on the probability of an examinee achieving a certain score" (p.380), the data showed that the students, who had very different grades from each other in OPI, had similar or the same grades when they were paired in role play. This supports May's statement. Proficiency of the interlocutors constitutes one of the main concerns of the students. Parallel to Foot's (1999) concern that a higher level student may intentionally draw the attention to the lack of his/her partners' proficiency (although the students didn't state their friend would do it deliberately), the students in the study believed that being paired with a higher level student might show them relatively worse than their original proficiency level.

Lastly, the familiarity of the interlocutor affected some of the participants, helping them to get rid of their stress and anxiety of speech and freeing them from the fear of embarrassing themselves.

Conclusion

This study aimed to reveal the differences and opportunities that "Oral Proficiency Interviews" and "Guided Role Plays" present in the assessment of oral proficiency. The different qualities of data obtained from both tests and the differences in the students' grades in each assessment type suggested that the focus of the tests and the other variables (such as dependency of partners on each other, co-construction, proficiency, gender and the familiarity of participants) affect the outcome of the assessment. In the study, oral proficiency interview was inefficient in eliciting collaborative interaction. However, as May (2009) put forward, collaborative interactional patterns should not be seen as the "gold standard of communication" (p. 418). Considering the nature of interactions that take place in a school context, asymmetrical interactions are also natural interactions. The spoken data of the students showed that if no one interrupted or directed the performance, students tended to display minimum data, making it hard to observe the competence objectively. When the focus is on separated aspects of language, such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation of specific words and their use in speech context, a predetermined role of the interviewer is necessary.

The role play activity potentially offered the students more opportunities for displaying the conversational micro skills specified by Riggenbach (1998). However, in the study the students showed the only

difference in "the ability to claim turns of talk" in role play. This can be attributed to their unfamiliarity with the conversation genre. The students should be instructed in reparining communication break downs, requesting clarification requests and shifting topics. Additionally, in role play test, an interaction segment should be added to the rubric. Considering the effects of the variables of gender, familiarity and language proficiency on students' performance, the students should be evaluated multiple times with different variations, and in order to be able to prevent pairs from influencing the grades of each other unfairly, similar proficiency level of students should be attempted to be paired together.

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Enhancing EFL Learners' Literary Competence through a Holistic Approach

Noureddine Guerroudj

Abstract

Unlike the traditional approach to the teaching of literature, which centers on lectures, literary surveys, biographical summaries, and text analyses with occasional discussions, many teachers now stress student-centered approaches that seek to encourage individual participation, account for students' needs, interests, and desires, and focus on the development of literary competence. One of the major reasons for conducting the present paper is to contribute further to the field of teaching literature by raising teachers' awareness of what I call a holistic approach in the teaching of literature. The latter originates from *'Holistic Medicine'* and is targeted to enhance EFL learners' literary competence at different levels: linguistic, textual and semiotic.

Keywords: literary competence, cultural competence, learner-centeredness, task- interaction

1 Introduction

In many universities, teaching literature in an EFL context has become *a sine qua non* for nearly all students. During the 1980's and 1990's, it was given too much importance within the language teaching profession, provoking the publication of many books on how to teach literature to EFL students including professional journals such as ELT Journal, TESOL Quarterly, The English Journal, The Modern Language Journal, Rhetoric Review, colloquiums and curricular reviews. As a result of research in the field of teaching literature, students' literary knowledge has greatly improved.

The overall aim of this paper is to increase the potential of teaching literature by raising teachers' awareness of what is called holistic approach in the teaching of literature, which is targeted towards enhancing EFL learners' willingness to interpret literary texts, and develop critical thinking.

To put it differently, literary competence has been largely defined as the ability to confer meanings from a literary text, unravel the plot of a novel, decode the dialogue of a dramatic text or make an interpretation of a poem's meanings where the language often deviates from generally observed rules. The teacher's role, however, is to devise a number of tasks that guide students through these linguistic complexities and create conditions under which they develop their overall literary knowledge and competence. The proposed approach is multi-dimensional in that it covers four components: learner-centered approach, task-based approach, competency-based approach, and language- based approach.

1.1 Learner-centered approach in literature classes

The newly developed teaching methodologies based on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) give priority to self-directed learning wherein students are encouraged to become increasingly independent and self-reliant in the way they learn.

The learner-centered approach rather than the traditional methods to teaching literary texts is pedagogically relevant and good enough yielding a secure environment favorable to learning about literature. Additionally, it caters for student needs in many ways in that it examines power imbalance between both teachers and students.

It is worth mentioning that the teaching of literature in most of our classes is teacher- centered where most of the classroom talk is done by the teacher. This can sometimes be very helpful in that it aids learners read more, and thus develop their own judgments and opinions from the initial stimulus of the wise and learned teacher (Carter and Long, 1991).

There are many ways in which the teacher may explore a literary text. For instance, he asks a set of comprehension questions related to the text, explains the meaning of some unfamiliar words, gives a plot summary of a novel or a short story and sometimes explains the whole poem in terms of form and content. In this context, Hedge confirms that "(…) *learners should not be passive recipients of knowledge but rather use their abilities for 'judging' and 'deciding' to take on more responsibility for their own learning".* Clearly, students who take the risk to learn learn more and better than those who are teacher dependent. A quiet class, on the other

hand, dominated by the teacher, inhibits an active learning environment. Therefore, students need to be more responsible rather than being under the teacher's guidance.

A student-centered approach in the teaching of literature is an approach which allows students to deeply explore all sorts of literary texts: poetic, dramatic and fictional. Additionally, it allures learners to think critically and develop their own responses to the text instead of merely accepting the teacher's responses and judgments. This does not mean that his comments or viewpoints are wrong. But sometimes the teacher's response impedes rather than helps students for further interpretation of a text.

1.2 The task-based approach

The task-based approach to foreign language teaching encourages students to work cooperatively and engages them in communicative interactions wherein the focus of attention is not only on language, but also on the learning process. The primary goal of the task based approach in teaching literature is to develop the learners' literary competence defined by Lazar as the ability to (...) *have an implicit understanding of, and familiarity with certain conventions which allow [readers] to take the words on the page of a play or [any] other literary work and convert them into literary meaning.*

Communicative tasks in a literature class help learners use language naturally, respond critically to what they have read, analyze and argue.

Additionally, students can negotiate information among each other to develop both interactional and study skills. Furthermore, the aim of a task in groups is to maintain interpersonal relationship through exchanging ideas, opinions, attitudes and feelings. Tasks should then take into consideration the following abilities:

- To develop students' literary competence
- To develop study skills
- To develop students' strategies to negotiate meaning among each other and interact in the target language
- To develop students' ability to read and respond to a literary text
- To develop students' ability to speak for communicative purposes

1.3 Competency- based approach in teaching literature

The competency- based approach in teaching literature could be seen as being made upon other interrelated areas of competence. Firstly, literary

competence helps EFL learners cope with literary texts, understand how language is used, and develop their skill in reading and writing. Secondly, cultural competence means being able to interact with people having different cultures. In teaching literature, it is the task of the teacher to sensitize learners to the cultural features of a text so as to help them understand a certain culture.

Successful learning is often associated with the acquisition of cultural knowledge. This may help learners communicate and increase their comprehension in the target language (Tseng, 2003).

1.3.1 Literary competence

The term "literary competence" as used by literary critics is a modification of the notion of competence developed by linguists and applied linguists (Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1971; Savignon, 1983Canale and Swain, 1983). However, the theoretical abilities attributed to the competent reader of literature are often very broad. They include various abilities: the ability to distinguish prose from verse, fiction writing from nonfiction writing. They also involve the ability to distinguish good literature from bad literature (Dane, 1986). Culler (quoted in Dane) defines literary competence as *"a set of conventions for reading literary texts"* A key word in Culler's work is "interpretation." He attempts to confine interpretation to "critical interpretation". A problem many of our students fail to use in the process of reading literature.

In fact, effective readers of a literary text possess 'literary competence' in that they have at their disposal an implicit understanding of, and familiarity with, certain conventions which allow them to convert the words on the page of a novel, a short story, a play or a poem into literary meaning. Literary competence consists of several areas of competence:

Textual competence	Communicative competence	Semiotic competence
Being able to identify linguistic competence at the word and sentence level Being able to identify cohesive features in terms of lexis and syntax. Being able to spot the relations between different parts of a text (i.e. coherence) Being able to differentiate between text types (i.e. a descriptive from argumentative text)	Being able to identify points of view Being able to recognize the purpose, and communicative function of a text Being able to identify the kind of text in terms of format	Being able to identify the signals and conventions which mark off a text as literary Being able to identify the different levels of a text: thematic, symbolic, ideological, morphological, syntactical, stylistic, phonological, rhythmical, and metrical. Being able to recognize both denotative and connotative meaning of a word. Being able to recognize the polysemic value of a text. Being able to identify the rhetorical features of a text- figures of speech, etc. Being able to identify literary genres (i.e. Plot and characters in prose; monologue and dialogue in drama; ode, sonnet and ballad in poetry.) Being able to relate different text types to each other (i.e. intertextual relationship)

Table 2.1: *The mechanics of literary competence (Based on Pantaleoni, 1986)*

1.3.2 Cultural competence

It is something of a truism to say that language mirrors culture, in that one can see the culture of a given society through its language. In its wider sense, culture comprises a society's historical and artistic background as well as shared values, beliefs and thoughts amongst people living in a given society. In this context, Donoghue (1978:124) provides a comprehensive definition of culture.

> (…) *a society level of civilization or … an individual's status in society. A highly civilized society has attained an advanced degree of sophistication in the arts – music, painting architecture and literature* (…)*. An individual is said to be cultured when he is knowledgeable about such arts.* [It also refers] *to all the aspects of one society: how its people behave, feel and interact; and what kinds of political, social, religious and educational institutions they have established.*

It is a universally acknowledged fact that both language and culture are 'intricately interwoven' (Jiang, 2000). Without language, culture would be impossible. The term 'iceberg' is used as a metaphor to compare language and culture. The visible part of the iceberg is the language in which we can find a small part of culture, whereas the hidden part beneath the surface is the invisible aspect of culture. Therefore, teachers need to encourage their students deeply explore that invisible aspect and do make attempts to arouse in them the desire to know about a foreign culture. This may develop their cultural background. Tseng (2003:13) claims that "…*learning changes a person from a naïve individual into one who understands the ways in which he is shaped by cultural forces, and is thus able to accept the diversity of those cultures"*. To help students develop their cultural competence, teachers need first to make them appreciate a foreign culture. Cultural appreciation comes when the students understand that foreign culture and hopefully feel comfortable with it.

Teaching the culture of a text usually means helping students understand a certain culture. It may happen that students' understanding of a literary text could be impeded not only by linguistic features but also by cultural ones. Therefore, teachers need to help them cope with the cultural factors of the text. By explaining these cultural traits in a literary text, we are in fact helping our students profoundly understand the language that vehicles that culture. Clearly, through reading, more particularly literary texts, students are made aware of different values, customs, beliefs, thoughts, ideas and social structures

In what follows, Kramsh (1993) suggests new ways of teaching language through culture.

1. *Establishing a 'sphere of interculturality': understanding a foreign culture requires teaching that culture in relation to one's own.*
2. *Teaching culture as an interpersonal process: replacing the presentation/ prescription of cultural facts and behaviors by the teaching of a process that applies itself to understanding foreignness or 'otherness'.*
3. *Teaching culture as difference: with the recent revival of nationalism and as national identities are being questioned around the world, the temptation is great to view culture only in terms of national traits.*
4. *Crossing disciplinary boundaries: encouraging language teachers to broaden their readings to include, besides literature, studies by social scientists, ethnographers and sociolinguists on both their societies and the societies that speak the language they are teaching.*

Lazar (1993) suggests the following strategies to overcome cultural problems that students may face in reading literature.

1. Personalizing: make the theme or topic of the text relevant to their own experience.
2. Providing explanations / glosses: provide brief cultural information in a note form.
3. Inferring cultural information: a set of questions are asked to help students infer cultural information from the text.
4. Making cultural comparisons: brainstorm ideas about students' own society and then ask them to compare them with those in the text they have read.
5. Making free associations: get students free associate around a word or a phrase that may have connotative meanings.
6. Providing cultural background information as reading/listening comprehension: get the students read or listen to a small text that provides information about the cultural aspect in the story they have just read.
7. Extension activities: thinking critically and being involved in the text students have read.

1.4 A language- based approach in EFL literature

Proponents of the language-based approach focus their attention on how to integrate language and literature in the classroom setting in order to improve student's knowledge and make them proficient enough in the target language. By using literary texts in the language classroom, teachers can help students expand not only their knowledge of the language, but also raise their awareness of the aesthetic aspect of language that literature provides.

A language-based approach to studying or reading literature itself helps the reader interpret the text and develop critical thinking. Students, therefore, need the necessary 'ingredients' as well as the method on how to analyze a poem, for example. The method which is often applied is stylistic analysis.

Literary stylistics deals with the complex and 'valued' language within poetry, drama and fictional prose. The reader of a literary text is required to focus on the more striking features of literary language, for instance, its 'deviant' and abnormal features. Analysis is fundamentally text-based. That is, the text contains meanings, and the task of the reader is to unearth these meanings.

To analyze a text stylistically is somehow different from a 'literary' analysis of texts in terms of figures of speech such as metaphors and similes.

Another familiar language based approach to the study of literature is called 'language –based study skills', Lazar (1993). Making predictions about what will happen next at some point in the story being read could be a good example. Lazar suggests the following language-based activities which can be used in teaching the reading skill to upper intermediate students upward. The aim is to enrich the learners' knowledge of language as well as develop their literary skill.

Activity one: groups of students are given three different critical essays of a poem they have already studied and asked to sort out the most convincing one.

Activity two: groups of students are given three plot summaries of a novel or a play they have already studied and asked to sort out the most convincing one.

Follow up activity: In a debate form, students are asked to justify their choice.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper points to the need for developing study strategies to improve students' literary competence through a holistic approach. Such an approach trains students to co-operate with others, increases motivation and creativity, and provide mutual support and guidance.

Nonetheless, this paper is constrained by certain limitations: no attempt was made to the field of testing EFL learners' literary competence (Pantaleoni, 1986). Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate further research in this domain because testing is an area that concerns all practitioners engaged in the field of teaching language and literature alike. In fact, testing develops students' ability to learn; besides, teachers must evaluate their students' performance and report on their progress. Another limitation concerns the use of portfolios as a teaching tool in a literature class as well as a means of assessment. Portfolios serve as time-saving yet a realistic means of assessing students' writing skill in literature.

Therefore, it seems desirable if not necessary to encourage further research in this area so as to clarify the significance of portfolios in teaching literature in a non-native context.

Notes

[1] The approach proposed in this research study originated from *'Holistic Medicine'*. This refers to alternative health practices that attempt to treat the patient as a whole person. ; It looks at an individual's over-all physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional well-being before recommending treatment. A practitioner with a holistic approach treats the symptoms of illness as well as looking for the underlying cause of the illness.

[2] Pantaleoni, L. Testing literary competence: an interim report *In* Boardman, R. and S. Holden (eds.) *Teaching Literature*. (Sorento Conference: Modern English Publications in association with The British Council, 1986), 69.

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PART TWO:

TECHNOLOGY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Digital Natives and Imaginative Materials

Deren Başak Akman Yeşilel and Müfit Şenel

Abstract

The general merits of websites and web tools are providing and presenting unlimited interesting, motivating and challenging alternatives to create and access imaginative and unusual materials for language classrooms. Many language teachers in our country unfortunately are digital immigrants because they were born either before the widespread adoption of digital technology or they were not exposed to it at an early age. On the other hand, we face a new generation in our schools. These are known as "digital natives". They think differently and have become accustomed to technology; therefore, they need to be taught in a fundamentally different way. As Dewey (1944) stated, "If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday, we rob them of tomorrow". The information shared throughout this manuscript was presented as an e-session. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to present some useful websites and Web 2.0 tools as imaginative and creative materials for digital learners. Some examples of Web 2.0 tools include technology based websites, social networking, social curation and readily accessible networks.

Keywords: digital natives, imaginative materials, technology, web 2.0, social networking

Introduction

The late 20th century was a period of major social, economic and political changes. There were big changes in how people see knowledge and how they use it as well. This period is now widely known as

Information Age. Information age is defined as "the period beginning around 1970 and noted for the abundant publication, consumption, and manipulation of information, especially by computers and computer networks" by American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language (2011). That's to say, large amounts of information are now available to people especially through the computer technology.

We are living in a global village- the world around us is changing and becoming smaller. Communication and media are changing, too. Therefore, the sources of gathering information are also changing. People used to go to libraries, search the books and encyclopedias for a piece of information for their projects or assignments. But now the world in which our children live is considerably different from that of yesterday. They have grown up with computers, cell phones (smart phones recently), video games, the Internet and use these tools and instant messaging effectively to connect to the others. These tools are natural parts of their lives just like radio or gramophone was familiar to older generations. They are just one click away from the sources. Particularly, the Internet is a powerful tool in that sense since it provides immediate and wide-ranging access to opinions, videos and more. Burkhardt et al. (2003:4) state that youngsters are bombarded with visual messages from the media. Members of this generation, often described as 'digital natives', expect to actively participate in and through their media.

The term "digital native" was coined by the U.S. author Marc Prensky in 2001. Prensky (2001) uses the term "digital native" to refer to the entire youngsters- from kindergarten through college- who have had access to the new technologies since birth and are "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, the Internet. International Telecommunication Union (2014) defines "digital natives" as young people born during the digital age and growing up using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). According to another definition given by Technopedia (2015), digital native is an individual who was born after the widespread adoption of digital technology. However, the term digital native does not directly refer to a particular generation; instead, it is a catch-all category for children who have grown up using technology like the Internet, computers and mobile devices. This exposure to technology in the early years is believed to give digital natives a greater familiarity with and understanding of technology than people who were born before it was widespread.

Prensky (2001) also used the term "digital immigrants" for the people who were not born into the digital world but later adopted and used many

aspects of the new technology. He compares the two generations as follows:

> Digital Natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They prefer their graphics *before* their text rather than the opposite. They prefer random access (like hypertext). They function best when networked. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to "serious" work. But Digital Immigrants typically have very little appreciation for these new skills that the Natives have acquired and perfected through years of interaction and practice. These skills are almost totally foreign to the Immigrants, who themselves learned – and so choose to teach – slowly, step-by-step, one thing at a time, individually, and above all, seriously (p.2).

As seen in the given quotation, students' profiles have changed a lot in schools. They are not only the passive receivers of the information. They want to be active and make use of digital technologies in their classes. Participants of the 21st Century Literacy Summit (2002) assert that "information and communication technologies are raising the bar on the competencies needed to succeed in the 21st century, and they are compelling us to revisit many of our assumptions and beliefs" (p. 4). Therefore, we need to keep ourselves up-to-date and acquire and develop new knowledge and skills continuously. Burkhardt et al. (2003) affirm that the global world and accelerating rate of changes by virtue of technology require a shift in the young generation's education. Therefore, 21st century literacy skills must be defined by policymakers and educators.

According to the report of the 21st Century Literacy Summit (2005:2), 21st century literacy is:

> 'the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual and digital literacy overlap. These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms.'

They list some of the characteristics of the 21st century literacy as follows:

- It is multimodal.
- It includes creative fluency as well as interpretive facility.
- 21st century literacy means learning a new grammar with its own rules of construction.

- The language of 21st century literacy lends itself to interactive communication.
- 21st century literacy implies the ability to use media to evoke emotional responses.
- 21st century literacy has the potential to transform the way we learn.

Thanks to digital technologies, especially the Internet, educators have opportunities to design new learning environments where students can easily reach the information based on their interests, needs and capabilities without any time or location limit. They can also redirect and redesign their learning experience, thus become autonomous learners rather than being passive receivers of the information given. Through enormous sources available, you can create a huge variety of imaginative materials. You can use everyday items like receipts, timetables and bags to cheer up your lessons. Here are some sample materials that can be used as teaching resources for creative lessons based on imagination: sound effect CDs, time tables, treasure hunting, simple props, phone features, advent calendars, radio, receipts and computers. For example, you can record a series of sounds such as crash, whistle, scream and let your students hear it. Afterwards, you can ask them to make up their own stories based on the sounds they heard.

The main focus of this study is to introduce some Web 2.0 tools and mobile applications that can be used as imaginative materials. In the following section, some of these tools and their applications in language classrooms will be given.

1. Tag Galaxy

Description: Tag Galaxy is a flash application created by Steven Wood as a diploma thesis project. "It uses Papervision3D with beautiful transition effects to explore Flickr photos via virtual planetary systems. You enter a tag and related tags appear with beautiful planetary systems". (http://www.koflash.com/tag-galaxy/)

Usability: To get started, you enter a tag such as a city name, holiday or many other possible tags and click "Go". The sun emerges in the middle surrounded by "planets" that represent complementary tags. You can click on the sun and you will be zoomed into a globe that is quickly populated with images related to that tag, but if you click on one of the planets, you will zoom into a specific set of image results associated with one unique tag. You can rotate the globe filled with pictures until an image catches

your eye. Click it once and it will expand; when you click it again, this time it will grow even larger and display the description of the image from Flickr, along with a link to go to that image's page on the photo sharing site. Click the "X" on the top right corner to make the image go back to the globe and to let you continue your browsing. (http://mashable.com/2008/05/25/tag-galaxy/). It is quite easy to use, and language teachers can make use of it to practice both speaking and writing skills. For example, our tag can be holiday. Students can search for the pictures they like to describe their dream holiday either written or oral to their partners. Thus, you can encourage collaborative learning in your classroom as well. It is a good application for visual learners, too. However, you need to keep in mind that you must have an internet connection to use it. One of the inefficient sides of the application is that it collects pictures from Flickr and if no photo is available related to your tag in Flickr, you cannot get the result in Tag Galaxy. One solution to this problem can be to upload some photos to Flickr for your students before you start your lesson.

Fig.1
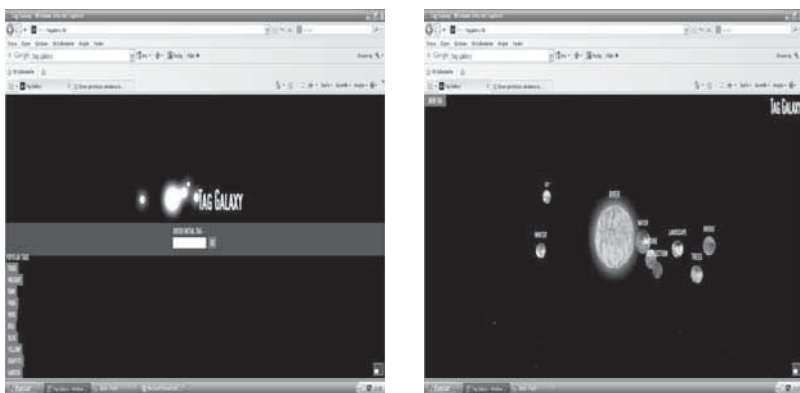
2. Bookr

Description: Bookr is one of the pimpampum Flickr toys. It is **a** Web 2.0 tool to create an illustrated book from Flickr photos. You can **b**rowse or create books, and send them to your friends (http://www.pimpampum.net/bookr/ & http://www.web2teachingtools.com/ bookr.html).

Usability: Bookr does not require a registration. It promotes students' imagination and creativity as they locate appropriate images and design a photobook and critical thinking skills while determining necessary tags

and planning the sequence of the book. They generally start with broad terms and then narrow down their searches. Teachers should explain how the text and pictures should work together to convey the meaning with examples. Students can create books for their writing assignments or research projects. Teachers can also create a photobook to introduce a new unit of study. Photobooks can be e-mailed or published by embedding them in a blog or other websites or by simply publishing a link to the photobook.

To add a title and an author, select "write a title for your photobook" and write your title first. Press enter key to add a text on the second line. Then select "author" text and type details of the author. Type a tag and you will get related photos from Flickr. Click on the photo you want to choose and it will appear at the background of the first page. You can turn pages back and forth and add captions to the added images on each page. To turn a page, click bottom right corner of the page. A simulated page turn will be observed. You can add new images to all pages. To add more pages press "+" on the right. After you are done, you can click "Publish this book" and make it public.

Fig.2
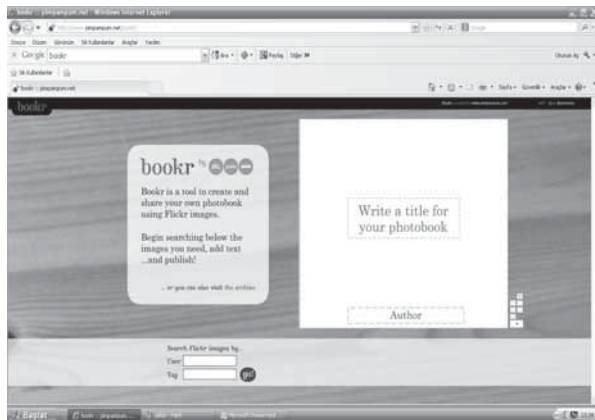
3. Padlet

Description: Padlet is a virtual internet wall tool, online bulletin board and a free web-based application. It is easy to use. That's to say, it is like a piece of paper and pencil on the web. It can give users a chance to express, share, publish, and discuss their opinions on any kind of topic on this wall.

It is also possible for users to support their opinions with images, illustrations, videos, drawings, pictures and all other possible visuals. It is possible to make this wall interactive. (http://ctreichler.wikispaces.com/x-What%20is%20Padlet%20formally%20 Wallwisher).

Usability: To get started, teachers should sign up either with Google or Facebook accounts or open a new e-mail account. After you have logged in, click on the "new padlet" icon on the right side of the top column to design your own wall with an appropriate title and description (e.g. Müfit and Deren's Classroom). When you click on the last icon on the right row, you will learn how to modify your wall. By double clicking on the wall, you can easily create your posts and add images, links, videos, documents, assignments or reports. By using privacy settings such as public or private, you can manage, organize and control the privacy of who views and adds material to the Wall. This password-protected wall provides a limited access for your classrooms through which you can easily ask questions about any topic and provide assignments to students. With easy-to-use options like drag-drop and upload, users and students can create more engaging and meaningful posts on their walls. Padlet also allows teachers to easily share and embed their walls in a blog, wiki or website for collaborative learning. (http://ctreichler.wikispaces.com/Padlet)

Fig.3
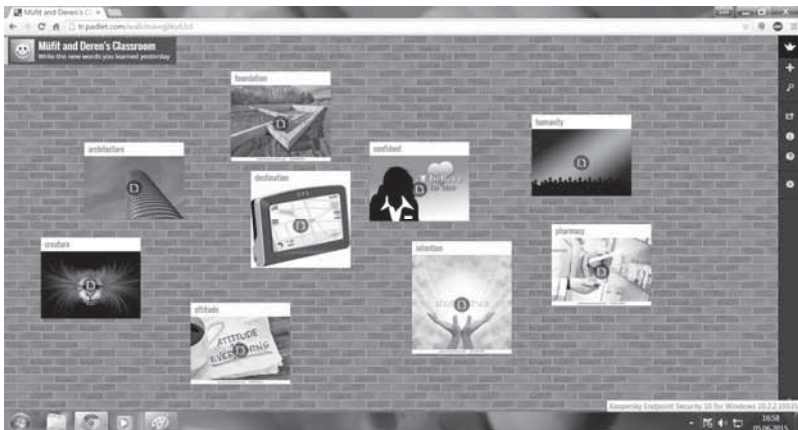
4. GoAnimate

Description: GoAnimate is a cloud-based website that is used for making animated videos to introduce a subject and to get students engaged. Variety of scenes, templates and characters may be chosen from the site and you can either use the voices provided by the website or you can record your own. Animated videos are directly created online, so there is no need to install the application. The only need is an Internet-connected computer, tablet or mobile phone. It also provides a basic text-to-speech moviemaker program with features like character movement and scene changes.

Usability: GoAnimate provides users with drag-and-drop tools that the company's website indicates can be used to access thousands of character models. The platform offers text-to-speech character voices with customizable environments. (http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles /1142/go-and-animate-with-goanimate). GoAnimate is very easy-to-use, making it a great resource for both teachers and students. When you finish your videos, you can share them via email, social media, URL, embedded codes or you can save them on your GoAnimate account**.** It has lots of opportunities for both teachers and students. Students are encouraged to engage in collaborative work with fellow students to create a video. In addition, it is a fun way of learning. Students can decide when and what to learn and are not necessarily bound to scheduled class times. Self-competence, creativity and critical thinking skills of the students are developed. On the other hand, teachers may find a chance to deal with technology. Peer learning is promoted. Animated videos and other materials can be used repeatedly and only need to be updated.

Fig.4

5. Augmented Reality

Definition: Abbreviated as AR, *Augmented Reality* is a type of virtual reality that aims to duplicate the world's environment in a computer. An augmented reality system generates a composite view for the user that is the combination of the real scene viewed by the user and a virtual scene generated by the computer that augments the scene with additional information. (http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/A/Augmented_Reality.html)

Usability: Augmented reality is available for smart phones. It has lots of applications for many kinds of products. Its usage in education can be provided by some websites through imaginary materials such as flashcards and coloring pages. AR Flashcards make learning fun with the technology of augmented reality. They are a new way to interact. They are more entertaining for preschoolers especially. Another material provided by some websites is coloring pages. You may print, color and play with an appropriate application. The only thing you need is either a smart phone or a tablet with the installed application.

Fig.5
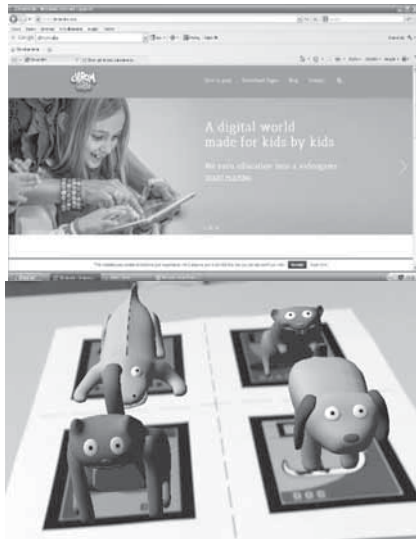
6. Storybird

Definition: Storybird is a collaborative storytelling website. It is an online storytelling platform and allows students to create their own virtual stories. Students can learn a lot from it. It is an alternative tool to pencil and paper story writing. It is very simple to use and suitable for even very young students. It is also great for teachers because they can easily create student accounts and assignments for students. (http://www.teachgennow. com.au/2011/10/48-storybird/)

Usability: Students use collections of art to be inspired to write stories. Once the art is chosen, students can build their stories by dragging and dropping pictures and creating a story to match. It's also simple to collaborate with others whether it's another student in class or someone from another country. Storybird is an extremely engaging site that allows students to focus more on the content of their writing rather than drawing pictures. These steps should be followed:

Step 1: Create an account

Go to www.storybird.com. Click "sign up" for free. Choose "educator /teacher. Fill in a user name, password and e-mail.

Step 2: Set up your class

After you have verified your account, sign in and create a class. You will need a class name, school name, your country and zip code. From here, you can add or invite students into your classroom.

Step 3: Create a story

To create a story, click the "write" button and select an image (you can also search images by tags). Once you find a collection you like, select "use this art", choose to create a multi-chapter or a multi-page book and create your story by dragging and dropping art and adding your text. After you have finished creating your book, click the "menu" button and select publish. You can also add a summary, a category or a tag to your book. When you are ready, click the "publish" button.

Fig.6
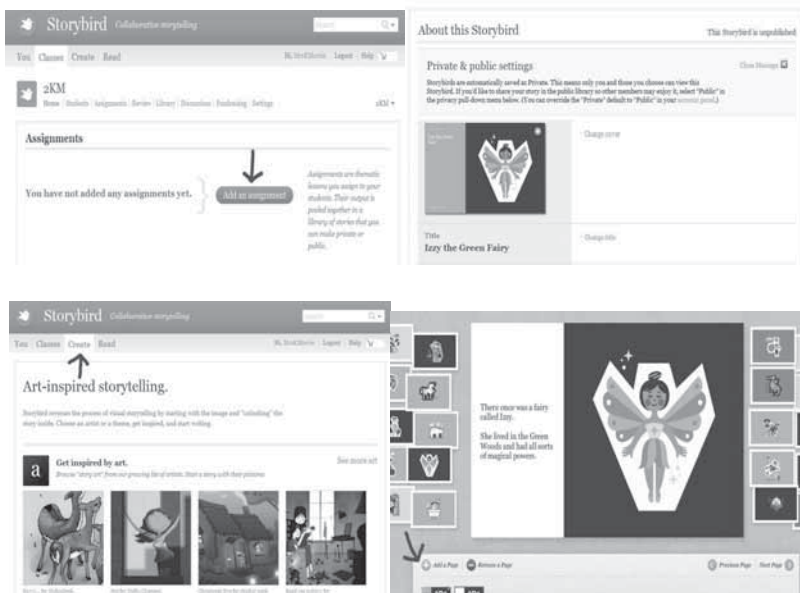
Conclusion

There is a great shift in the way people communicate and express themselves. People are not sending letters but emails in this global village. Technology plays an important role in every aspect of the life, just like in education. Researchers, educators and policy makers are now aware of the fact that current education models are not satisfactory. According to the

report of 21ˢᵗ Century Literacy Summit (2005),

> "students come to school equipped to learn on many levels, using multiple pathways and drawing on multiple intelligences, but today's curricula do not meet their needs, and too often school is the least engaging part of a student's day. Schools do their students a disservice when they fail to teach literacy in the expressive new language that their students have already begun to use before they even arrive" (p.2).

As is seen, educators must keep pace with the incredible progress of science and technology and use the outcomes in the educational field. It is vital to figure out ways to use natural skills of young learners regarding technology to help them become effective communicators and better learners. Prensky (2010: 4) states that students now are not similar to the ones in the past. They want to use different ways to learn. "They want ways of learning that are meaningful to them, ways that make them see—immediately—that the time they are spending on their formal education is valuable, and ways that make good use of the technology they know is their birthright". We should find ways to motivate and engage our students. There are powerful tools to achieve this purpose.

Web 2.0 tools are among these powerful tools. In this paper, some of these tools and their applications in language classrooms are given. It is a fact that most of the teachers resist using technology in their classrooms. Yet, there are still concerned teachers who are participating in trainings for their professional development in order to use technological tools effectively in their language classrooms. They do not need to learn each and every aspect since their responsibility is to guide their students to use these tools effectively for learning a language or practicing it. It is also teachers' responsibility to prepare their students for living and working in the 21ˢᵗ century. Therefore, schools and teachers must change to help students develop the necessary skills. Teachers must be trained to integrate new technologies, learning applications and new information sources into their curriculum. It is no use shutting our eyes to technological developments around us. We should accommodate ourselves to the changes in the world.

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Emerging Multiple Identities in Students' Social Media Interaction[1]

Arzu Ekoç

Abstract

The aspiration of this study is to provide a lens to students' emerging multiple identities in social media class group interactions. The present study is not concerned with the notion of typicality or representativeness but with the particularities and complexity together in the given context. Reviewed literature (Simpson 2009, Darhower 2002) indicates that the opportunity to interact primarily with peers and within a relatively peer-centered communication environment opens up new realms to perform new identities not traditionally associated with those of "student" in instructed institutional contexts. Although it does not mean that virtual environments are totally exempt from participants' roles and expectations (as this is a class group page), with its multi-modal tools and interactive resources, students' opportunities increase in the social media to claim identity positions that vary, differ or deviate from the traditional ones they adopt in classroom settings. This study was conducted with the participation of foreign language preparatory school students (n = 35, 23 male, 12 female) from social studies and civil engineering departments of a state university in Turkey for a period of four months in 2012. This study adopts a series of qualitative methodological and theoretical pillars such as narrative analysis, content analysis, discourse and multi-modal analysis. The findings revealed that different identities may become salient depending upon environmental cues that prime one or other type of identity and how social-community building has been established through jokes, sarcasm and sharing by utilizing multi modalities in social media.

Keywords: social media, identity, interaction

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[1] This paper is a part of the doctoral dissertation research completed in 2013 at Istanbul University.

Introduction

Since the turn of the millennium, recent sociopolitical and socioeconomic trends such as globalization, formation of new regional coalitions, transnational movements and explosion of media technologies have provoked new discussions about the place of self and identity. As Merchant (2005, 301) puts it "we inhabit a social world in which identity is complex, no longer closely tied to place and territory, delineated by nationhood, nor simply created, as psychology suggests, through acts of identification". Instead, according to him, it is produced by action and performance. In other words, the idea of doing identity and performing identity becomes salient. The term 'identification' turns identity from a noun to verb and treats identity not as a state but as a process (Ivanic 2006). This idea suggests a way of looking at identity as a move away from fixed identities as we are endlessly engaged in twisting, moulding and redefining our identities in today's world.

Different theoretical orientations and research traditions highlight the complexity of defining identity (Norton 1997, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Wodak et al. 2011; Edwards 2009). There have been notable similarities and differences in conceptions of identity evolved in years. Literature on identity research heavily draws on three main approaches to identity: sociopsychological, social constructionist and poststructural approaches. In the past twenty years, there has been a shift in perspective from psychologically based concept of identity centering on the individual self as stable to social constructionist views conceptualizing identity as a dynamic process grounded in interaction (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012). Social constructionist approaches can be placed at the opposite end of an essentialist view of identity as fixed. Such conceptualizations emphasize the socially situated nature of identity as well as the agentive characteristic of it. The recent research tradition can be termed as poststructural in essence. Poststructuralist theories of language achieved much prominence in the late twentieth century, and the terms 'poststructuralism', 'postmodernism', 'critical inquiry' are used as an umbrella for a variety of approaches adopted by different researchers (Bakhtin 1981, 1984; Bourdieu 1977, 1991; Hall 1997; Weedon 1997) within this paradigm. The post-structuralist approaches emphasize its multifaceted nature and try to unveil how external influences such as organizations, institutions, relationships, etc. and power come to influence identity formation. Within this approach, identity is conceptualized in the context of diverse relations of power between people and in the broader social, political and economic processes.

Poststructuralist approach to identity has become influential in social sciences and has been taken up by SLA researchers interested in exploring links between L2 learning and identity (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004; Norton 2006a, Norton 2006b; Block 2007a; Hirst 2007, Norton 2008; Edwards 2009; Huhtala and Lehti-Eklund 2010). As Norton and Toohey (2011, 427) put it; this paradigm encourages researchers to reject grand theories and top-down approaches to research but understand the "particularity of the persons, environments and processes they wish to examine". Researchers (Block 2007; Norton and Toohey 2011) have argued that SLA needs to privilege contexts, discourse and interaction, and seek the learner complexity and particularity of context. This expansion in the field of SLA has allowed identity to take a center stage as learning English is not only "the mastery of linguistic code but also entails learning about and understanding the world around oneself" (Flowerdew and Miller 2008, 204; cited in Park 2013). It appears that identity stays as a key construct in SLA research and has opened up multiple avenues for research on every aspect of the field.

An important topic of discussion in the literature on L2 learner identity revolves around its discursive aspects, thus how identity is reflected and constituted in spoken and written discourse. As for researchers interested in language and identity, writing in different genres has become one of the domains to see this discursive construction of identity. They have become interested not only in the conditions under which language learners speak, but in the extent to which identities structure their engagement with texts. There is growing recognition that when a learner engages in textual practices, the construction of the text is mediated by the learner's identity.

One should note that there is inherent difficulty in researching identity but by narrowing the scope of research to certain facets such as writing in different contexts, certain aspects of identity can be analyzed in depth. Besides non-virtual/formal environments, virtual environments are worthy areas to explore identity construction and re-construction through writing. As Merchant (2005, 301) puts it; "digital communication is intimately involved in the redefinition of who we are and how we relate to one another and is contributing to the development of new semiotic and discursive practices". The social nature of new technology is contributing to a re-evaluation of identity and interaction. New media literacies combine texts with multimodal resources and the emergence of identity in these settings has opened up new venues for researching identity. Thereby, in alignment with socio-constructionist and poststructural approach, this paper tries to analyze how identity is discursively constructed by describing

the ways foreign language students choose to foreground or background their identities in social media environments.

With due focus on the following research question, the study examines students' emerging identities in social media interaction:

- How do students "socialize" into a foreign language and enact their identities in different contexts, namely in the social media?

What Makes Social Media Different from L2 Classroom?

In understanding the identity constructions on social media, there are several key constructs that make social media interaction different from classroom writings in L2 settings. Social media interactions offer interesting environments in which to investigate L2 interaction, given that they combine the textuality of written communication with the real-time interactivity of face-to-face communication (Darhower 2002). Text-based but speech-like interaction occurring via computers has generated a specific way of writing, which challenges the traditional means and conventions of traditional written norms for the purposes of economical, compressed and fast-paced message production. The unique linguistic and iconographic features of electronic writing comprise but are not limited to innovative abbreviation, emoticons, simplified syntax, capitalization and other characteristics. One can say that communication using new literacy technologies has also profound implications for the construction of identity; by its nature, electronic communication "offers the opportunity to develop and emphasize different aspects of identity with new sorts of writing" (Simpson 2009: 109).

One remarkable feature of social media is the pervasive use of multimodal resources that involve both verbal and visual semiotic modes. From a social semiotic perspective, multimodal resources are deployed to enable dialogic engagement with each other. Social media provide the multimodal communication channels where students can communicate both synchronously (instant picture and video upload) and asynchronously (comments and wall posts). Using Facebook, for instance, people can easily interact and share multiple formats of information, including texts, pictures, videos, etc., with each other via diverse digital devices (e.g., smartphone) without temporal or spatial constraints. As social media can present material in more than one modality; "it can provide learners with richer mental images, thus facilitating language learning" (Smith et al. 2003, 707).

With its multi-modal tools, the identities constructed on social media can sometimes be different from the identities constructed in formal classroom writing as social media encounters create a sense of freedom that encourages self-expression by allowing people to express their ideas with or without connection to their off-line life. The idea that individuals can create online identities that are in some ways different from the way they present themselves in their face-to-face encounters is increasingly taken for granted. First of all, at the very basic level, SNS users have more control over their self-presentational behaviors than they have in face-to-face communications. They have the opportunity to think how their personalities will be presented and which photos and/or audio resources will best convey the images they want to create for themselves. Boyd & Ellison (2008, 219) mention that individuals construct a representation of self and this includes impression management and self presentation.

Compared to formal educational settings, freedom in self-expression in the social media helps individuals to disclose themselves more freely. The virtual space offers individuals the freedom to choose who they want to be, how they want to be and whom they want to impress in ways one could not before. Thus the Internet provides not only new social spaces, where identity can be renegotiated, but also new forms of social life, and spaces for learning and self-presentation. Therefore, for young people online identity becomes an opportunity to escape the constraints, norms and values of the formal settings. However, it should be kept in mind that being a member of a particular community may also limit an individual's self-expression because the individual may feel constrained to follow the expectations of the community. It can limit one's attitudes and behaviors and even influence participation and identity construction in an online community.

It is taken for granted that "social relations are always also relations of power, and so the workings of status, prestige and hierarchy will shape how identity is constructed" (Ivanic 2006, 6). Power relations embedded in different social contexts are the driving forces that shape what identity roles are accessible, what opportunities are available for negotiation, and what kind of learning takes place (Norton 2000). The aspect of power is another issue which differs in the social media. Social media space provides a context to explore how students' identities are constructed and how students reposition themselves and negotiate their identities. Social media interaction can embody symmetry between the students and the teacher as the students are also active in shaping topics (Heritage 2008, 237). Rather than a social order with a center of power, social media invites participants to finetune the relationships of power in multiple and

complex ways (Wildner-Bassett 2005). Social media offers the altered power and authority distribution in contrast to conventional educational settings. In social media students are able to be more engaged in the learning to become English users as active learners, team builders, collaborators, and discoverers. The voluntary virtual atmosphere can encourage students to become proactive learners, expressing ideas, and generating discussions on the topics they find interesting and relevant to their lives. Furthermore, students take central roles in negotiating topics and sharing concerns, while the instructors simply take a supporting role in facilitating and guiding the overall learning process (Rachtam and Kaewkitipong and Firpo 2012). They learn through joint engagement with each other through interactions. Also, peer-centered communication gives opportunities to perform identities not traditionally associated with those of "student" in institutional contexts. In other words, students construct collaborative power relations within social media. It is indeed possible to discursively negotiate a more equal relationship in these kinds of social media interaction, but it should also be noted that students may also transfer the power relations of the classroom to the virtual environment to some extent as the teacher is still the teacher with whom they interact although the environment is different.

Given the above mentioned dynamics of social media interaction and inspired by these, one of the driving motives of this study is to explore how social media environment influences L2 learner identity development at the tertiary level of education.

Methodology and Research Context

The Purpose of the Study

This paper is part of the doctoral dissertation research and qualitative in scope, the aspiration of this study is to provide a synoptic discussion of features relevant to emerging identity construction in social media sites. The present study does not concern with the notion of typicality or representativeness but as the scholars highlighted with the particularities and complexity together. As Kramp (2004, 105) notes; "context enables the researcher to meaning where previously there was no meaning". It is concerned with particularities as behaviors, events and actions gain meaning in context.

The Participants and the Setting

The context of the present study was the School of Foreign Languages at a state university, a highly competitive university pioneering in architectural and engineering education. This study was conducted with the participation of foreign language preparatory school students (n = 35, 23 male, 12 female) from social studies and civil engineering departments in the spring term in 2012. The students' age varied between 18 and 23. They had all graduated from a high school in Turkey. Ten of the participants were from Istanbul. The rest were from different towns in Turkey and had come to Istanbul to pursue their studies. Students who enter the degree programs are required to take a proficiency test in English. Depending on their performance in the exam, the students either attend preparatory English classes or continue with their programs at their departments where medium of 30 % or 100 % of instruction is English. Students who score a minimum of 60 out of 100 are considered exempt from the English preparatory school. Students who cannot pass the proficiency exam are obliged to attend the preparatory classes for a minimum duration of one semester or two where they are offered 32 week intensive course on English.

The researcher collected the data from two writing classes which she instructed for a term. When the researcher met the students at the beginning of the second term, most of them were at the pre-intermediate level and were expected to finish the term with intermediate level. The researcher met each class twice a week for writing and course book classes. The writing class was offered five hours a week, and this course was given particular importance by the prep school students as it not only forms the basis for academic studies but also develops critical thinking skills. For writing lessons, two assessment types are used: sit-down examination in the midterms and portfolio assessment. As for the latter, one week is devoted to content- based instruction where the topic under question is explored in depth and in the following week, students get their writing tasks under the invigilator of their own writing teachers. Students have to write about the given task and finish the activity in an hour. Then, the written works are evaluated by the teachers. Students, later, get feedback on their work and revise them. This portfolio assessment affected 5 % of their overall grades at the end of the term.

Data was collected from the students' and instructor's posting messages and comments on the class group page in social media for a period of four months and field-notes and memos kept during the process of data collection and analysis. Triangulation of data by means of observation notes, diary entries and memos assisted the researcher in

identifying the students' reasons for the choices they made in their social media interaction. Some steps were taken to ensure the ethical standards in the main study. At the beginning of the study, the researcher informed the participants about the research and their consent was taken to become participatory in this project. The written permission of the institution was also taken. In order to secure confidentiality, the names and photos of the participants in social media interaction were blurred.

Data Collection Procedure

A group page was created in social media to encourage students' English language use outside school contexts. The participants joined the group page on voluntary basis and 15 out of 16 prep students in the class of Civil Engineering Department students and 16 out of 19 prep students in the class of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences students joined the class group page in the social media. Other students did not have accounts in the social media and because of some technical difficulties, they chose not to join the group page but follow the announcements via their classmates. There was also the question of access to a computer. A number of students did not have a computer at home or in their dormitories and had no internet connection. They joined the group page but could not become active users of it.

The initial aim was to create an informal and rather free context where students shared, pursued and jointly constructed themes. The researcher logged onto Facebook on a daily basis, proposed triggering questions and posted media messages and directly interacted with the students so the role of the researcher was that of a participant. Being a participant researcher allowed the researcher to capture some of the subtle details of critical interactions and discursive choices emerging in students' writings. This assisted her in interpreting data and locating a great number of humorous situations, conflicts and potential sources of (dis)/alignments. The wall was perhaps the most conventional communication feature of Facebook and group page and, in terms of the configuration of Facebook at the time of the study, constituted the main space where users could interact and communicate with each other. Class group page displayed posts with date and time. Posts were typically presented in reverse chronological order automatically (most recent first or the one lastly commented on). Class group page encouraged interaction among students and between the teacher and students. There were some limitations and problems in the phase of data collection. For instance; some students were reluctant to

share posts or comment on the posts though they mentioned orally in the class that they followed the posts. That is, these students generally used Facebook for entertainment and keeping in touch with peers. As it was not a course requirement, some students were not willing to become a part of this community. Although the aim was to create an informal discussion environment, it did not turn out to be so. Some continued to ignore the questions in the coming days. Some students did not feel compelled to comment on or acknowledge instructor's contributions. The researcher decided not to further pursue those who, for whatever reason, had not responded to the postings. Prompts were utilized but students were not enforced to follow these themes. As Chesebro & Borisoff (2007, 9) pinpoint that this is in line with the nature of qualitative research:

> The subjects are allowed to identify and determine topics of communication, provide transitions from one topic to another, and provide any qualifiers they see fit. The researcher's objectives and research questions do not generate and guide the communication topics, transitions, and qualifiers of the subjects.

Consequently, it was very rare for the participant researcher to get answers from the full group each time. Five participants were active almost all the time. There was enthusiastic participation in some phases of the term with some students posting photos and links. The topic being discussed also affected the extent to which learners engaged in negotiation. Some topics encouraged active engagement on the part of students and instructors alike. For instance; celebration posts for Women's day took most of the participants' attention. The comments for those humorous posts were intertwined with some aspects of identity such as friendship and solidarity. They used masculine and intimate forms of address, built on each other's comments.

With the help of a software program (Jing) which helps to take screenshots of the screen pages, the researcher systematically archived exchanges between students from their various interactions on social media and stored data in files on computer on daily and weekly basis. Hard copies of the interactions were printed and kept for later analysis.

Data Analysis

Grounded in the poststructural research orientation, the study seeks to understand identity construction as emerging in discourse and towards that end employs some key current qualitative research perspectives, analytic resources and tools available across the methodological spectrum. Not just

content but also the salient aspects of discourse features helped the researcher to analyze how identities were constructed, negotiated and re-negotiated in the course of unfolding interaction. What is more, multimodal features such as pictures, videos and the interplay between visual, auditory and verbal modes were analyzed to understand the emergence of identity in a virtual environment. Jenkins (2008, 17) pinpoints that "there is something active about identity that cannot be ignored: it isn't 'just there', it's not a 'thing', it must *always* be established." Therefore, in this study, the analysis of data was not confined to certain pre-determined identity sensitive categories in the initial stages of analysis such as age, ethnicity, nationality but when those categories were found to be relevant in unveiling emerging identity sensitive discussions, such as the influence of gender difference in social media interaction, they were given due focus for the analysis and discussion of the findings. Such a projection was required for this particular research where a great majority of students from civil engineering department were male.

   As for the classification of content for social media interaction in this study, the first step of the analysis was the familiarization with the data. Following the advice of Silverman (2001) and other qualitative researchers, all of the online interactions were read through numerous times looking for patterns in discourse which would help the researcher trace identity-sensitive points. The researcher started from data in order to create categories, a procedure referred to as coding. The process is quite different from standard content analysis, where the analysis is the frequency of occurrence of predetermined categories. Choosing the posting as the unit of analysis meant some postings that were quite lengthy could be categorized at multiple levels. The researcher read the interactions and tried to understand what was being talked about. The data was read repeatedly to identify emerging themes. At this point, it should be mentioned that the personal and theoretical experiences which the researcher may bring to the task can serve as material for the generation of categories. Referring to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) work on grounded theory, Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009, 57) point out that the researcher does not approach reality as a tabula rasa. S/he must have a perspective that will help him/her see relevant data and abstract significant categories from his/her scrutiny of data. Likewise, Strauss (1987) highlights that when coding you usually have some codes in mind and are also looking for other ideas that seem to arise out of the data. Themes may come from reviewing literature or from the characteristics of the phenomena being studied. The researcher looked for transitional points in the data where the

flow, and/or the topic of the talk or text were changed, continued, or terminated. In the decision stage for coding an item, one criterion was the recurrence of the items in the narrative data. The coding and analysis became cyclical; ongoing analysis mandated additional coding.

After multiple readings, a number of common themes and topics such as attitudes to English, peer support, asking for help, teasing, language learner identity, resistance and solidarity became apparent. Most of the entries had between one and five codes attached to them. Next, the data were arranged according to the codes and read at least several times. It was found that one piece of interaction might fit into multiple categories. The patterns of overlapping codes were as important to the analysis as were the individual codes. After deciding on a code to constitute a category, it was time to cluster them. The next stage after clustering the codes was defining them in order to identify major categories and attain preliminary meanings from the emerging themes. After deciding on the categories, the next step was to try to find interrelationships between them; thus, links between topics were checked. It became apparent in these interactions that students established and built up multiple identities. These emergent identities were as learner identities, interactional identities, gender identities and relational identities. In search of clues for these emerging identities, certain discursive elements in the data were analyzed to see how identities are constructed and negotiated. For instance; to show their peer support, resistance or solidarity, the participants made use of many linguistic and pragmatic devices such as code-switching, terms of address, hedging, referents and politeness strategies. Based on reviewed literature, there have been studies linking code-switching and identity (Ellwood 2008), hedging and identity (Bucholtz and Hall 2005), terms of address and identity (Fuller 2007), the role of politeness and impoliteness in the construction of identity (Hatipoğlu 2007; Graham 2007). Therefore, it was thought to have these as sub-headings under the umbrella heading "tools for negotiating identities". In the end, we came up with the features to help us understand how students' identities emerge in their interaction.

Findings and Discussion

As mentioned in the reviewed literature, identity is complex and multidimensional and individuals negotiate multiple identities over time. Like a chess game, the statements made, the questions asked and the responses given, in other words, the identity we "present" and the one(s) we are "given" by others, have consequences in terms of the shared community experiences we build, solidarity we establish, multi-faceted

identities we negotiate. As Swann, et. al. (2009, 82) put it "identity negotiation processes thus provide the ''interpersonal glue'' that bonds people to one another". In this negotiation process, identities are relatively nuanced, they offer people far more flexibility. For example, if someone receives feedback that is inconsistent with a particular identity, they may respond by substituting an alternative identity that is more compatible with the situational demands (Swann et al. 2009, 82). Individuals can selectively activate identities that are uniquely appropriate to the situation. The question is; how do the individuals bring forward, or move to the background, particular identity claims? In this section, we reflect on foregrounding and backgrounding of identity claims throughout the process of social media interaction. The study also seeks to find out the ways how the participants use social media interaction to appropriate and take on social identities.

As for the themes in social media, they are found to be more diverse and open. The possibility of initiating posts enabled the participants to create their own topics, which probably made the community more interesting to the participants. Also, some of the dialogues consisted of conversations, usually initiated by the teacher, in which she asked questions to the participants based on the posts. The following table offers an overall view of the shared posts in the social media:

Table 1

Posts	Academic	Daily	Gender related	Cultural
Student-initiated	37	52	3	3
Teacher-initiated	35	29	2	5
Total	72	81	5	8

The number of student-initiated and teacher-initiated academic posts was almost the same. When compared to academic related posts, the social media environment enabled to share knowledge around daily topics. These can be evaluated to understand the capability of this technology in breaking down social barriers. Interestingly when the results were analyzed, it can easily be seen that the students initiated daily topics more than the teacher.

In the process of enacting their identities and negotiation, some discursive features are used and these features help us to see how the

participants draw upon their social attachments with peers, their status in the classroom and beyond, and their understanding of the event in relation to broader social and cultural goals. Ways of negotiation and re-negotiation impact their communication with the researcher and their peers and helped them enact identities in a more effective way. For instance; code-switching is commonly used to downplay or highlight identities. These micro choices have macro consequences in terms of presenting multi-faceted identities. The data also illustrate that the participants code-switched to indicate the social relationships between themselves. The students sometimes switched to Turkish to tap feelings of solidarity, but there were also times when they used code-switching to level off the power of the teacher. They attempted to redefine the situation as one between in-group members and distanced the teacher as an out of group member. In itself, this function can be classified into two categories, identifying the relation with the teacher and identifying the relation with his/her classmates. They illustrate the participant's effort in enacting a relationship with the others through code-switching. Code-switching to L1 can be used as a strategy for solidarity building by using special expressions that become the jargon of that particular group. There are a number of exchanges that appear to be attempts to build closer relationships or emotional bonds in the process of constructing in-group identity. Intimacy between these students can be cued from the way they choose to address to each other, the use of shared expressions specific to their community and/or the common experiences they refer to while interacting with each other. Another significant example is the use of terms of address and certain politeness devices for establishing solidarity. As Scollon and Scollon (2003) defines, solidarity is the system that operates among friends or close colleagues, a system which enables parties to see themselves in some ways socially equal and close. In this study, examples for solidarity can be seen mainly in peer to peer interactions. The following piece of data provides an example for this:

Extract 1[2]:

Student 1: thanks a lot. all this happens because of you all instructors :D
Student 2: hi :) i passed exam :)
Student 1: adamın dibisin dibi ulan :D
Student 2: sende adamın kullanma kılavuzusun kamilcim :)
Student 3: very tanks my dear teacher Iam very satisfy from you and my
other teacher I want successful and happy time for my teachers and my
classmates.
Instructor: Have a nice holiday, thanks :)
Student 4: I send personel message my teacher :)
Student 4: my teacher have helped us about many matters thanks a lot :)

In the given example, students were direct to each other, showed
solidarity and praised each other by using such expressions "adamın
dibisin dibi [you are a real man]", "adamın kullanma klavuzusun [you are
like the guide of how to become a man]". They preferred to code-switch
from English to Turkish. The use of masculine forms actively produced
identity through language. When they communicate with the instructor,
they preferred to write in English, but when they communicate with their
peers, they immediately switched to Turkish. All these dynamics of
communication were taken into consideration in establishing links
between separate themes and provided a methodological frame for data
interpretation.

Certain discursive strategies such as face-saving maneuvers, hedging
and politeness strategies were also analyzed in depth to reveal how
individuals take up positions but also try to mitigate, downplay their
positioning depending on power negotiation in the flow of ongoing
discourse. These strategies help us to negotiate views and ideas and
qualify claims at an appropriate level of commitment. Likewise, hedging
strategies play a role especially when students display resistance to the
teacher. The data obtained from participants' interaction in social media
indicate that students are aware of power asymmetries between themselves
and the teacher. Their status as a learner in the community affected their
choice of rhetorical strategies such as hedges. Cognitive verbs such as
think, believe were used to hedge. Students were found to be using

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[2] These extracts are the written versions of the screenshots taken by the researcher
from the group page and all the sentences are written word by word without any
correction for misspellings or grammar.

hedging strategies mostly when making projections for the future and giving opinions.

Moreover, a possibly expected feature to emerge from the learner-teacher interaction is the way students display resistance to the teacher or to her institutional identity. Analyzing alignment and misalignment in online interactions provides resources for interpreting how asymmetrical social relationships among the participants were and how they were negotiated during interaction. In this study, misalignment came to the fore especially in gender related issues, therefore a category was allocated to that theme. There were some posts where the students acted impolite. These impolite instances coincided with the instances when students' gender identities, especially male identities were foregrounded. It was the male member of the group with his two classmates, who on a number of occasions projected his male chauvinism. For instance, he reprimanded and disagreed with the student who expressed his wish for Women's Day. In the below interaction, the student assigned a role to himself and acted like the guard of the classroom. What is more, his discourse was heavily grounded on masculinity. By saying "instructors are presidents of c-5, we are slaves, men don't need women", the student is challenging the female authority. Data show that female students, fewer in number, were occasionally challenged by male students. The posting below triggered a series of negative comments from female students along with other male students who distanced themselves from such chauvinistic attitudes. Interestingly, all gender-sensitive identity negation is fulfilled in English. Thus, language learner identities are not exempt from master identities.

Extract 2:

> Student 3: There is no such thing as women's rights, because they always are right :)
> Instructor: Thanks :) Yes, good point :) women are always right :)))) I am joking :P There are HUMAN RIGHTS, we should all agree on that.
> Student 2: Kamil, what did he say? What do you think about him?
> Instructor: first give your opinion, then, ask Kamil :)
> Student 1: mehdi and rasim I don't want to see you again in my class find another one. I want to cry my hasan we are slaves in the class. Instructors are presidents of c-5 and finally men don't need women but women always need us sorry but it is truth :D hahahaah

During the analysis, as new themes emerged, the categorization of themes was re-arranged and they were included under the heading such as "negotiating teacher-learner identities" as they come to fore in social media interactions. In this study, the symmetrical relationship between the instructor and the learners contributed to the emergence of a community. The instructor as a participatory researcher tried to put herself as an equal member so that a more parallel power relationship can be established. It is evident that the learners did not always align with the instructor's opinions. They sometimes questioned them or even ignored them.

Apart from written interaction on social media, multi-modal resources such as visuals, photos and videos were analyzed to see how identity construction is taking place in a broader semiotic landscape. Krippendorff (2004, 19) explained that ''...works of art, images, maps, sounds, signs, symbols, and even numerical records may be included as data—that is, they may be considered as texts...''. In this study, content analyses of images and videos were also conducted to address the multimodality of social media interaction. Historically, content analysis has been used to analyze and draw inferences from images and text, but it can be extended to other forms of media, including video. The analysis and interpretation of language use is contextualized in conjunction with other semiotic resources which are simultaneously used for the construction of meaning. Multimodal analysis takes into account functions and meaning of the visual images together with the meaning arising from the integrated use of the other semiotic resources (O' Halloran, 2004). In this study, social media promoted creativity with language through multiple communication modes. This resourcefulness can be seen in the videos and photos shared online. It made the group page more enjoyable with pictures or sounds, allowing multi-modal resources for identity negotiation and construction. Students sometimes posted cartoons, songs without writing any comment. Multi-modal tools such as pictures, videos gave the participants opportunities to express themselves. For example, they used humor effectively. It brought opportunities for them to show their possible selves and express their beliefs. In a creative manner, they could show whether they liked or disliked something or displayed resistance to certain issues.

Some identity claims were visual, involving the display of photos and pictures uploaded by the participants themselves. For instance; one of the students shared a cartoon without writing anything and in that cartoon, a student was depicted like the game character "Angry birds" and he was throwing a teacher out of the school. Two of his friends 'liked' the post shared by their friends. Based on class observation, those students had low marks from the exams and always shared their concerns related to learning

English in the class. They also failed in the proficiency exam. Multi-modal feature of the social media environment helped them to share their frustrations and anger. By using cartoons, pictures, etc., the participants sought to make certain identity claims.

Participants in social media also used profile photos building up one or more aspects of their identity. Profile pictures enabled the participants to re-establish their identities by producing them in a highly visible online space. Selecting a profile picture confirms what people value and how they want to be perceived. The participants remained conscientious about the visual images representing their online identities. They were extremely mindful of the image they projected on Facebook, and were careful in their selection of photos. The participants in the study displayed the following two behaviors: (1) placing a great emphasis on profile pictures, with a quest to differentiate themselves and (2) symbolically changing photos to coincide with internal and external shifts in their lives. Photos helped users differentiate themselves, often by picturing their personal interests and tastes. Some students appeared in photographs with others, depicting themselves in the context of their friends mostly smiling, having fun. Some students used cartoon characters. Some students changed their profile photos as a reaction to the events or as a signal of their moods. These images often changed when new events happened or a shift took place in users' lives. A Facebook profile picture is not just a picture, but an image telling a story. For instance, just before the proficiency exam, a student changed his profile photo to a road sign on which the word "HOPE" was written in capital letters. For confidentiality, profile pictures of participants are not displayed but other representative images are included in the analysis and discussion of findings.

The overall framework of the analysis draws upon discursive strategies that are employed to construct identity. From this point of view, the study tries to show how people use language to construct versions of the world. It is a construction in the sense that a variety of linguistic resources are employed, active selection occurs, and the consequential nature of accounts is emphasized. Analyzing and interpreting what the participants wrote is an attempt to understand how they construct their understanding of themselves as learners and how they relate themselves to the world.

On the whole, the following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the present study:

- A close analysis of qualitative data collected from social media interaction, contributes to the understanding of language learner

identity building as a process of negotiation, acceptance and/or rejection.

- A central feature in students' social media interaction is the process of negotiation where multiple identities are at stake and there is always scope for emerging identities.
- It is above all the discursive practices which mirror the emergence of multiple identities; thus identity is primarily about language choices. Approaching the data through a discursive lens enables the researcher to see how identities are constructed in and through discourse.
- A wide range of discursive tools such as code-switching, terms of address, hedging and politeness strategies, and multimodal resources such as emoticons are found to be effective in the construction and negotiation of identities.
- Social media can be seen more flexible in generating discussions on various topics and offers further opportunity to use the target language interactively. Because of the multimodal and user-controlled nature of presentation and communication on the site, students are given freedom to personalize the learning experiences and use target language in expressing views on self-selected topics. Nevertheless, the participants refrained from directly revealing their political inclinations in their social media interactions.
- Social media interactions changed the traditionally assigned asymmetrical relation between students and the teacher. The study offered several instances of de-centering the teacher either by ignoring the teacher's individual postings or changing the topic.
- Learning a new language reflected the desire of learners to expand their range of identities and to reach out to wider worlds through imagined communities. The data reveal that they are constructing multiple learner identities and imagined communities that they can orient towards the future and see themselves as members of a certain group in days to come. Therefore, attitudes to English language learning and going abroad as an ideal way for success are recurrent themes emerging in social media interactions.
- Language learner identity is not exempt from master identities. One particular identity emerging along with L2 language learner identity is found to be gender identity. It was intertwined with other aspects of identity such as friendship and solidarity. The study revealed how social-community building has been established through jokes, sarcasm and sharing by utilizing both verbal and non-verbal modalities in the semiotic landscape.

- In social media, the participants were more prone to emphasize particular aspects of their identity. In other words, they tried to define themselves in alternative ways by distancing themselves from labels such as students, L2 users.
- Macro-dynamics of the educational context were at stake in their interactions. It became clear that the participants' learner identities were shaped and reshaped by their attitudes to prep school and English language learning. In the research context where prep school is compulsory and attendance is taken on a daily basis, learning English brought some changes and re-construction of their identities. Some of them are genuinely motivated for learning English but there are also others whose only reason for being in the prep school is because it is compulsory. These students move in and out of language learner identity and show resistance to this identity attributed to them.
- In this study, in a particular social media context, the symmetrical relationship between the instructor and the learners contributed to the emergence of a community. The instructor as a participatory researcher tried to put herself as an equal member so that a more parallel power relationship can be established. It is evident that the learners did not always align with the instructor's opinions. They sometimes questioned them or even ignored them.
- In conversations between teachers and learners in the classroom it is often assumed that learners portray polite behaviors as an expression of their respect for the teacher, but in the social media context, it appears that some students preferred a more forceful and casual style when interacting with his teacher. These claimed relational identities may be indicative of their unwillingness to take on the more traditional place of the learner as someone who passively accepts the positioning attributed by the teacher. It may also be a reflection of their claim to a personal identity as a resistant student. It is also an instance of refusing institutional identity of the teacher.
- The data also revealed that as both the participant researcher and the teacher, the researcher sometimes foregrounded her teacher identity and backgrounded her researcher identity and vice-versa. Further research exploring this sort of dynamic construction of his/her identity in the research context in terms of the researcher would be illuminating.
- The data have illustrated that learning a language involves constructing new identities with various dimensions and complexities. It is,

therefore, important that teachers view learners as individuals with multiple and changing identities, not just as individuals with English language learning needs.

Limitations of This Study and the Implications for Future Research

Qualitative in scope, the study does not claim any generalizability, but aims to offer insight to individual voices and unique experiences in defining multi-faceted identities of English language learners in a foreign language education context. Therefore, the use of a specific intact population of participants in a specific context makes it difficult to make generalizations about L2 learner identity research. However, this cannot be considered as a 'limitation' considering the nature of qualitative-based identity research which concerns itself with unique experiences and individual cases with a heightened interest on deeper meanings. Identities were searched in emerging discourse via certain observable negotiation tools. However, this does not, on any account, come to mean a preference for the static view of identities attached to certain pre-set categories, on the contrary the study adheres to emerging identities in the dynamism of continuing interaction. Also, it cannot be claimed that these are the only identities, just that the analysis made these particular identities visible. A person may regularly use some words, patterns but we cannot be sure that this is definitely a reflection of one type of identity. Collecting more data across time would provide an even more nuanced perspective.

Another hardship is that social bonding and intimacy through computer-mediated communication requires time to mature. This process necessitates researchers to engage in longitudinal studies about the use of SNSs in order to acquire insights into this phenomenon. Care must be taken to ensure a continuously friendly group environment that fosters learning. One may think that the more open and friendly the instructors are with the students, the more friendly and responsive they are likely to be in terms of the community atmosphere and system usage, but this correlation is not always the case. The students were informed that the researcher would use their writing and social media interaction as her data sources and this might have had a negative influence on their degree of involvement and participation in the project. Nevertheless, from the researcher's point of view, the students interacted with each other with the understanding that the interactions were intended not to "please" the teacher but to continue their class community outside the class.

There were also technical problems in the process of research implementation. Facebook did not provide some features, such as the ability to upload documents or slides, which could have been helpful for knowledge sharing via an online learning platform. Uploading feature was added to Facebook in the last two weeks of the semester. Another limitation of the study is the lack of evidence from the students' perspectives. Interviews of the students would have convincingly demonstrated the motives and functions of their choices. This deficiency is due to the nature of the research context. As the participants start the summer holiday after the proficiency exam, it is difficult to reach students and ask them to recall their motives. What is more, it is difficult to ask the participants for their preferences as far as the research issue of this study is concerned. They may not be aware of their choices in identity construction. It is hard to expect them to be aware of multiple identities they had enacted and gather their opinions, beliefs and attitudes.

Further studies investigating co-construction of teacher-student, student-student identities in different contexts could be very useful in exploring L2 language learning as an identity work. The study can be exploited to investigate similar research questions with different target groups at their different stages of education. Also, data regarding the construction of identities in different age groups could provide very important data for ELT. These areas are awaiting further research in diverse settings.

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PART THREE:

TEACHER EDUCATION

Continuous Professional Development in an EFL Program: Meeting the Diverse Needs of EFL Instructors

Yeşim Nalkesen, Zeynep Gönenç Afyon and Donald Staub

Abstract

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) provides teachers opportunities to refresh and enhance their skills throughout their professional lives while also leading to the improvement of the organisation and the success of the students (Prince and Barret 2014; Padwad and Dixit 2011). The value of CPD programs is well-documented. Yet there is growing evidence that the traditional, or "training" (Kennedy 2005) delivery model is simply ineffective and unsustainable (Day 1999; Bolam and Weindling 2006). Research at one private/foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey, and carried by the Office of Quality Assurance (OQA) within the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) confirms this reality. Their data indicates that: 1) that the staff holds diverse needs, as many are at different points in their careers, and 2) that the time and energy that instructors can dedicate to PD are in low supply. Resolved to succeed in providing a broadly effective, sustainable CPD program, this SFL is flipping the model. Through a data-driven, agile approach, the CPD unit is striving to effectively and efficiently deliver concepts, theory, and practical ideas, thus generating deeper learning and a sustained professional growth programme. This paper examines the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of this CPD Unit in the EFL programme at a private university in Turkey.

Keywords: Continuous Professional Development (CPD); Alternative Program Delivery; Program Evaluation

1. Introduction

There is certainly no disputing the value of professional development in education. Arguably, this is even more so in the EFL realm as there are many instructors who choose this as a life-long career. Likewise, within most EFL programmes, there is a consistent stream of turnover. In either case, professional development is necessitated by the continual emergence of findings from brain science and learning theories, or new methodologies, or changing student profiles. Regardless, professional development has traditionally been viewed as the responsibility of the individual instructor - through personal pursuit of training and advanced degrees, or participation in professional meetings - or it has resulted from the efforts of dedicated staff within a programme. In other words, the establishment of an office charged with the responsibility of developing and delivering continuous professional development that is staffed and embedded in the structure of an EFL programme is a relatively new phenomenon. Lack of resource allocation, workload, or lack of expertise are commonplace responses for why systematic CPD programmes may not exist within an EFL programme. At one private university in Istanbul, Turkey, the EFL programme has crossed the threshold - in part, driven by an accreditation application process - and has committed resources to the creation of a CPD unit. The guiding question throughout this development, and research, process has been *how* to design and deliver professional development that meets the diverse needs of the programme's instructional staff; i.e. a programme that appeals to the needs, beliefs, and constraints of the staff. This paper explores both the design and implementation phases of this newly established CPD unit. Evaluation and assessment have been integrated into the process from the start, allowing the CPD staff to report, reflect on, and react in real time, to the successes and challenges of this initiative.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definition of CPD

Broadly speaking, the primary aim of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) in education is improvement of the individual and, by extension, the school and its students. Day (1999) defines professional development as a process consisting of all conscious and unconscious attempts which are intended to be directly or indirectly beneficial to the individual, group or school. In a similar vein, CPD is viewed as an

opportunity for teachers to refresh and enhance their skills throughout their professional lives while also leading to the improvement of the organisation and success in the achievement of student learning outcomes (Prince and Barret 2014; Padwad and Dixit 2011).

2.1.1. Purposes, Models and Components of CPD in EFL

CPD can be examined from the perspectives of outcomes, or purposes, and processes. From the outcomes perspective, Grundy and Robison (2004) identified three interconnected purposes of CPD: extension, growth and renewal. *Extension* is the introduction of new knowledge or skills to a teacher's repertoire. *Growth* refers to the development of greater levels of expertise. *Renewal* is achieved through transformation.

Sachs (2006) metaphorically re-named these as *retooling, remodeling, and revitalizing*. Retooling takes the view that teachers can improve professionally through learning and development of new skills. In a traditional sense, this is also referred to as the Training Model agenda determined by the expert (deliverer) where teachers (participants) are placed in a passive role (Kennedy 1995). Remodeling is concerned with "transmission" (Kennedy 2005) to ensure that teachers are compliant with government change agendas when the existing practices are modified. This type of CPD may help teachers "understand more deeply the content they teach and the ways students learn that content" (Guskey 2003). One limitation of this approach is that teachers' behaviours may be remodeled, yet it does not guarantee that attitudes and beliefs will be altered as well. Revitalizing is a transitional model, connecting teachers with other teachers and through the needs of students. Its focus is on teacher learning, particularly professional renewal through opportunities to rethink and review practices so that teachers become reflective practitioners.

An extension of the revitalizing model is the Inquiry Approach (Richardson 2003), where teachers are allowed the space and time to raise questions - inquiries - and identify needs for themselves and for their classrooms. This model allows teachers to be transformative by giving them chances to collaborate at a deep level with their colleagues. Teachers systematically take data collected at the classroom and school-level and utilize it for collaborative activities that seek to rectify challenges, thereby becoming a regular part of on-going, job-embedded professional development" (Guskey 1999). This CPD as re-imagining values teachers as researchers of their own and their peers' practices.

Needless to say, practitioners of CPD will agree that the field has numerous delivery models to choose from. The challenge for EFL

programmes developing CPD initiatives, rather than selecting an ideal model, is to find an effective balance that may weave together a number of approaches. Kennedy (2005) and Gaible and Burns (2005) separately developed taxonomies of CPD models that together provide a comprehensive catalogue of the different means through which CPD is delivered. Kennedy's nine-model classification includes:

- **Training model** – a classic approach where training is provided by an outsider, taking little stock of the needs of the participants;
- **Award Bearing model** – completion of training provides some form of an award that is validated by an external body;
- **Deficit model** – the starting point of which is that any shortcomings emanate from the teachers themeselves, with little consideration that teachers may perform poorly due to organisational and management practices (Rhodes and Benecike 2003);
- **Cascade model** – also commonly known as the train-the-trainer model, CPD participants take their learnings from trainings and share them with colleagues. While this model may spread skills enhancement, it rarely focuses on values (Solomon and Tresman 1999);
- **Standards-based model** – works to effectively draw a line between teacher effectiveness and student learning (Beyer 2002). While this approach may be useful for developing a common language amongst teachers but may be narrow and limiting;
- **Coaching/Mentoring model –** as the name suggests, this model commonly takes place between two teachers, with an emphasis on building a solid rapport;
- **Community of Practice model –** in comparison to the coaching/mentoring model, this approach comprises a larger group than two. According to Wenger (1998), within these communities there are three essential processes that take place regarding learning: *evolving forms of mutual engagement*; *understanding and tuning [their] enterprise*; and *developing [their] repertoire, styles and discourses*;
- **Action Research model –** teachers ask critical questions of their teaching environment, allowing them to explore practices and beliefs through experimentation. . This model has a great capacity for transformative practice and professional autonomy.

- **Transformative model** – aligned with CPD as re-imagining, this model allows the blending of different approaches, supporting teacher-control of the CPD process.

In contrast to Kennedy's disparate classification, Gaible and Burns (2005) condensed CPD models into three separate categories: Standardized, Self-directed, and Site-based. Standardized CPD, is, as its name suggests, a broad-based approach that aims to disseminate CPD to an increasing number of instructors via the training-based or cascade approaches. Its "one size fits all" approach may exclude teachers with divergent needs. Self-directed CPD allows the instructor to set the learning goals and take relevant action. It should not be taken as the sole CPD activity, but rather a supplement to Standardized and Site-based approaches. Finally, Site-based CPD takes place on-location, with master teachers as local facilitators helping teachers enhance learning pedagogy, content, and technology skills. Site-based CPD consists of a variety of approaches, such as observation/assessment, open lessons, lesson study, study group, inquiry/action research, case studies, and mentoring (see below). This model is compelling as it offers the benefit of catering to the diverse needs of teachers. The components of this model will be briefly mentioned to give the readers a better insight about the nature of this model. The Site-based model provided us with a useful framework to organize the creation and implementation of our CPD unit.

- **Observation/ Assessment**, also known as peer observation, is a mutually beneficial practice where pairs of teachers, by observing each other's lesson in a structured manner, assist each other in identifying areas of strength as well as areas of improvement;
- **Open Lessons** occur when teachers create lessons and invite their colleagues to observe and provide feedback (in a post observation session). Unlike the *Lesson Study*, the focus of Open Lessons is on *teacher behavior*;
- **Lesson Study** takes place when teachers collaboratively plan, observe, and reflect on the lessons (Lewis 2002). The purpose of this model is to train and support teachers to improve teaching and learning in higher education, as well as to help teachers;
- **Study Groups** promote whole-school collaboration, peer based learning, and communities of practice. Teachers collaborate by sharing experience and on solving challenges and developing materials;

- **Inquiry/Action Research** allows teams of teachers to form teams based on a common interest. Teachers may examine a particular issue in an effort to discover practical solutions. This approach empowers teachers to improve their understanding of the effects of their action and their own practice and empowers them to be more effective in the context of their work (Kemmis 1981).
- **Case Study** is utilized when a team of teachers wishes to examine each component of classroom instruction, and in turn, observe, discuss, reflect and transfer their learning to their own respective classroom.
- **Mentoring** may be conducted as either one-to-one (i.e. experienced-novice) or many-to-many, again with experienced instructors guiding novices in a team format. Mentoring is a useful model in that it helps teachers collaborate, form relationships with colleagues (Gaible and Burns 2005), promote confidence, and reduce their anxiety and sense of isolation that may keep teachers from trying new approaches in their classrooms.

It should be stated that all the components in the Site-Based Learning may be made more effective by the use of technology in that it offers teachers the opportunity to find/share relevant information on their field, share their work, as well as communicate and network with colleagues who share the same interests as themselves.

In sum, CPD can be provided in many different forms. However, when we look at the picture broadly, we can determine that the trend is moving from the old style of CPD *"that is done to teachers"* towards a Development-Constructivist approach that is inquiry-based and led by *actively participating* teachers who determine their own agenda based on their diverse needs and interests.

Among the models mentioned above, we have tried to apply an approach where teachers will be actively engaged in all CPD-related processes, where all their different needs are satisfied, and where they can collaborate with their colleagues at a deeper level. Taking from Kennedy's (2005) taxonomy, our CPD Model may be classified as a *Transformative Model*, allowing the blending of varying practices of CPD to happen to meet the needs of teachers who have control over the agenda of their professional development program. Likewise, our CPD Program may be classified under *Site-Based CPD Model* based on the CPD Models of Gaible and Burns (2005). As such, our CPD Unit determined that the Site-Based model to CPD design and delivery would be the most suitable for our context as it includes a variety of approaches such as lesson study,

observation, action research, etc. Considering the fact that organizations may have diverse needs as well as teachers, Site-Based CPD may be considered as sufficient in that it caters to different needs that may arise among teachers and stakeholders.

3. Methodology

3.1. Aim of the research

This research aims to help EFL programmes that are in the planning and early implementation stages of a Continuous Professional Programme (CPDP) by presenting a CPDP model.

3.2 Research Question

This research aims to answer the question "How can a sustainable CPDP be designed, developed and implemented in order to meet the diverse needs of an EFL Programme"?

3.3 Context

The research was done by the Office of Quality Assurance within the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) at an English medium private/ foundation university in İstanbul which has recently been accredited. SFL has 38 instructors and 350 students.

3.3.1 Instructor Profile

The instructors are at different points in their careers with different backgrounds and various qualifications. They have different years of teaching experiences and they have different qualifications (see Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 below).

While approximately 25% of the teachers are highly experienced with 20 or more years of teaching .40 % of the teachers have been teaching 10 years or less and 30% of the teachers have 10-20 years of experience. In terms of qualifications, teachers also have diverse backgrounds. Only 20 % of the teachers have their BA in ELT while the rest have different major areas. 13 % of the instructors have got an MA in ELT with one teacher with a Phd in ELT in progress while more than 50 % of the teachers have their MAs in other fields. Besides, a considerable number of teachers (% 65) hold ELT certificates or diplomas.

In terms of the workload, teachers have more or less similar schedules. They are teaching 18 hours for four days a week with one day of "non-teaching"when they are not required to come to school. Although this seems to be an advantage for many in terms of workload, it leaves not much time for CPD activities.

1-10	10-20	20
15	13	10

Table 3.1: Teachers' years of experience

BA in ELT	8
MA in ELT	5
PHD in ELT	1 (in progress)
Diplomas & Certificates in ELT	25
BA in other fields	30
MA in other fields	20

Table 3.2: Intructors' Qualifications

3.3.2 History of Professional Development at the Institution

Before the accreditation process, there was no systematic structured CPDP except for some sessions held in an isolated fashion on voluntary basis. Besides, these sessions didn't differentiate much among teachers in their different levels of experience, background ; therefore, different needs. The instructors were responsible for their own development. There was a yearly appraisal system which comprised some components such as planning, instructing and learning. Most of the data for the appraisal data was based on instructor observations done by coordinators, instructors' participation in meetings, contributions in general and instructors' self-evaluations where they specify their accomplishments throughout the year. CPD obviously didn't have much weight.

3.3.3 The accreditation process and the establishment of the CPD Unit

The accreditation process brought about changes in the SFL in terms of various policies and procedures. As a result of this move towards another direction, there followed the establishment of the CPD Unit as part of the Quality Assurance Office.

3.4 CPD Unit Accomplishments

CPD Unit was established in November 2015 towards the end of the first semester. The main objective of the programme was to move the institution away from the former traditional professional development approach of one size fits all towards a more teacher centered approach to cater for diverse teacher needs.

Since its establishment, CPD unit has been going through some stages. (see Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 below).

STAGE 1- DESIGN
1)   Baseline data collection for needs analysis
a)   Needs-analysis survey for staff and administrators
b)   Focus group discussions
2)   Identification of research- based data- driven CPD framework
3)   Identify short-term goals and strategies for CPD
4)   Preparation of a CPD Manual & policy for staff induction
5)   Preparation of a CPD programme for the next semester
6)   Establish assessment plan for CPDP

Table 3.3: Design

STAGE 2- IMPLEMENTATION
1) Individual Learning Plan Pilot Programme
2) Peer observation Pilot Programme
3) Nano- Conference
4) Focus Group Discussion
STAGE 3- ASSESSMENT
1) Formative and summative feedback meetings with ILP volunteers
2) Formative and summative feedback meetings with peer observation pilot programme volunteers
3) Feedback survey for the Nano Conference
4) Feedback Survey for the focus group discussion

Table 3.4: Implementation & Assessment

3.4.1. Design

The *initial* stage was the "design" where CPD Unit members started off by giving needs analysis surveys both to the staff and the administrators (see table 3). Besides, they held focus group discussions

with the staff to learn about their needs for Professional development and their expectations. The second step taken was to find a teaching framework which would act as a guiding structure in the development of the programme. Eventually, CPD members prepared a CPD policy, manual, programme for the next semester and an assessment plan based on the data gathered from the needs analyses and the framework.

3.4.2. Implementation

The *second* stage was when CPD Unit implemented the programme. The components of the programme (see also table 4) are as follows:

3.4.2.1 Individual Learning Plan Pilot Programme

Prior to embarking on the formal accreditation process, variations on the *individual learning plan* concept were practiced throughout the EFL programme. Such activities were isolated and without systematization or standardization. The impetus for designing and implementing a programme-wide ILP, beginning with the pilot, stemmed from one of the standards expected by the accreditors, which read that the programme should, "develop individual action plans when appropriate, through a process of constructive feedback and dialogue." Internally, "when appropriate" was interpreted to encompass the majority of EFL students, as most are perceived as lacking a degree of self-autonomy that would facilitate success in the programme, thus necessitating a broad-based implementation of the ILP.

CPD Unit members decided that it would be best to pilot the programme before it is offically approved and run within all classes the following year. The pilot project was implemented with 12 volunteers teaching different levels. Overall, 5 classes (2 Track 1 classes, 2 Track 2 classes and 1 Track 3 class) were involved in the project. CPD Unit provided the teachers and the students with guidelines and materials (forms, calendar, and procedure) on how to implement the programme. The programme lasted for 3 months. CPD unit members collected formative and summative feedback to assess the programme.

3.4.2.2 Peer Observation Pilot Programme

Based on the data gathered through the needs analyses done with the staff and the administrators and the teaching framework, it was decided that "peer observation" should be a component in the CPD programme. CPD Unit prepared guidelines and materials for the pilot programme (peer observation criteria, pre and post observation forms). 6 volunteer teachers

were involved in the programme. They formed 3 pairs and each pair did only one observation with one person acting as the observer and the other as the observee. CPD Unit members collected formative and summative feedback to assess the programme.

3.4.2.3 Focus Group Discussion

CPD Unit also decided to include focus group discussion as a component in the CPD programme. The first Focus Group Discussion was held as a needs analysis tool to find out about teachers' expectations of the CPD Programme, CPD forms and topic selection. The second one, on the other hand, was about "How to enhance Learner Autonomy"; this theme was chosen for the discussion as it was one of the topics that came up in the needs analyses with the administrators and the staff and it is one of the qualities of an effective teacher as stated in the teaching framework. Two concurrent discussion sessions were held where instructors were invited to join in. Overall, 14 instructors participated in the discussions. A feedback survey was given afterwards.

3.4.2.4 Nano Conference

As the name suggests, CPD members decided to hold a mini conference which lasted for only 15 minutes (3 topics presented, each lasting only 5 min). CPD members chose the topics (Effective Learners, Lesson Study and Technology Tools in class) using the teaching framework and the data gathered in the needs analyses. A feedback survey was given afterwards.

4. Assessment and Evaluation

The final stage CPD Unit has gone through is the "assessment" stage (see table 4.1). As mentioned above, CPD unit has assessed all the components in the programme by feedback surveys, summative and formative feedback meetings.

Throughout the year, there has been a consistent focus on data collection and analysis for evaluative and planning purposes. Data for planning was gathered via surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one sessions with instructors - some of whom also serve as coordinators within the SFL; i.e. Academic coordinator and Track-level coordinators. Data was sourced as well to provide formative assessment of the numerous initiatives had been implemented in this first year, such as Individual Learning Plans, Peer Observations, Nano conferences, and the overall performance of the CPD.

Here is a list of instruments that have been used for needs analysis and formative evaluation this past year:

1) Staff Needs Analysis Survey
2) CT Needs Analysis Survey
3) Focus Group Discussion 1 "Hear your voices" Data
4) Focus Group Discussion 2 "Learner Autonomy" Data
5) Feedback Survey For Focus Group Discussion "Learner Autonomy"
6) Feedback Survey for Nano Conference
7) Feedback Sessions with ILP volunteers
8) Feedback Sessions with Peer Observation Volunteers
9) Feedback Sessions with ILP students

The following are synopses of the data collected through each of these instruments:

4.1. Staff Needs Analysis Survey

Of the 27 who responded to the survey (75% of teaching staff), there is a range of teaching experience from 20% having fewer than six years of experience to 30% having 20+ years of experience. When asked to identify personal qualities, the majority of instructors selected *Communication skills*, *Responsible* and *Organized,* and *Enthusiasm* as their areas of strength. In contrast to skills areas in which the majority of respondents had received training over the last three years, such as *Teaching Skills*, *Resources and Materials*, Web Tools, and *Language Assessment*, when asked for training preferences, instructors suggested areas such as *Learning Strategies & Learner Autonomy, Diversity, Learning Styles, and Managing Learning*. Instructors also placed *Workshops at School, and Giving Workshops to Colleagues* at the top of the list for activities that would be beneficial to instructors. Finally, when asked about ways that instructors can best support their colleagues and institution they listed *Research, Giving workshops, and Peer Observations*.

4.2 CT Needs Analysis Survey

There are 12 members in the Coordinators Team. As the CPD Unit was making initial plans, a survey was distributed to them to solicit their perspectives on the professional development needs of instructors in the EFL programme. The CTs were asked two central, open-ended questions:

1) The types of professional development activities that would be useful for instructors and, 2) The suggested content of the professional development activities. From the survey's respondents (n=4), the key areas of need identified were *content, classroom, and time management*, as well as *instructional methodology*, which could be conducted via collaborative projects. As one respondent emphasized regarding these needs, *"I believe that in our institution, many of our fellow instructors are in denial of such a need."*

When asked about the content of professional development activities, suggestions were made for workshops that align classroom objectives (e.g. *response paragraph writing* and *core – grammar-*) and the skills necessary to convey them in the classroom, as well as *testing* and *assessment*. Respondents also stressed the need for *"practical"* and *"hands-on"* workshops.

4.3 Staff Needs Analysis Focus Group Discussion I "Hear your voices"

The CPD Unit conducted four Focus Group Discussions *"Hear Your Voices"* to learn about

- Instructors' attitude towards CPD;
- Instructors' description of CPD at its worst;
- Instructors' description of CPD at its best;
- Forms of CPD instructors prefer.

Focus group discussions were conducted in small groups of 5 and 6. The data coming from these discussions served as a data collection tool to give insights about the areas mentioned above (teachers' attitude toward CPD, their familiarity with CPD and their conceptualization of it and the forms of CPD they would prefer in their schools).

Out of 21 teachers who participated in these discussions indicated that they had a "skeptical" attitude toward CPD (due to negative experiences they had in the past); however, they wanted to turn into "believers".

Most of the teachers indicated that they would not like CPD Activities to be very loaded, long, uninteresting, impractical, irrelevant to instructors' needs and classroom practices, too fast and incomprehensible. It was also commonly stated that teachers would not like CPD activities to consist of slide presentations where instructors are just asked to only read and/or online tools which avoid human interaction.

The common responses that came out of instructors when they were asked about their expectations from a CPD Program were that they would like to have short, interesting, hands-on sessions which are useful for their classrooms. They wanted the content to be relevant to their needs. They suggested that the sessions should be a mixture of theory and hands-on activities. They also indicated that the sessions to be given should give teachers a new perspective and have a follow-up discussion where teachers may learn more insights about the content of the session given.

The teachers usually responded that they preferred *workshops, collaborative activities* and *seminars* as CPD activities. *Lesson Study* was also usually stated as a desired CPD Activity amongst teachers. All the teachers indicated that *having informal chats* with their colleagues was the best way for them to learn. The teachers stated that they would not like to have "research projects" due to their heavy workload.

As for the session topics, instructors reported that they would like to have sessions on *technology, teaching integrated skills* and the *actual problems* they face in classrooms.

4.4 Focus Group Discussion II "Learner Autonomy"

The rationale for holding conversations related to Learner Autonomy comes from a number of sources. As indicated previously, the Cambridge Framework has been central to the early shaping of the CPD Unit within the SFL, and Learner Autonomy is an essential component of the Framework. In addition, increased Learner Autonomy is one of the central outcomes of the SFL programme, and strongly endorsed by the director of the SFL. Finally, data from the ILP evaluation sessions with instructors clearly demonstrates the need for greater learner autonomy among SFL students.

Three separate 40-minute Learner Autonomy focus groups, facilitated by CPD team members, were attended by a total of 21 instructors from the SFL. The discussions addressed four key questions: 1) instructor perceptions of learner autonomy, 2) their experiences with learner autonomy in the classroom, 3) supports and barriers to learner autonomy in our instructional environment, and 4) ways to enhance learner autonomy within the SFL. The central findings are as follows:

- **Instructor perceptions of learner autonomy**

"Autonomy happens when you catch the interest of your students." The instructors indicated that learner autonomy is taking responsibility, learners' having self-discipline and self-awareness of weaknesses and

strengths. Likewise, autonomous learners do not want to be "spoon-fed", they don't rely on memorization, and they possess a curiosity about learning to learn. Students will start to feel more autonomous when they start to understand that learning should be done for the sake of long term lifelong goals rather than short term goals, such as grades.

- **Instructor experiences with learner autonomy in the classroom**

A few instructors noted that some of their students do research, go to the library and ask questions. One instructor mentioned that she employed drafted writing in her class and observed her students' progress in writing. In contrast, through a different assignment, she asked her students to prepare a lesson and teach their peers. However, she indicated that only one student carried it out. In another activity, students were required to moderate a discussion. An instructor said she got her students to write diaries (about personalized topics) and she said she gave feedback on the content at the same length. One instructor indicated that she sometimes combines her classes with a film and a follow-up activity. She was asked to share her idea with the CPD Unit. Another teacher, again, said he did a song activity to enhance students' listening & speaking ability. Both instructors indicated that students were really motivated with these kinds of activities. Finally, all instructors agreed that we can't expect to see any evidence of autonomy in classes unless we stop treating students as "high school kids". If we continue to spoon-feed students, we prevent them from being autonomous.

- **Supports and barriers to learner autonomy in our instructional environment**

Nearly all the instructors agreed that there was a need for a stable internet connection in classes. Some instructors said that the classroom did not look like "real classrooms" because of some factors, esp. chairs (some of them indicated that they needed bigger chairs). One instructor indicated that there was a need for more pinboards. A few instructors believe that the overall SFL policy and rules of compulsory "attendance" and "forcing sts to come to class with books", "forcing sts to come to office hours" are very important factors which hinder autonomy. Nearly all the instructors indicated that Learning Center was a nice place for students and they liked it.

- **Ways to enhance learner autonomy within the SFL**

Instructors in the conversations also added that students should be given the opportunity to work collaboratively and in situations where they gain responsibility.

Nearly all the instructors agreed that there was a need for an orientation type of a program for students especially in the first week(s). They agreed that training sessions on autonomy & learning strategies was a good idea. They proposed that this training be given at the beginning of the module for approximately 5-6 hours (explicit instruction). English was suggested as a medium of instruction in these sessions by some instructors while some other instructors said that this strategy traning should be in students' L1 considering the language level of Track 1. The materials to be used in these trainings were proposed to be different for each track. (e.g. more visuals should be used in Track 1). Most of the instructors supported the idea of a learner training portfolio kept by the students to be filled in weekly and submitted to the instructors at the end of the module. It was suggested to put "How to study step by step" Sections on the weekly Learner Training Portfolios. It was suggested that 30 minutes would be OK for Learner Training Portfolios to be filled in class as a whole class discussion. Instructors suggested that CPD Unit should give a session to instructors on "how to make students autonomous learners" to ensure standardization throughout SFL.

4.5 Survey Results of Student Autonomy Discussion

Of the 8 who responded to the Feedback Survey on the Focus Group Discussion (25% of teaching staff), 75% of them found it useful; while the remaining thought it was un-useful because the time was spent on irrelevant issues due to some participating teachers. 87% of the teachers taking the survey reported that the length of the FGD was *just right*.

4.6 Survey Results of Nano Conference

Teachers were given a feedback survey on the Nano Conference. They were asked if they found the Nano Conference interesting, if they thought the length of the session was right and if they would like to see sessions like this in the future. Of the 11 who responded to the Feedback Survey on the Nano Conference (30%of teaching staff), half of them indicated that it was "good", while the other half indicated that it was "quite good". 63% of the teachers indicated that the length of the session was right, while the remaining 37% thought it was too short. All the teachers taking the

feedback survey responded that they would like to see similar sessions in the future.

Feedback sessions:

1. ILP Pilot Instructor Feedback (mid-semester & end-of-semester)
2. ILP Pilot Student Feedback (mid-semester & end-of-semester)
3. Peer Observation Pilot Instructor Feedback

4.7 ILP – Instructor Feedback

Midway through the semester-long pilot, two formative evaluation sessions were held with the nine ILP pilot instructors participating in the project. Near the conclusion of the pilot, a summative feedback session was held with eight of the instructors. The sessions were facilitated by CPD team members and were approximately one-hour in length. The information that we hoped to glean from the instructors were their impressions concerning 1) the orientation process, 2) the grouping of students, 3) the logistics of student-instructor meetings, and 4) suggestions for improvement.

The orientation phase for instructors included an overview of ILPs, the materials that would be used, as well as guidance on how instructors should communicate the ILP to their students and conduct their ILP sessions. Instructors reported that they devoted 10-15 minutes to introduce the ILPs, and that when first learning of the process, students were confused, which required more explanation than originally anticipated. Some instructors resorted to providing the orientation in Turkish and English to ensure clarity. Instructors also indicated that the process was met with mixed emotions. Where most students "felt motivated and showed a positive reaction" when they learned that the ILP would not impact their course grade, some others expressed resentment that they were "victims chosen for the pilot project while many other classes were not included."

One of the questions that the pilot was intended to help answer was how to group students among the instructors. The same class of students may have three different instructors, and the issue of equitable distribution among instructors arose in the planning stage. That is, what criteria should be used in dividing a class of 24 students by three instructors? Should they be separated according to needs (i.e. skills-based) or should they be chosen randomly? Most instructors agreed that the latter approach – random selection – was the most reasonable. One instructor suggested that students be allowed to select the instructor that they felt most comfortable with.

The third issue of concern for the CPD unit was how to most effectively introduce the concept and the practice of ILPs to the students – both to the whole class as well as in one-on-one sessions with students. For orientation purposes, a slide presentation, an explanatory brochure, and working ILP packet had been created by the CPD unit and distributed to instructors during their orientation to the programme. Instructors would, in turn, walk through the concepts and process with the whole class via the slides and brochures. They would then introduce the packet to each of their ILP students during their one-on-one sessions.

Regarding these sessions, instructors reported that initial meeting times ranged from five to thirty minutes per student; five to ten minutes for "good" students "who were more aware of their needs and weaknesses" and up to 30 minutes with "poor students who needed more in-depth needs analysis and guidance from the teacher." All students attended scheduled Track 1 & 2 meetings; only two of six Track 3 students came to their meetings. As for the language used during the ILP sessions, it should be noted that seven of the nine instructors were native Turkish speakers, as well as one Canadian and one Belgian. The native Turkish-speaking instructors indicated that they held their consultation sessions with the students in Turkish, whereas the two non-native Turkish speakers held their sessions in English. There was a communication issue reported by the Canadian instructor as he doesn't speak Turkish and he has lower level students.

Language was also an issue with the ILP assessment forms that students were to fill out, identifying areas of improvment, objectives, and action plans. The instructors mentioned that students lacked the English to fully understand the forms, and that there were too many objectives listed, making it time consuming for students to fill out; most instructors were asked to fill out the form for the students.

Finally, instructors were asked to reflect on what they perceived as student reactions to the ILP. The most telling result was the lack of sustained student participation throughout the semester. More than half of the students did not come to scheduled meetings beyond the initial session. Early on, it appeared that most students received the process positively; although it was inferred, by their lack of participation, that the Track 3 students did not see much value in the programme. Instructors did note that those who fully participated demonstrated gains primarily in writing and listening.

As for actual impact, instructors remarked that while some students evidenced visible gains as a result of the ILP, most "sadly" did not implement the programme. Other instructors noted that poor performance

on a mid-term exam inspired more active participation among some of the students. Perhaps the most relevant comment was that instructors saw the need for a training programme that would increase student autonomy, which they perceive as the root of student lack of participation in the ILP programme.

Instructors were also asked to provide input on how the programme could be improved as it transitions from a pilot to full implementation. A prevailing attitude was that the objective list in the assessment form was too long and needed to be shortened considerably. It was also suggested that instructors receive training in how to successfully implement the ILP, particularly regarding how to guide students to relevant resources, such as the SFL's Student Learning Center. It should be stressed to students as well, during orentation sessions, that the ILP sessions are not intended for tutoring. Finally, all instructors emphasized the belief that the ILP is not useful for "good" students; such students already understand their strengths and weaknesses and have self-devised plans. The concern was raised that by excluding this group from the programme, feelings of discrimination may emerge, which led to the suggestion that an opt-in programme may be developed for this population.

4.8 ILP – Student Feedback

We also actively sought feedback on the ILP programme from participating students. The CPD Unit student-worker was trained in conducting focus groups and during the pilot semester, she facilitated four separate focus groups with students from classes whose instructors were participating in the pilot. At mid-semester, three focus groups were held, one for each of the three tracks in the EFL programme. These semi-structured conversations mirrored those held with the instructors, asking questions about the orientation to the ILP programme, subsequent meetings with instructors, and formative feedback on the process.

Both Track 1 students (n=5) and Track 2 students (n=5) corroborated the information that the instructors had provided about the ILP orientation. The instructors introduced the programme via a slide show and a brochure. The students reported that they understood the aim and outcomes of the ILP, and that they held a positive reaction to it, indicating that it would help them specify areas of improvement, and serve as a source of motivation as it provided "a guideline to follow with clear aims."

In contrast to the Track 1 and 2 focus groups, the Track 3 focus group was actually a one-student interview due to lack of student participation. The student remarked that the initial orientation session had been

confusing, thus he was hesitant to become involved. Afterward, his instructor explained the aims and advantages of the ILP programme and he felt comfortable enough to participate.

The initial instructor-student meetings met with mixed reactions. While three students from each group were pleased with the usefulness and efficiency of the meeting, one of the Track 1 students felt that the meeting was too short, and more time should have been spent on the separate skill areas. The remaining Track 1 student remarked that it took place too early in the semester and it was "too early for him to specify his needs." One of the Track 2 students noted that a diagnostic test would have been a better indicator of his performance than previous assessment scores, as used on the ILP assessment form.

At that mid-point in the semester, all focus group participants from Tracks 1, 2, and 3 viewed the ILP as "very useful." Yet, they were also willing to share their concerns with the programme, beginning with the fact that it started "too late" in the school year with the second semester (which was simply an outcome of the planning and development process). By starting at that point, students felt that their aims would be too difficult to achieve. Additionally, all students expressed that the timing and duration of meetings with instructors was ineffective; i.e. individual sessions were too short and three per semester was insufficient. The Track 3 student, in discussing the effectiveness of the programme, echoed the instructors' ideas regarding student autonomy by commenting that.

Unless the student is motivated to learn, the ILP is of no use...making the ILP compulsory for all students could be one way to help students understand and adopt the programme. If it is implemented on a voluntary basis only, many students may avoid it and miss something very important.

The fourth focus group was conducted at the end of the pilot semester. Again, it was facilitated by the CPD Unit student worker. This time, it was only held with students from Track 2 (n=5). The reason being that by the end of the semester, the Track 1 and 3 students had stopped participating, as had most of the Track 2 students, pointing to homework, exams, and general fatigue as barriers to participation. The students mentioned that they had dutifully filled out their assessment forms, but had failed to folllow action plans. Additionally, communication was again raised as a hindrance, citing an inability to conduct a fruitful discussion with instructors who are non-native speakers of Turkish.

Overall, all of the students in this end-of-semester focus group believed that they had not gained anything from the ILP, and that they would hesitate to participate again in the future. To make the programme

more effective, they suggested that only native Turkish speaking instructors should participate, and that there should be higher frequency meetings between instructors and students, such as once a week, during class hours.

4.9 Instructor Feedback on Peer Observations

The Peer Observation (PO) programme was piloted over the course of one semester. To assess the progress and effectiveness of the PO, two separate focus groups were held with participating instructors; one at the beginning of the semester and one at the end. In the pilot, there were three pairs of instructors who volunteered. For each pair, one observation took place, with one pre- and one post-observation meeting taking place. At the beginning of the pilot semester, all relevant forms that had been created by the CPD Unit were distributed to the volunteers. This was followed by a meeting to review the materials and resolve any questions that the volunteers may have had. This meeting also served as an initial opportunity for the instructors to provide feedback on the forms themselves.

Suggestions that emerged from this meeting included 1) *not* utilizing a Likert-type scale for each of the criteria, and 2) converting the criteria list from Yes/No (i.e. is something occurring) to an open-ended item that asks *How* something is occurring. One other suggestion was to create separate note-taking forms for each of the major criteria, along with prompts to guide instructors during observations. For instance, if the major criterion is Classroom Management, associated prompts may include board use, rapport, etc.

Near the end of the pilot semester, after all three pairs reported having completed their observations, a follow-up focus group was conducted with the volunteers. Three essential questions were asked in the focus group: 1) Effectiveness of the materials, including the checklist/rubric, 2) Recommended frequency of observations, and 3) Selection of partners. Regarding the materials, the instructors believed that the wording of the prompts needed to be "less critical and more constructive." For instance, rather than, "Are the concepts related to students' experience?" a prompt may read, "How does the teacher relate the concepts to the students' experience?" Concerning the second item, there was a general consensus among the volunteer instructors that observations should take place at least once a semester; i.e. each member of the pair would observe each other in the same semester. Finally, partner selection should be carried out by the instructors themselves, according to the volunteers. The rationale being

that they would feel more comfortable working with someone they know and are eager to work with.

5. Analysis

Our structured evaluation, along with continuous reflection – whether through regularly scheduled meetings or over coffee – have led us toward a set of conclusions and implications that will continue to impact our own efforts, and may prove beneficial to CPD units that are in the planning or early implementation stages.

5.1 Accreditation

As a School of Foreign Languages that had lacked a structured, systematic CPD programme, conducting a self-study in pursuit of accreditation provided the rationale to establish a CPD unit. This addition to the organizational structure, including the allocation of resources (i.e. office space, release time for faculty to staff the office) demonstrated the SFL's commitment to continuous quality improvement by institutionalizing professional development. Indeed, the CPD unit was created as a sub-unit under the newly established Office of Quality Assurance. Meeting the requirements of key accreditation standards had been the impetus behind the formation of both of these units.

5.2 Leadership

Crucially, such actions do not take place without the vision and support of leadership. Indeed, quality assurance and accreditation are still more or less an institutional choice; they are not driven by external mandates. Leadership (i.e. Director of SFL) has been instrumental in initiating accreditation and structural change, as well garnering support and resources from the university administration in order to bring these ideas to fruition. Additionally, Distributed Leadership (Spillane & Diamond 2004) has played a role in the CPD unit's ability to gain a foothold in the SFL organizational culture. Distributed leadership is often misperceived as the distribution of power, when it in fact suggests the distribution of cognition - the spread of vision and values that sustains organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Although the SFL Director paved the way for a CPD unit, by creating the structure, office, and policy behind CPD, she has also stood aside and allowed the CPD unit to set an agenda and run its own course. This is not to say that the CPD unit was simply a case of plug-

and-play. There have been moments of angst as the existing structure and communications system adjust to this new entity. Again, however, leadership has played the critical role of stepping in on occasion to validate the CPD unit and reinforce the notion that the CPD unit is and will remain an integral part of the SFL structure. We continue to remind ourselves that this is one form of culture change, and perseverance is required.

5.3 Implementation

As a newly formed unit working to meet the diverse needs of a staff that expresses a strong desire to embrace CPD, yet limited time and energy to do so, we knew we needed to devise agile systems of attempting initiatives and delivering content. Once the CPD unit had been formalized and a series of needs analyses had been conducted, priorities were set. Logistically and culturally, it would have been unwise to overwhelm the pressed staff with initiatives. Thus, we established a quick-response system that we refer to as *DIAD*: Design-Implement-Assess-Decide.

These steps may take place in the course of a few weeks for workshop ideas (e.g. our Nano conference) or one semester for piloted initiatives (e.g. ILPs and Peer Observation). We have concluded that the key phase in the cycle is Assessment, as gathering data from multiple perspectives (i.e. students, instructors, staff) and using multiple methodologies (i.e. surveys, focus groups, performance assessments) provides a sense of whether or not we are moving in the right direction. For instance, we realized fairly early that the ILP would not fit and that something different for individual learners would be needed. Thus, we move back into the Design stage of a Learner Autonomy and Learning Strategy project.

In a similar vein, both in responding to instructor feedback regarding limitations of time and energy and in keeping with the DIAD approach, we have played with variations of content delivery. The guiding keywords – extracted from interviews and surveys – have been: more practical than theoretical, collaborative, short, and small-group. The model of bringing the staff together for a one or two-hour workshop (i.e. the so-called *sit-and-git* model) was not effective and clearly not what the staff desired. Not all activities are the same length – some do run an hour – however, the teachers are in charge. The CPD team members facilitate the discussions, but the teachers rule them. From the Nano conference (three, five-minute presentations) to the roundtable Focus Group Discussions (on specific topics identified by instructors), there is a general consensus that this delivery model is effective. The aim is to tighten the process even more by

making it more collaborative, more focused, and even more closely aligned with individual instructor needs and constraints. Just as we are working toward an Individual Learning Plan that works for students, we are striving to achieve something similar for instructors. Full implementation of the Peer Observation and Lesson Study programs and continuation of the small group discussions appear to be the path forward for content delivery.

Two other essential pieces of our CPD design and implementation plan from the beginning have been Assessment and Communication. Evaluation of CPD – from the individual activity to the programme as a whole – has guided our design and implementation. We begin with the aim and outcomes of our CPD initiatives and design the activities from that point. The end result is a clear measurement of the anticipated outcomes of the specific activity, as well as additional data for a growing database of the CPD unit's overall effectiveness.

Communication has also played a central role in the implementation of CPD. We have established a website (sflquality.wordpress.com) that serves not only as a means to communicate progress on our own initiatives, but it is also an evolving calendar of relevant internal and external CPD-relevant events, and an archive of CPD-related materials (e.g. CPD manual, Peer Observation materials, reports). SFL staff subscribes to the site and automatically receive email notifications when new content is added to the site. In addition, the CPD unit publishes a week-by-week CPD calendar for each semester that it distributes throughout the SFL. There is also the CPD email address that is used to send updates and reminders. Certainly, as a newly established unit within a larger structure, even a multi-pronged communication plan has not prevented all conflict. The lesson learned as a new entity is that simply developing an apparently effective communication plan for the unit has not been sufficient. What was necessary was a greater appreciation of how communication flows across the SFL, and finding a way to enter that stream. Eventually, we realized that the crucial missing piece of the communication plan was to establish alignment with the planning and communicating structures of other units within the SFL. At first, there was conflict, which may have been inevitable as the CPD unit tried to gain legitimacy in its first year. Subsequent conversation and collaboration on projects across units and the establishment of a more comprehensive calendar – aligning curricular, quality, and CPD activities – holds promise for year-two.

Finally, it should be acknowledged that given all of the work that we have accomplished throughout this first year as a CPD unit, the proof will

be in the pudding. That is, the true test of our effectiveness will be improved student learning. Admittedly, the line between CPD and student learning is not always clear. Yet, as we make an effort to uncover that line, the variable of organizational culture will certainly be taken into account. Specifically, CPD is not a mandatory activity in our SFL, thus not all instructors participate at equal levels in CPD activities. This too, is imperfect, but it may help us gain a better understanding of what may be working to increase student learning.

6. Conclusion

There is no questioning the value of Continuous Professional Development for EFL instructors. The challenge for EFL programmes when setting out to provide CPD for their staff is twofold: designing and implementing an effective CPD plan, and establishing a CPD programme that is sustainable. This paper has been an exploration of a newly created CPD unit within a school of foreign languages that is striving to achieve both of these goals. One step toward sustainability is for leadership to create a space in the existing structure for such a unit to exist, and provide it with the requisite resources (e.g. personnel, physical space). However, to ensure sustainability and legitimacy within the organization, effective design, implementation, and delivery are paramount. To this end, continuous evaluation, reflection, and agile responses to the needs of the organization and the staff should be the basis of all decisions taken. Likewise, communication and collaboration should be guidewords for any CPD unit that is newly established or working to validate its position within the organization. The CPD unit is a paradoxical entity. On one hand, it provides significant value-added to an organization. On the other hand – particularly for units that being inserted into an existing structure and culture – it can be perceived as intrusive and burdensome by adding complexity (and extra work) to the regular flow of life within the organization. The challenge for CPD units is to gain acceptance and engagement by effectively designing and implementing a CPD programme that helps tip the balance toward value-added and away from intrusive.

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Teacher Efficacy and Concerns in Pre-Service ELT Teachers

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Abstract

This study examines pre-service ELT teachers' views on teacher efficacy and concerns. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the study intends to give insights about pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concern scores prior to the teaching practicum. Moreover, the study investigates whether there is any correlation between pre-service ELT teachers' perceived efficacy and concern scores in line with specific demographic variables. Findings indicate statistically significant relationship between teacher efficacy and concerns. Finally, the study employs semi-structured interviews to clarify implications of the findings for ELT teacher education programs.

Keywords: teaching concern, efficacy, pre-service, practicum

1. Introduction:

Teacher education has undergone a dramatic paradigm shift from more traditional approaches which view pre-service teachers as 'empty vessels' to be filled with expert knowledge to more constructivist approaches empowering pre-service teachers as active stakeholders in their own personal and professional development (Richards, 1998; Roberts, 1998). In accordance with this shift, organizing teacher education programs that tap multidimensional development of pre-service teachers has gained vital importance. More precisely, it has been a top priority, if not a must, to recognize pre-service teachers' cognitive, social and emotional needs and concurrently supplement their development in all these areas. However, most research probing into cognitive, social and emotional factors such as self-confidence, self-efficacy, anxiety, burn-out, stress and motivation has treated these constructs separately and thus, failed to reveal a more precise

picture of pre-service teachers' development. Considering that various dimensions of pre-service teachers' development operate in correlation with one another rather than independently, there emerges a dire need to investigate correlations between these constructs.

One such construct, teacher efficacy is claimed to be one of the strongest factors directly influencing students' achievement (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Although it has been a major research topic in teacher education studies (Chacon, 2005; Oh, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), there is not much research (Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999; Boz & Boz, 2010) examining its correlation with other constructs. Another major research topic, teacher concern is no exception to the problem of being studied in isolation though it has proven to be an influential factor on teachers' practices in the classroom. Given the abovementioned need for studies examining correlations between different factors affecting pre-service teachers' development, this study intends to reveal pre-service ELT teachers' perceived efficacy and concern means, and if there is any statistically significant relationship between the two constructs. Moreover, it investigates if various personal factors such as gender, being a day/night group student, previous teaching experience, practicum school type and grade level placement correlate with their efficacy and concern levels. Hence, this study aims to respond to the following three questions:

R.Q.1. What are pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy scores in terms of student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management?

R.Q.2. What are pre-service ELT teachers' perceived concern scores in self, task and impact concerns?

R.Q.3. Is there any statistically significant correlation between pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concern scores and personal factors (including gender, being a day/night group student, previous teaching experience, practicum school type and grade level placement)?

R.Q.4. Is there any statistically significant correlation between pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concern scores?

2. Literature Review: Teacher Efficacy

Efficacy is a construct deriving from Bandura's social cognitive theory. In his theory, Bandura (1986) argues that one's efficacy beliefs are dependent on the triadic interaction among personal factors, actions and

environment. When applied to teacher education, self-efficacy, more commonly known as teacher efficacy, is described as "a teacher's judgment of his/her ability to affect students' learning" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001: 783). According to Bandura (1997), there are four sources of efficacy. First and foremost, mastery experiences refer to teachers' experiences that they gain from their own practices; thus, these experiences are considered as the strongest source of efficacy. Secondly, vicarious experiences emerge from teachers' observations of others' practices. Thirdly, social persuasion consists of feedback and reflections teachers' receive from others. As the last source of efficacy, physiological and emotional arousals point to the role that teachers' emotional status may have on their judgment about their capabilities in teaching. Considering that most pre-service teachers lack previous teaching experience, teaching practicum courses offered in the final year of teacher education programs may offer crucial opportunities feeding into their mastery experiences. Likewise, observations of and regular discussions with school-based teachers in the practicum may be major sources of vicarious experiences and social persuasion, which in turn help to shape teachers' beliefs about their efficacy in teaching. Finally, relationships pre-service teachers establish with students, administrators and other teachers throughout the practicum may have an influential impact on their emotional arousals about teaching.

A great deal of research has revealed relationships between teacher efficacy and various factors. Schwarzer & Hallum (2008) indicate that teachers' sense of efficacy is negatively correlated with stress and burnout, which implies that teachers with high levels of efficacy can more easily handle stress and burnout. Chacon (2005) argues that teachers with high levels of efficacy are likely to make more effort as they have stronger resilience upon difficulties they encounter in teaching. Several other researchers (Derosier & Soslau, 2014; Gavora, 2010) emphasize that teachers with high efficacy levels are more willing to implement new techniques into their teaching. Apparently, research on efficacy in pre-service teachers has been a matter of interest following the move towards school-based teacher education (Cantrell, Yooung & Moore, 2003; Çakıroğlu, Çakıroğlu & Boone, 2005; Oh, 2011). Lin & Gorrell's (2001) study reveals that pre-service teachers' beliefs about their efficacy change throughout the teacher education program. Boz & Boz (2010) found no significant correlation between pre-service teachers' efficacy levels and their academic year in the program though those in their 5th year had the highest efficacy level. In contrast, Mulholland, Dorman & Odgers (2004) showed that pre-service teachers' efficacy levels tended to decrease after

they participated in the practicum in the final year of their teacher education program. Lin, Gorrell & Taylor (2002) found that ending-level pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy was slightly lower than beginning-level pre-service teachers. Similarly, findings about correlations between efficacy and gender are still inconclusive. Whereas Çakıroğlu et al. (2005) reported no significant difference in efficacy scores of female and male pre-service teachers, Cantrell et al. (2003) indicated higher efficacy scores in favor of males. Cantrell et al. (2003) also highlighted that pre-service teachers who participated in the practicum for longer periods were identified with higher levels of efficacy. Finally, Boz & Boz (2010) demonstrated that pre-service teachers had overall moderate levels of efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management.

3. Teacher Concern

Teacher concern refers to teachers' apprehension, distress and interest in the teaching profession (Fuller, 1969). Interchangeably used with anxiety and stress, teacher concern has both negative and positive connotations. While the negative aspect relates to what teachers worry about, the positive aspect of teacher concerns refers to areas that teachers care for and want to improve (Cho, Kim, Svinicki & Decker, 2011). In one of the pioneering studies on teacher concerns, Fuller & Bown (1975) projected a 3-stage concern development trajectory in teachers' career. In the first stage called self-concern stage, teachers focus on their own survival in the classroom. This stage involves worries and/or interests such as classroom management, gaining recognition as a teacher in the school, being liked by students, and understanding expectations about the role of teacher (Capel, 1998a). Fuller (1969) argues that as teachers gain experience in teaching, task-related concerns become more prevalent. At this second stage of the concern development, teachers focus on concerns about routines of teaching including inflexibility of the curriculum, lack of instructional materials, working with too many students and workload of administrative work (Boz & Boz, 2010). In the final stage, impact concerns stage, teachers elaborate on issues such as how their teaching caters for students' learning, whether their teaching helps to meet students' multi-faceted needs and whether students achieve learning goals. Fuller & Bown (1975) hypothesize that progress through these stages is sequential. Thus, teachers typically move from self through task to impact concerns stages while it is also possible to return to a previous concern stage due to contextual changes (Fuller & Bown, 1975). However, this monolithic view

of the move through concern stages has been highly controversial. While some studies (Jenkins & Veal, 2002; Ralph, 2004) support Fuller & Bown's (1975) linear development model, others (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Capel, 2001; Derosier & Soslau, 2014) reveal that teachers may hold concerns of different types simultaneously. With respect to the time it takes to move to a subsequent stage, Borich & Tombari (1997) argue that teachers' physical, emotional and mental states have an influential impact. Furthermore, contextual factors such as their school environment, colleagues working in the same school and students in their classrooms may affect the time teachers spend on overcoming challenges of each concern stage. These factors may also affect the intensity with which they experience each concern stage as much research (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Capel, 1998a; Derosier & Soslau, 2014) reveals that concerns are context-specific.

Fuller (1969) emphasizes that in the early year of their career, teachers are vulnerable to high levels of concerns, particularly self-concerns. Nevertheless, these concerns are idealized without first-hand experience in teaching (Capel, 1998b; Fuller, 1969). Considering the pre-service teacher education contexts, practicum as the first site for transition from student to teacher may be a critical source of concern because practicum provides pre-service teachers with the opportunity to testify their teaching knowledge and skills in actual classroom settings. In their study with pre-service teachers, Chan & Leung (1998) indicated that reality and practicality of teaching practice reduced pre-service teachers' early idealistic confidence in their teaching skills. On the one hand, much research (De Baz & El Weher, 2008; Wynn & Kromrey, 2000) demonstrated that survival was the permeating issue in the practicum, since self-concerns were relatively higher than the other two concern types among pre-service teachers. On the other hand, Capel (2001) reported that both self and impact concerns appeared to be simultaneously high in pre-service teachers following their participation in the practicum.

As mentioned above, several personal and contextual factors may affect pre-service teachers' concern levels. For instance, some studies (Cho et al., 2011; Çakmak, 2008) found no correlation between gender and concern levels though others (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Morton, Vesco, Williams & Awender, 1997) indicated that female pre-service teachers had higher levels of concern. Regarding grade placement and concern levels, Morton et al. (1997) identified negative correlations between the grade level in which pre-service teachers were placed in the practicum and their concern levels. More specifically, pre-service teachers assigned to late primary grades in the practicum school reported higher

concern levels than those assigned to junior grades. Likewise, Çakmak (2008) demonstrated that establishing positive communication with students led to higher concern levels in pre-service teachers. Also, Chan & Leung (1998) highlighted that lack of knowledge in the subject matter they would teach triggered higher concern levels in pre-service teachers. Yet another factor considered to aggravate pre-service teachers' concerns was the knowledge of being observed by their mentors. Nonetheless, Ngidi & Sibaya (2003) suggested that as an alternative to alleviate pre-service teachers' concerns, pre-service teachers should be provided with more effective guidance from the mentors and more opportunities to observe their mentors teach. Finally, Capel (1998b) maintained that involvement in reflection with others on their teaching practices might help teachers reduce high concern levels.

4. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach. The study employed two independent scales to elicit quantitative data. However, merely using questionnaires would fall short of clarifying views about such complex constructs as teacher efficacy and concern (Meek & Behets, 1999). Therefore, the study also utilized semi-structured interviews to interpret findings emerging from the quantitative data collected in a cross-sectional way through these scales.

4.1. Participants

There were 250 pre-service teachers, 84 males and 166 females, in this study. All the participants were senior students enrolled in English Language Teaching department at two different universities. Their age ranged between 21 and 45, with a mean of 23. Further demographic information about the participants can be found in Table 1. All the participants were informed of the purpose of this study and that they would indicate their consent to participate in the study by filling out the questionnaires. The participants wishing to further contribute to the study by accepting to be interviewed were asked to note down their e-mail address or phone number, without their name, in the appropriate space given in the demographic information section of the questionnaires. In this way, the study intended to ensure true anonymity and voluntary participation of the participants. At the time the data were collected, all the participants were enrolled in the first part of the practicum which required them to observe the school-based teachers in the practicum schools

without necessarily being involved in active teaching practices because practice teaching was the prerequisite in the second part of the practicum.

Group		Prac.School Type		Grade Level Placement			Work Experience	
Day	Night	Public	Private	Low-Primary	Upper-Primary	High School	No	Yes
146	104	215	35	87	92	71	200	50

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the demographic variables

4.2. Instruments

The study employed two scales, namely Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) and the Teacher Concerns Checklist (TCC) (Borich, 1992). TSES is a Likert-type scale which measures 3 aspects of teacher efficacy including efficacy in student engagement, instructional strategies and classroom management. Although there is also a short version of the TSES consisting of 10 items, this study has utilized the longer version with 24 items. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) reported high reliability and validity for the overall scale and the subscales. Various other studies (Chacon, 2005; Oh, 2011) using the TSES have reported similar reliability and validity scores. Similarly, TCC consists of 3 subcategories: self, task and impact concerns. Developed on Fuller and Bown's (1975) concern model, TCC investigates views on each concern type by 15 questions and thus, includes a total of 45 items. It is a Likert-type scale with items anchored from '1- no concern' to '5- pre-occupied'. The reliability and validity of the TCC have been well-established through various studies (Borich & Tombari, 1997; Buhendwa, 1996; Rogan, Borich and Taylor 1992) across countries. As for the interviews, 15 pre-service teachers from either university who indicated willingness to be further contacted about the study participated in semi-structured interviews. Upon the participants' preference, the interviews were conducted in their L1 so that they could more easily disclose their ideas. All the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis.

4.3. Data Analysis

The quantitative data elicited through the TSES and TCC were analyzed through SPSS. A couple of analysis were conducted to find out possible relationships between the pre-service teachers' efficacy and

concern scores as well as possible impacts of personal factors on these constructs. As for the qualitative data, the interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English by the researcher. The translated version was cross-checked by a colleague who was about to complete her PhD degree in ELT, and all of the changes she suggested were made. As a next step, the translated version of the interviews was exposed to content analysis by the researcher and the same colleague as she had extensive experience in content analysis. After each rater independently categorized the participants' responses in the interviews with particular reference to Bandura's (1986; 1997) efficacy theory and Fuller and Bown's (1975) concern model, a meeting was arranged to compare and contrast these categorizations. Although there were a few differences stemming from multiple interpretations of some phrases/ words, consensus was achieved through discussion.

5. Findings

This study used a range of statistical analyses to come up with responses to the abovementioned research questions. Some of the findings in this study are in tune with the previous research in the related literature while the rest yields contradictory insights into the questions at hand. The study utilizes excerpts from interviews with the participants in order to clarify these intriguing findings.

The findings showed that the pre-service ELT teachers participating in this study were moderately efficacious as the frequency analysis of the perceived mean scores of the participants was found to be 6,44 (See Table 2). Of the three subscales of the TSES, the participants had the highest efficacy in instructional strategies, with a mean score of 6,53 while they demonstrated the least efficacy in classroom management (See Table 2). The interviews with the participants pinpointed the role of the methodology courses that they had taken in their teacher education program because the participants stated in the interviews that they had studied various teaching strategies, techniques and approaches in those courses; thus, they knew how to teach students with different characteristics. For instance, participant 3 said that "I feel comfortable about what to do in the classroom to teach my students the subject." Also, participant 10 argued that they had "learned several techniques at the university. We know how to adapt the subject to students' level." An interesting finding emerging from the interviews was the high level of perceived efficacy in classroom management. Though the frequency analysis of the participants' responses to the TSES indicated the lowest

levels of efficacy in classroom management, the participants in the interviews estimated that classroom management would not be a major problem for them because they would be the authority in the classroom and "students will respect us as we are teachers, we can somehow keep them under control" (Participant 7). This perceived discrepancy might stem from the specific characteristics of the interviewees or the fact that the interviewees had no prior teaching experiences; thus, their espoused views about classroom management were based on hearsay.

		Overall Efficacy	Efficacy in Student Engagement	Efficacy in Instructional Strategies	Efficacy in Classroom Management
N	Valid	250	250	250	250
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		6,4433	6,4500	6,5325	6,3475

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy scores

Regarding the pre-service ELT teachers' concerns, this study indicated that the participants had overall moderate teaching concern scores, with a mean of 3,52 (See Table 3). Likewise, the frequency analysis of the participants' responses to the TCC revealed that they were moderately concerned about all three concern types introduced in Fuller & Bown's (1975) concern model (See Table 3). Though they had the highest scores in impact concern with a mean score of 3,7, the pre-service ELT teachers in this study had the lowest means in task concerns. This means that the participants attached utmost importance to whether their teaching would cater for students' needs and supplement the students' learning. Obviously, it was surprising that the pre-service ELT teachers who had little or no teaching experiences felt the most preoccupied with whether their teaching would have the desired impact on their students' learning. The interviews with the participants affirmed this finding as one of the participants asserted that "I had both good and bad teachers in my school years. I learned a lot from them about how to make my class attractive for students. I hope I will make my classes fruitful for my students" (Participant 8).

		Overall Concerns	Self-Concerns	Task Concerns	Impact concerns
N	Valid	250	250	250	250
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		3,5231	3,5088	3,3603	3,7003

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the pre-service ELT teachers' concern scores

As for correlations among the participants' efficacy and concern scores and the demographic variables, this study utilized multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The findings pointed out that of the five demographic variables, only grade level placement showed statistically significant correlations with the participants' efficacy and concern scores (Wilk's Λ= .899, F $(4,450)$= 6,173, p=. 000). In other words, the participants' efficacy and concern means were in statistically significant correlation with whether they were placed in a low-primary, upper-primary or high school during the practicum. The univariate ANOVA test conducted to delineate the difference stemming from the grade level in which they were placed in the practicum revealed a statistically significant difference (p<.05) between efficacy and concern scores of those placed in upper-primary and high schools (See Table 4). The interviews supported this finding as the participants placed in the upper primary level perceived it very hard to teach a foreign language to children who were "always active in the classroom, very likely to be bored and impossible to focus on a subject for a long time" (Participant 4). The remaining four demographic variables (i.e. gender, being a day or night group student, the type of the practicum school the participants were placed in and prior work experience) showed no statistically significant correlation with the participants' efficacy and concern scores. Nevertheless, the findings regarding these four demographic variables should be tentatively handled because there was an unbalanced distribution of the participants in these groups. For example, although a great majority of the participants had no prior teaching experience, only 20% had taught previously (See Table 1). Also, only a minority (14%) were placed in private schools for practicum while the rest (86%) were placed in public schools. Therefore, any generalizations from these findings might be misleading.

	Placement Level	n	X	S	sd	F	p
Efficacy	Low-primary	87	6,43	1,15	2	11,436	,000
	Upper-primary	92	6,63	1			
	High school	71	6,20	,93			
Concern	Low-primary	87	3,53	,53	2	6,425	,002
	Upper-primary	92	3,62	,54			
	High school	71	3,38	,49			

Table 4. Relationships between the pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and scores and grade level placement

To clarify if there were any statistically significant correlation between the pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concern scores, the study conducted correlation analysis. The Pearson product-moment correlation test unraveled moderately significant positive correlation (r= .486, p<.01. See Table 5). That is to say, the higher one's overall efficacy means were, the higher their concern means would be. This finding was perplexing, since it would be expected that one with high efficacy scores should have little concern in their teaching knowledge and abilities. However, the interviews with the participants enabled to probe deeper into this finding as three major themes that could help to interpret this finding emerged in the interviews. Firstly, most of the participants (80%) in this study had no prior teaching experience and thus, their views about their teaching capabilities and concerns were necessarily based on the courses they had taken in their teacher education program. Therefore, it might be argued that while the participants felt efficacious in their teaching knowledge and skills as a result of the courses they had taken, they were still concerned about their success in the face of actual classroom teaching. This concern was evident in one of the participants' criticism about the gap between theory and practice as she stated that "we will make observations and teach in the practicum schools this year. I don't know if all the theory that we learned at the university will fit into real classrooms" (Participant 8). Moreover, their "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975: p.61) might have been a major source of efficacy in their teaching knowledge and

skills in that throughout the interviews, the participants referred to several good and bad teaching practices they had been exposed to as a learner. Nevertheless, these experiences might fall short of predicting their own success in teaching as Participant 15 said that her English teacher in the high school "was a very good model. She did her best to help us learn English. I mean, she was very successful in answering our questions. But I am not sure if I can be as good as her, though I will also do my best for my students." Finally, the participants' views about the school environment and classroom atmosphere they would work in might help to explain the moderately significant positive correlation between the participants' efficacy and concern scores. Most of the participants in the interviews mentioned that the administrative in the school in which they would work might not be open to "innovative teaching techniques" (Participant 3), and parents might be hard to satisfy as some parents would urge the teacher to "make their children pass the nation-wide exams whereas others want teachers to teach real English, I mean teach English for communicating with people even in crowded classrooms" (Participant 15).

	r	**p**	**n**
Efficacy-Concern	,486	,000	250

Table 5. Correlational analysis between the pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concerns means

6. Discussion

This study aimed to reveal pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concern scores, if certain personal factors were related to their efficacy and concern scores, and if their efficacy and concern scores were correlated. This study indicated that the pre-service ELT teachers' overall efficacy means were moderate, which contradicted the findings of previous research (Chacon, 2005; Oh, 2011) reporting high efficacy levels in pre-service teachers. However, it echoed Chacon's (2005) study in that the participants' perceived efficacy in classroom management was rated low. This study also demonstrated that the participants felt moderately efficacious in all subcomponents of efficacy including engaging students in learning activities, implementing instructional strategies and successfully managing the classroom. Given the mean scores in the three subcomponents, this study complied with previous research (Boz & Boz, 2010; Eslami & Fatahi, 2008) as it identified efficacy in instructional strategies as the area in which the pre-service ELT teachers felt the most

efficacious. It might be frustrating to note that the participants displayed the highest efficacy in adopting effective instructional practices. Yet, this finding might be attributed to the participants' lack of actual teaching experience. As indicated in the interviews, the fact that the participants' highly optimistic views about their previous experiences as learners and the methodology courses they had taken had not been testified in actual classrooms might have also fostered higher scores in their perceived efficacy in teaching. This optimism about the courses they had taken supplemented Woolfolk Hoy & Spero's (2005) argument that teacher education could promote pre-service teachers' efficacy levels.

With respect to teaching concerns, this study unraveled that the pre-service ELT teachers scored moderately on their views about which aspects of teaching would concern them the most. This finding corroborated Ngidi & Sibaya's (2003) study in which pre-service teachers were identified to have moderate levels of teaching concerns. Apparently, a moderate level of concern is desirable (D'Rozario & Wong, 1998) because this may motivate pre-service teachers to sustain their personal and professional development. However, this study yielded two intriguing findings which furthered the controversy in the literature about teaching concerns. Firstly, this study indicated that despite slight differences in the mean scores, the pre-service ELT teachers concurrently held concerns about all three concern types. This finding contradicted Fuller's (1969) concern model as she and others (Jenkins & Veal, 2002; Ralph, 2004) following her model deemed a linear progress from self to task and ultimately to impact concerns in early career years. Conversely, the participants in this study were concerned not only about self but also about the task of teaching and the impact of their teaching on students simultaneously. Similarly, Fuller and Bown (1975) surmised that beginning teachers would typically be preoccupied with concerns about self. However, the pre-service teachers in this study reported the highest concern scores in the impact of their teaching. Hence, this study confirmed previous researchers (Campbell & Thompson, 2007; Capel, 2001) who maintained that pre-service teachers did not necessarily follow a pre-determined path from self through task to impact concerns. Instead, concerns are context- and person-specific (Capel, 1998b; Derosier & Soslau, 2014; Fuller & Bown, 1975) and thus, pre-service teachers may have different concerns depending on their own experiences, needs and contexts.

The demographic variables (except for grade level placement) examined in this study showed no statistically significant relationship with the participants' perceived efficacy and concern scores. This finding

supported previous studies which reported that such personal factors as gender and whether they were enrolled in day or night groups had no statistically significant impact on pre-service teachers' efficacy (Çakıroğlu et al., 2005; Yılmaz & Huyugüzel Çavaş, 2008) and concern means (Çakmak, 2008; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999). Furthermore, this study contributed to the literature as it found that two rarely investigated personal factors i.e. the school type in which the pre-service teachers were placed in the practicum and their prior teaching experience had no statistically significant relationship with their efficacy and concern scores. Yet, this study did find a statistically significant impact of the grade level the pre-service ELT teachers were placed during the practicum on their efficacy and concern scores as the participants who would observe and practice-teach in the upper-primary grades reported higher perceived efficacy and concern scores than those placed in high schools. This finding was in tune with Morton et al.'s (1997) study as they (1997) found that pre-service teachers placed in upper primary grades were identified with higher perceived concern scores than those placed in early primary or junior levels. Likewise, Ghaith & Shaaban (1999) found that the grade level taught affected teachers' efficacy levels. A possible interpretation of this finding might be, as highlighted in the interviews, that the pre-service teachers perceived it more difficult to deal with problems and needs of young learners due to the basic features of the developmental period young learners were in.

Finally, this study illustrated that though it was moderate, there was a statistically significant positive correlation between the participants' efficacy and concern scores. Although there were only few previous studies (Boz & Boz, 2010; Ghaith & Shaaban, 1999) investigating the correlation between teachers' efficacy and concern scores, they revealed negative relationships between the two constructs. For instance, Ghaith & Shaaban (1999) who worked with in-service Lebanese teachers highlighted that those with high levels of efficacy had low levels of concerns. Similarly, Boz & Boz (2010) emphasized that pre-service science and mathematics teachers with high levels of efficacy were found to have low concern levels. Nevertheless, the findings in this study contradicted the previous literature because the mean efficacy and concern scores of the pre-service ELT teachers were proven to be positively correlated. That is the pre-service ELT teachers with higher efficacy scores were identified to have higher concern scores. This intriguing finding was explained by three major themes emerging from the interviews with the participants. Firstly, most of the participants had no prior teaching experience. Also, they reported to have gained a lot from

the extensive experiences with good and bad teaching practices as learners and the methodology courses they had taken at the university. Furthermore, contextual factors such as relationships with the school administration and parents as well as the classroom atmosphere might have affected their views on their own teaching efficacy and concerns. Overall, these factors might have on the one hand promoted their sense of efficacy in teaching, on the other hand aggravated their concerns about how to handle responsibilities of teaching in actual classrooms. Thus, the findings of this study have introduced a new perspective on the correlation between teacher efficacy and concerns because this is one of the few, if not the first, studies revealing a positive correlation between the two factors, which may in turn foster further inquiry into the nature of this correlation.

7. Conclusion

This study has contributed to the literature in teacher education by filling in some gap in research about correlational studies on teacher efficacy and concerns. The study revealed moderate efficacy and concern scores in pre-service ELT teachers. Moreover, it found a moderately significant positive correlation between the pre-service ELT teachers' perceived efficacy and concern scores, which contradicted the findings of previous research and brought about a need for further inquiry into the nature of this correlation. Since such constructs as efficacy and concerns are closely bound up with various contextual factors, this study concludes that pre-service teacher education programs should deeply probe into reasons aggravating pre-service teachers' concerns and devise solutions to reduce those concerns to a minimum. Similarly, pre-service teacher education programs should include activities that will promote pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy in teaching.

Given the recent trend towards school-based teacher education, there arises a drastic function to be served by practicum courses offered in teacher education programs. The finding that the grade level placement was significantly correlated with the pre-service ELT teachers' efficacy and concerns scores leads to the suggestion that pre-service teacher education programs should provide more opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice in actual classrooms. Otherwise, the idealized views on their own teaching efficacy and concerns may drag pre-service teachers into a 'reality shock' once they are assigned as full-time teachers in actual classroom settings. An implication of the correlation between grade level placement in the practicum and pre-service teachers' efficacy and concern

scores may be the adoption of a rotational practicum trajectory. That is teacher education programs may require pre-service teachers to observe and practice-teach in different grade levels at certain time periods of the practicum process instead of placing them in a classroom at a/an primary, elementary or high school level and asking them to commute to the same classroom throughout the practicum process. In this rotational model, pre-service teachers will have the opportunity to test their teaching knowledge and skills at various grade levels and thus, develop a more realistic understanding of teaching and themselves as a teacher. Finally, one should notice that the findings of this study are limited to its own specific context because of the unbalanced distribution of the participants in terms of their personal variables. Henceforth, any deduction from this study should be tentatively handled.

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Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Beliefs on Learner Autonomy based on Practicum Experiences

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Abstract

Although learner autonomy has been intensively discussed in the field of language teaching, especially in the last decade, a very limited number of research studies have been conducted in order to have a clearer understanding of teachers' beliefs about this phenomenon. Thus, this study focuses on pre-service English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and whether they change based on their practicum experiences. Regarding the research design, this study follows a quantitative methodology. The data were collected through a questionnaire, which was adopted from Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012). It was administered to 57 pre-service teachers as a pre-questionnaire in the first week of the semester, before they went to practice schools within the scope of their School Experience course. After their 10-week observation and teaching experiences, the same questionnaire was administered again as a post-test. The results of the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire were analyzed through frequency analyses and Mann-Whitney test. The results coming from the pre and post-questionnaires revealed that the beliefs of this group of participants did not differ before and after their practicum experiences; and student teachers were dispositioned positively towards the notion of learner autonomy. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the literature by exploring the relationship between pre-service teachers' practicum experiences and their beliefs about learner autonomy, and thus providing teachers, educators and policymakers with valuable insights into this phenomenon.

1. Introduction

Learner autonomy gained prominence in the field of language teaching due to the shift from teacher-centered classrooms to student-oriented and more communicative learning environments. Learner autonomy is defined as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981, p.3) in a broad sense. According to this view, learners are totally responsible for all the components of their own learning processes, such as choosing course materials, arranging classrooms, deciding on the time and place of the lessons. In this regard, learner autonomy is "associated with a radical restructuring of language" and it is considered to be "the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working" (Allwright, 1988, p. 35). Furthermore, teachers are supposed to develop teaching strategies linked with learner autonomy. To this end, teachers play a key role in promoting the implementation of learner autonomy in the classrooms. In this sense, teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy have recently earned prominence in terms of gaining a broader perspective on the achievability and desirability of this phenomenon. Previous research revealed that beliefs are one of the essential components of teacher cognition, which is the research field of what teachers know, think and believe (Borg, 2006). Although beliefs are generally perceived as mental representations which are rigid and hard to change (Thompson, 1992), they may be affected or changed by experiences. In this sense, practicum is a crucial process in which pre-service teachers gain experiences and have an opportunity to reshape their beliefs and attitudes before entering the profession. Within the scope of practicum courses in teacher training programs, classroom realities and teaching practices may result in changes in pre-service teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy.

These changes are crucial for both pre-service teachers and their future students since learner autonomy is the starting point of a complex and fruitful process by which students accept the responsibility of their own learning and teachers have a chance to evaluate their teaching practice. As practicum courses are widely known as an opportunity for student teachers to gain an in-depth experience on classroom realities and go through real-like interactions with students, it would be plausible to focus on the investigation of the effects of practicum courses on pre-service teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy. Therefore, there is an urgent need to understand pre-service teachers' beliefs towards learner autonomy, since

teachers' beliefs may affect their teaching practices. Thus, this paper aims to identify the pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy and explore the relationship between practicum experiences and their beliefs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Beliefs

Teacher beliefs are valuable concepts which shed light on teachers' thought processes and instructional practices (Zheng, 2009); thereby, they are considered as one of the essential components of teacher cognition which is what teachers know, think and believe (Borg, 2006). Research studies regarding foreign language teacher cognition have grown rapidly since the mid-1990s (Borg, 2009). In a similar vein, researchers started to provide clear definitions of teacher beliefs in the early 1990s. Pajares (1992) defines beliefs as "an individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do" (p. 316). Based on this description, he also suggests that beliefs affect individuals' behavior and practices. He further elaborates that beliefs are constructed from the very early stages of life; therefore, they might show resistance to change or adaptation. On the other hand, Thompson's (1992) definition of beliefs as "dynamic, permeable mental structures, susceptible to change in light of experience" (p. 140) paves way for modifications if experiences support them. Ford (1994) also corroborates the formative power of an experience upon beliefs by describing beliefs as "convictions or opinions that are formed either by experience or by the intervention of ideas through the learning process" (p. 315). In this study, Thompson's definition of teacher beliefs is adopted based on the fact that if teachers have been through a drastic intervention or experience, their preconceptions can be reorganized. With this regard, the particular status of pre-service teachers in the stage of the practicum calls for a meticulous study on their beliefs since the first school experience is also a very intense formative intervention which is also known as experiencing reality shock (Caires, Almeida,& Martins, 2009; Kim & Cho, 2014).

The practicum, on its own, is a delicate process in which student teachers enter into the profession for the first time as a professional practitioner within the scope of their pre-service teacher education studies. In other words, they undergo a "transition" from their teacher education program to "the realities of teaching" (Gebhard, 2009, p. 250). They are

expected to put theories, to which they are exposed in their academic studies, into practice with the assistance of mentor teachers in the cooperating schools and their supervisors in the university departments. During the practice teaching procedure, student teachers need to go through a transformation from being a student to being a teacher. This desirable change yields a chance for revisiting assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning (Caires, Almeida & Martins, 2009). In a similar vein, this is the first stage for pre-service teachers to professionally explore the beliefs and values which inform their teaching as a teacher in practice (Borg, 2009). In their studies with pre-service teachers at the stage of school experience, Caires, Almeida and Martins (2009) found that first teaching experiences lead to changes in student teachers' both personal and professional perceptions about their own teaching. In this sense, Borg (2003) also indicates that teachers' classroom experiences, including practice teaching of student teachers, have a power to affect their cognition or beliefs. For instance; Richards, Ho and Gibson (1996) have explored change in student teachers' cognition during the introductory practice teaching course in Hong Kong. They concluded that this initial practice course changed future teachers' perceptions of their role in the classroom, their knowledge in professional discourse and professional knowledge. Therefore, a study which examines teacher candidates' beliefs about learner autonomy right before and after the practicum experiences is vital for capturing pre-service teachers' cognitive developments with regard to practice teaching.

2.2 Learner Autonomy

Autonomy has been defined in several ways in foreign language literature. For the purposes of this study, Holec's (1981) definition of autonomy is used as a basis since it is the most cited definition in the literature. Holec (1981) defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's learning … to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning" (p. 3). Additionally, scholars like Dickinson (1987) focus on the situation based aspect of autonomy. This view defines autonomy as "the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions" (p. 11). Furthermore, learner autonomy is "associated with a radical restructuring of language pedagogy" and it is considered to be "the rejection of the traditional classroom and the introduction of wholly new ways of working" (Allwright, 1988, p. 35). This belief entails a reconstruction of conventional language classroom practices around the

world (Benson, 2007). The closing gap between "classroom" and "out-of-class" applications lead to the emergence of new ideas of learner autonomy (Benson, 2007).

On the other hand, the present study examines learner autonomy in a collectivist culture, Turkey (Wasti, 1999), and thus some criticisms of learner autonomy arise from contextual factors since it underlines the individualistic Western culture. Although there is not a conclusive result in the literature, it is argued that autonomy can be implemented in collectivist eastern cultures via group work (Smith, 2001).

The literature notes that there are several ways to practice autonomy. Learner autonomy can be implemented in classroom environment and outside-the-class. As for outside-the-class practices, Gardner (2006) suggests that learners can go to self-access centers for language learning purposes. In the same vein, the autonomous language students can also exploit CALL (computer assisted language learning) practices (Benson, 2005), along with distance language education (White, 2007) and tandem learning, a practice where two people work collaboratively to learn each other's languages (Lewis, 2005). Similarly, for the classroom environment, Aoki (2003) suggests that learners have a chance to be autonomous in the class as well. Learner autonomy can be enhanced through the classroom activities, curriculum and evaluation practices. Furthermore, the literature also presents that learner autonomy is linked with learning strategies and that the learners should be able to identify and adjust their learning strategies for better learning outcomes (Little, 2000). Autonomy and motivation are also considered to be related (Takagi, 2003). Dörnyei and Csizer (1998) argue that one of the 'ten commandments' for motivating learners is promoting learner autonomy, while Ushioda (1996) states that self-motivation is required for being an autonomous learner. Based on these findings in the literature, the data collection tools to be used in this study have been designed accordingly.

2.3. Teacher's beliefs about learner autonomy

Jacobs and Farrell (2001) tried to define principles of learner autonomy in order to clarify this notion. They suggested that the most significant principle is to move the focus from teaching to learning. It does not mean that the teacher becomes redundant in the classroom. On the contrary, s/he plays a key role in terms of organizing lessons in collaboration with learners in regards to both course materials and methods. They further pointed out that by creating cooperative classrooms, teachers contribute to student participation in the process of decision-making in terms of

choosing course materials and defining course objectives. Students take responsibility for their own learning by forming their own working groups, arranging their seats and deciding on homework types. In line with these principles, Balçıkanlı's (2010) study investigated 112 student teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy in one of the universities in the Central Anatolia region of Turkey. The study also employed 5 focus group interviews with 20 volunteer teachers.

The findings revealed that teacher candidates mostly have positive attitudes towards the above-mentioned principles of learner autonomy. Pre-service teachers hold favorable views about students' active participation in deciding on the methodology of the course and learning strategies. However, a great number of student teachers are unwilling to involve their students in choosing the course materials, since they believed that selecting a textbook is regarded as a part of professional teachers' task.

In another study investigating pre-service teachers' attitudes towards learner autonomy, Camilleri (1999) administered a questionnaire to 50 teacher candidates. The study revealed that some teachers show strong resistance to learner autonomy regarding curriculum factors (such as selecting a course book or place and duration of the lesson) because they think that teachers can make better decisions about choosing the course materials. Nevertheless, the author found that teachers believe learner autonomy serves as a way of motivating students as it enables students to make decisions about their learning. On the other hand, Zeki and Güneyli (2014) conducted a study with 37 pre-service teachers in order to explore their beliefs about learner-centered classrooms. The data were collected using reflective essays written by the undergraduate students who were enrolled in a Student Centered Education Course at one of the universities in Northern Cyprus. Pre-service teachers reported that student-centered classrooms might cause unenergetic and unmotivated students since pupils become tired of taking too many active roles in the whole learning process.

In parallel with the above-mentioned studies, research on in-service teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy also shows similar results. Barillaro (2011) conducted a project which aimed to explore English language teachers' perspectives of learner autonomy at a Canadian private ESL school. The study adopted a mixed method approach using a questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study showed that most of the teachers have certain knowledge about learner autonomy and they do not have negative attitudes towards the notion of an autonomous learner. The teachers considered that they should

not take on the responsibility for learners' outside learning. However, they also reported that teachers should have a part in making decisions about in-class learning and teaching-related issues. Some of the participants claimed that particular courses in the private school curriculum make it easier to create a favorable classroom atmosphere in which a learner can take ownership of his/her learning. On the other hand, some of the teachers believed that the teacher plays a key role rather than the school curriculum, if fostering learner autonomy is in question. In addition, according to the teachers, increasing number of students and time limitations are the major problems in promoting learner autonomy in the classrooms.

Another study by Shahsavari (2014), aimed to gain an insight into Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions about learner autonomy and investigated the problems occurring in the real classroom environment related to this concept. The study compared teachers' and students' perspectives about learner autonomy. A structured questionnaire and an interview were employed in order to understand how teachers make sense of learner autonomy. The results of the study revealed that in both groups, allowing learners to choose their course materials, involving them in the process of designing syllabus and offering opportunities for determining the way of assessment were among the most supported factors. Teachers believed that they have necessary skills and opportunities to promote learner autonomy while most of them thought that their students do not have a precise understanding of being an autonomous learner and its importance. On the other hand, a group of teachers considered that if they let students take responsibility of their learning, they will be regarded as an inefficient teacher. Last but not least, some of the teachers stated that the education system is one of the greatest obstacles to develop learner autonomy.

2.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

As can be inferred from the review of literature, learner autonomy is mostly studied with beliefs and perceptions of in-service teachers. Furthermore, when learner autonomy studies are conducted with pre-service teachers, the practicum component has not been taken into account. The present study aims at filling this gap in the literature by exploring the effect of the practicum component on pre-service teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy. In addition, based on Borg's (2003) suggestion that the teaching context has a power to change teacher beliefs, the effects of the teaching contexts in practicum, the age group pre-service teachers observe (young learners or adolescents) are also investigated

within the scope of this study. Therefore, the following research questions have been formed:

1) What is the relationship between pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy and the practicum experience?
    1. a) Do pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs in desirability of learner autonomy differ before and after the practicum?
    1. b) Do pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs in achievability of learner autonomy differ before and after the practicum?
    1. c) Are there any differences between the groups of pre-service EFL teachers who observe young learners and those who observe adolescents regarding their beliefs in learner autonomy?

It is hypothesized that there will be a difference in the beliefs of pre-service EFL teachers about learner autonomy, its achievability and desirability before and after the practicum. Furthermore, it is expected that there will be a difference between the groups of pre-service EFL teachers who observe young learners and who observe adolescents regarding their beliefs in learner autonomy.

3. Methodology

3.1 Context and Participants

The study took place in one of the public universities in Turkey. The participants were the senior year students of Department of Foreign Language Education at this university. The medium of instruction of the university was English. This four-year teacher education program comprises theoretical courses (English language, ELT methodology, educational sciences, linguistics and literature) and a practicum component which consists of two courses in the senior year (school experience and practice teaching). This paper focuses on school experience part of the practicum component. Senior year students were selected as participants for this study because the participants were taking their first practicum course in the semester the study was conducted. As a part of this course, the participants were required to visit a cooperating school for four hours a week and observe an in-service English language teacher and learners at an assigned school. There were seven sections for this course and each section visited different schools. As a result, the participants also got familiarized with different age groups: young learners (0-12) and adolescents (13+). The practicum lasted for about ten weeks. The pre-

service EFL teachers were supposed to complete several different tasks: observation, reflection, research, and teaching.

The participants of the study were 57 pre-service English language teachers (f=47, m=10). The participants were between the ages of 20 and 24 (mean age= 21.2). Furthermore, 19 of the participants observed young learners and 38 observed adolescents. For the sampling process, convenience sampling was followed due to ease of access to the participants.

3.2. Data Collection Tool

For the data collection process, a questionnaire including attitudinal questions (Dörnyei, 2007) was administered which is the case in most of the belief studies about language learning and teaching (Borg, 2006). The use of questionnaire is needed since teacher beliefs are not directly observable; thereby, such studies require the employment of statements about teacher beliefs to make sound inferences (Borg, 2006, 2009; Pajares, 1992). 'Questionnaire on Learner Autonomy' developed by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) was adapted and used as a data collection tool in this study. The questionnaire included two parts. The first part of the questionnaire aimed to find out participants' opinions about the desirability and achievability of learner autonomy; there were 28 five-point Likert scale items, ranging from very desirable (4) to not desirable (1) and from very achievable (4) to not achievable (1). For both of these scales there was also an undecided option which was coded as "0". 14 of the items were related to the desirability of including learners in decision making about certain curricular activities (material selection, choosing topics discussed, etc.) and of certain learner abilities (identifying their needs, weaknesses, etc). Likewise, 14 of the items were about the achievability of including learners in decision making processes and of certain learner abilities. The last part of the questionnaire entailed 6 questions and aimed to elicit demographic information related to the participants (e.g., gender, age, and students' teaching experiences). The demographic information part was placed at the end of the questionnaire since asking personal questions at the beginning may result in some resistance in the participants or they may have a suspicion that the questionnaire is not of anonymous nature (Dörnyei, 2007). Since autonomy can be defined in several ways (Benson, 2007), at the beginning of the questionnaire a definition of autonomy was provided for the participants. The aim of this was to create a common ground for the definition of learner autonomy across participants. The most cited autonomy definition in literature (Holec, 1981) was selected for this purpose.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

This study followed a quantitative methodology. The data were gathered throughout the fall semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. The adapted version of the questionnaire was pilot tested before administration with pre-service and graduate students on four rounds. After piloting, the main study was conducted with 57 pre-service teachers who enrolled in the fourth year of the department after all participants' permission was taken. The questionnaire was completed approximately in 20 minutes and no difficulties were reported by the respondents. Questionnaire on Learner Autonomy was administered as a pre-test to find out their beliefs on the concept of learner autonomy in the first week of the semester before they went to practice schools within the scope of School Experience course. After their 10-week observation and teaching experiences, the same questionnaire was completed as a post-test.

3.4 Analysis

The data collected via the pre-practicum and post-practicum questionnaires were analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 20 Software and Microsoft Excel Software. For the analysis of the Likert-Scale items in the pre and post-practicum questionnaires, frequency analyses were conducted. The data coming from the first part of both questionnaires were compared and contrasted through frequency analysis to see if there were any effects of practicum experiences on pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about desirability and achievability of learner autonomy. Furthermore, to see if the observed age group affects the pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy, the Mann-Whitney test was utilized. Since the data coming from the questionnaires were categorical, the Mann-Whitney test was used to determine the significance of the differences between these groups (Field, 2009; Larsen-Hall, 2010).

4. Results and Discussion

After the data collection process, data gathered through the questionnaire were analyzed. The Cronbach's Alpha for the Likert scale items in the first part of the questionnaire was calculated as .89. To Dörnyei (2007), internal consistency estimated for well-developed scales should be around .80. Therefore, the results of the study were obtained

from a quite reliable questionnaire. The results are presented with reference to the research questions of the study.

4.1 Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers about Desirability

The first research question of the study was "Do pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs in desirability of learner autonomy differ before and after the practicum?". The data coming from both of the questionnaires are analyzed and discussed separately below. Figure 4.1 summarizes the student teachers' responses from both pre-practicum and post-practicum questionnaires.

4.1.1 Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers about Desirability before Practicum

The data coming from the pre-practicum questionnaire showed that the participants have found all of the items in this section of the questionnaire desirable. Figure 4.1 clearly shows that the degree of desirability for a range of abilities that are generally regarded as indicators of learner autonomy (m=3,4) was higher than the degree of desirability for students' involvement in decision making (m=2.6). For instance, teacher candidates believed that student involvement in decisions about classroom management (item=1g) (m=2.2), the objectives of a course (m=2,2) (item=1a) and how learning is assessed (m=2.4) (item=1e) was relatively less desirable than their involvement in decision making about the topic discussed (m=3.2) and kind of topics and activities they do (m=3.4). These results are in line with Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012), who also reported that teachers found student involvement in decisions particularly about objectives and assessment less desirable.

The mean scores of items about desirability for a variety of abilities that students should possess were consistently higher: learners' ability to identify their own needs (m=3.5), their own strengths (m=3.6) and weaknesses (m=3.6); the ability to monitor their own learning progress (m=3.5), and their ability to learn independently (m=3.4). These results also support Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012). In this sense, teacher candidates' beliefs about desirability of learner autonomy are similar to in-service teachers' preferences even before the practicum.
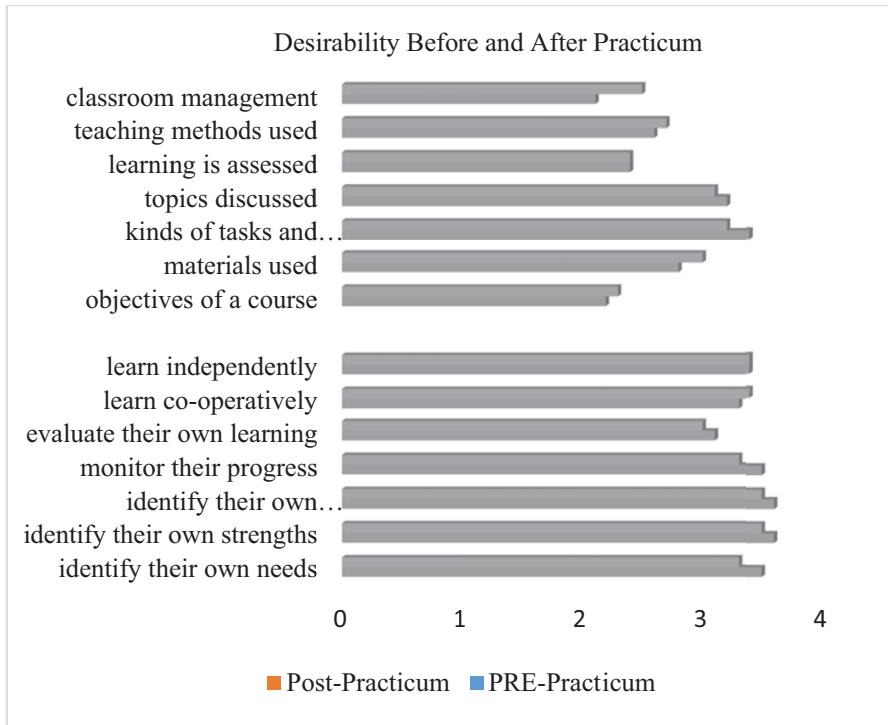
Figure 4.1. Summary of the results of desirability items before and after practicum

4.1.2 Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers about Desirability after Practicum

After the participants' practicum experiences, the mean scores of their answers to the desirability items were slightly higher for the involvement of learners in decision making processes (pre-questionnaire m=2.6; post-questionnaire m=2.7) while the mean scores were slightly lower for the items about students' expected abilities (pre-questionnaire m=3.4; post-questionnaire m=3.3). Still, student engagement in decisions about classroom management (m=2.5), the objectives of a course (m=2,3) and how learning is assessed (m=2.4) were relatively less desirable than their involvement in decisions about topic discussed (m=3.1) and kind of topics and activities they do (m=3.2).

With regard to the student abilities, items of identifying their own strengths (m=3.5) and weaknesses (m=3.5); and learning independently

(m=3.4) and cooperatively (m=3.4) were found more desirable. It is not surprising that student teachers' responses for the desirability of learner autonomy have not changed after the practicum since it seems unlikely that desirability of such a comprehensive and leading concept gets affected by experience. Besides, after the actual teaching context, their beliefs on the desirability of learner involvement in the decision making process were slightly strengthened.

To sum up, our hypothesis that there would be a difference in pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs in desirability of learner autonomy at the end of the practicum was not confirmed by the results of the study.

4.2 Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers about Achievability

The second research question was "Do pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs in achievability of learner autonomy differ before and after the practicum?". Figure 4.2 illustrates the student teachers' responses about achievability of learner autonomy from both pre-practicum and post-practicum questionnaires.

4.2.1. Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers about Achievability before Practicum

The data coming from the pre-practicum questionnaire indicated that the participants have found the items regarding learner involvement in decision making (m=2.4) relatively less achievable than the items about autonomous learner abilities (m=3.1).

Similar to the desirability part, pre-service EFL teachers believed that learner involvement in decisions about the objectives of a course (m=1.9), how learning is assessed (m=2.1), the teaching method used (m=2.3) and classroom management (m=2.3) were less achievable than their engagement in decisions about topic discussed (m=2.9) and kind of topics and activities they do (m=2.9). These results are in line with Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) as well. They also found out that teachers thought student involvement in decisions particularly about objectives and assessment was less achievable. Besides, Shahsavari (2014) came up with similar results in her study which investigated both Iranian EFL learners and teachers' opinions about both desirability and achievability of learner autonomy by using Borg and Al-Busaidi's questionnaire. She concluded that student involvement in decision making in relation to assessment was found less achievable by teachers.
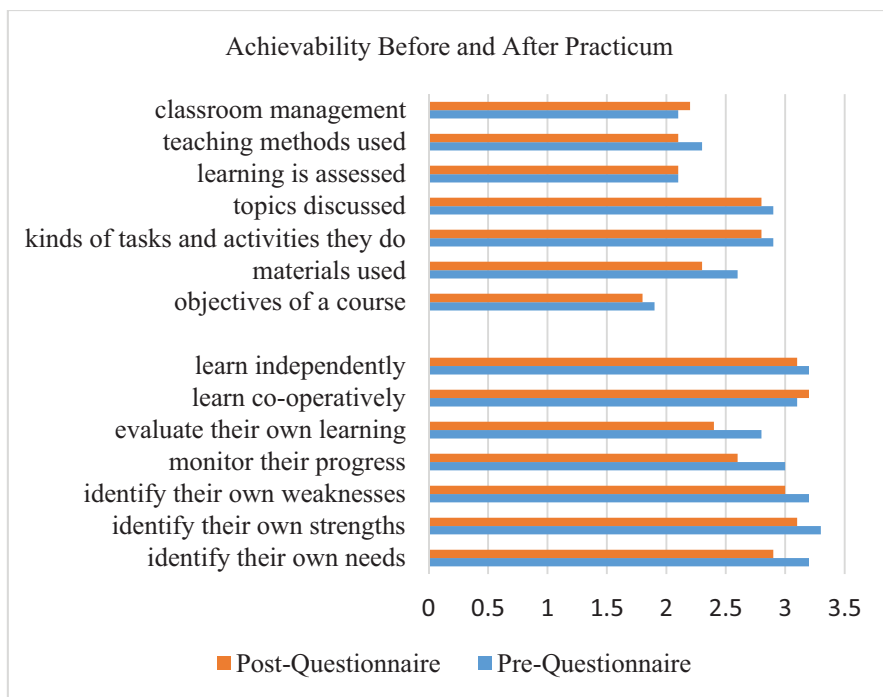
Figure 4.2. Summary of the results of achievability items before and after practicum

The mean scores of the following items about achievability for a variety of abilities that students should possess were consistently high: learners' ability to identify their own needs (m=3.2), their own strengths (m=3.3) and weaknesses (m=3.2); the ability to monitor their own learning progress (m=3.0), and their ability to learn independently (m=3.2).

4.2.2 Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers about Achievability after Practicum

The results of the post-practicum questionnaire illustrated that there was a slight change in pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs regarding achievability of involving learners in decisions about learning process (m=1.8) since the mean was 2.4 before the practicum. Likewise, the mean for the items about achievability of the learners' abilities regarding autonomy in the pre-questionnaire (m=3.1) decreased to 2.9 in the post-questionnaire.

After the first teaching experiences, the participants considered that the abilities of the learners related with autonomy were more achievable than involving them in decision making processes. According to the participants, the most achievable items were ability of the learners identifying their own strengths (m=3.1), weaknesses (m=3.0), and also their ability to learn cooperatively (m=3.2) and independently (m=3.1).

As for learner involvement in decision making processes, the participants leaned towards not achievable/ slightly achievable side of the continuum after their practicum experiences. For instance, the number of the students who found learner involvement in decisions about the objectives of a course not achievable was 21 (36%) after the practicum, while it was 10 (17%) before. In a similar way, while only one person found learner involvement in decisions about the materials used (1,7%) not achievable in the beginning, the number increased to 10 after the practicum (17%).

Future teachers' responses to the achievability of learner autonomy before and after the practicum further support Balçıkanlı's study (2010) and Camilleri (1999) whose pre-service teacher-participants also thought that decisions about material selection should not be left to learners since this is a task which requires professionalism. Overall, lower degrees of achievability for student engagement in decision making about classroom may imply that student teachers think that teachers rather than students should be taking an active role in decision making processes about in-class learning and teaching-related issues (Barillaro, 2011). Although student teachers' beliefs about achievability of learner autonomy before and after the practicum have not altered drastically, one could see a decrease in the level of achievability after the practicum. This result may also be due to student teachers' realization of the gap between theory and practice after their practicum experiences (Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, & Tomlinson, 2009). The awareness of difficulty in applying theory into the practice may have driven future teachers to rate the lower degree of achievability.

To sum up, the hypothesis that there would be a difference in pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs in achievability of learner autonomy at the end of the practicum was partly confirmed based on these results.

4.3 Pre-Service EFL Teachers Observing Young Learners and Adolescents

The last research question of the study was "Are there any differences between the groups of pre-service EFL teachers who observe young learners (0-12 ages) and those who observe adolescents (+13) regarding

their beliefs in learner autonomy?". To provide answers for this question, the Mann-Whitney test was conducted on the data gathered from the pre-questionnaires to illustrate that there is no difference between these two groups of students who observed young learners and those who observed adolescents before the practicum. The results of the pre-questionnaire revealed that overall there was no difference between the groups regarding their beliefs about learner autonomy.

The Mann-Whitney test was conducted one more time on the data gathered from the post-questionnaire to see whether the observed age group had an effect on student teachers' beliefs on learner autonomy. In this sense, nearly the quarter of the items in the desirability and achievability part yielded significant differences, in total six items: item 1a (z=-2.1, p.029) , item 2b (z= -2.1, p. 032) and item 2c (z=-2.1, p. 032) in the desirability section and item 3e (z=-2,4, p. 013), item 3f (z=-1.9, p. 050) and item 4e (z=-2.0, p. 037) in the achievability part. For all these items, young learners group believed that both desirability and achievability were relatively difficult to accomplish (Table 4.1). For instance, learner involvement in decision making about the objectives of a course was found less desirable by the young learners group (36.8% not desirable; 5.3% very desirable) than the adolescents group (15.8% not desirable; 18.4% very desirable). Similarly, as can be seen in Table 4.2 and 4.3, learner involvement in decisions about how learning is assessed was found less achievable in the young learners group's answers (52.6% not achievable, %0 very achievable) than in the responses of the adolescents group (28.9% not achievable; 7.9% very achievable) and a difference was observed in the findings between the groups for engaging learners in decisions about the teaching method (42.1% not achievable in the young learners group; 13.2% not achievable and 7.9% very achievable in the adolescent group).

Overall, the groups who observed young learners believed that it was relatively less desirable and achievable including learners in decisions about the lesson objectives, assessment and methods used. In addition, they also found that learner abilities to identify their own strengths and weaknesses not very achievable compared to the group who observed relatively older students. Based on these findings, for this group of student teachers, the age group they observed, a contextual factor, might have affected their beliefs (Borg, 2003). Since the diversity in the context student teachers were engaged within for the purpose of practicum yielded diverse results, which carry the peculiarities of the context; it could be concluded that enabling student teachers to experience in diverse contexts

during the practicum process may help them restructure and enrich their beliefs as well as broaden their context specific knowledge.

Table 4.1. Results of Mann-Whitney Test for Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers Observing Young Learners and Adolescents on Learner Autonomy

ITEMS	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
1a.Learners are involved in decisions about the materials used	240,5	430,5	-2,1	0,029
2b. Learners have the ability to identify their own strengths	255	445	-2,1	0,032
2c. Learners have the ability to identify their own weaknesses	255	445	-2,1	0,032
3e.Learners are involved in decisions about how learning is assessed	224,5	414,5	-2,4	0,013
3f.Learners are involved in decisions about the teaching methods used	251,5	441,5	-1,9	0,050
4e. Learners have the ability to evaluate their own learning	242,5	432,5	-2,0	0,037

Table 4.2. Differences between Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers Observing Young Learners and Adolescents on Desirability Items

Items	Not Desirable %		Slightly Desirable %		Quite Desirable %		Very Desirable %		Not Decided %	
	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents
1a.Learners are involved in decisions about the objectives of a course.	36.8	15.8	31.6	23.7	26.3	36.8	5.3	18.4	0	5.3
2b. Learners have the ability to identify their own strengths.	5.3	0	5.3	2.6	36.8	23.7	47.4	73.7	5.3	0
2c. Learners have the ability to identify their own weaknesses	5.3	0	5.3	2.6	36.8	23.7	47.4	73.7	5.3	0

Items	Not Achievable %		Slightly Achievable %		Quite Achievable %		Very Achievable %		Not Decided %	
	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents	Young	Adolescents
3a. Learners are involved in decisions about the objectives of a course	52.6	28.9	36.8	42.1	10.5	15.8	0	10.5	0	2.6
3e. Learners are involved in decisions about how learning is assessed	42.1	13.2	42.1	50	15.8	28.9	0	7.9	0	0
3f. Learners are involved in decisions about the teaching methods used	42.4	13.2	26.3	47.4	26.3	26.3	0	10.9	0	2.6

Table 4.3. Differences between Beliefs of Pre-Service EFL Teachers Observing Young Learners and Adolescents on Achievability Items

To this end, the last hypothesis that there would be a difference between the groups of pre-service EFL teachers who observe young learners and who observe adolescents regarding their beliefs in learner autonomy was partially confirmed.

5. Conclusion

By making use of a quantitative method, this study revealed that pre-service EFL teachers were positively dispositioned to the concept of learner autonomy and their beliefs about learner autonomy did not differ drastically based on their practicum experiences. Nonetheless, the results

also showed that there was a slight change in the participants' beliefs about the achievability of learner autonomy after the school experience. With regards to effects of the context they observed during their practicum process, the observed age group yielded a slight difference in their beliefs about achievability and desirability of learner autonomy.

This study made an important contribution to the issue on pre-service EFL teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy based on their practicum experiences. During practicum experiences, pre-service teachers undergo a dynamic and interactive process prior to their professional teaching life. This process plays a key role to have an understanding of pre-service teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy. The results of this study can be used in curriculum development for ELT departments by teacher trainers. With regard to the content of the practicum, the courses may include awareness raising tasks for learner autonomy. However, more studies are needed to corroborate the results of this current study.

As it is the case with other studies, this research is not without its limitations as well. One of the limitations of this study is to use only questionnaires as the data collection tools, following a quantitative design. Therefore, this study did not benefit from open-ended questions or interviews to establish a more in-depth insight into the issue. In addition, this study is context-specific since it was conducted solely in one university.

This study may yield more fruitful results if future studies extend this research with more participants and institutions. Conducting this research in other regions of Turkey and other EFL contexts with diverse populations from different universities may provide deeper insights into the issue. Moreover, a longer term study would shed more light on the issue. This study only focused on the school experience part of the practicum, extending the study to include practice teaching component of the practicum can be more enlightening. In addition, this issue can be investigated through qualitative methods with the aim of gaining a deeper perspective. Nevertheless, this study will contribute to the literature by demonstrating the current situation of pre-service teachers' beliefs about learner autonomy with regards to their practicum experiences.

Acknowledgements

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EFL University Teachers' Autonomy as a Prerequisite to Learners' Autonomy

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Abstract

The notion of learner autonomy, which refers to students' independent and responsible engagement in his/her own learning, has become largely agreed upon as a determining constituent in the success or failure in the language learning experience. Yet, surprisingly enough, research on teacher autonomy in comparison has witnessed less popularity. Thus, the focus of our research on teacher autonomy is motivated by our belief that dealing with the former constitutes a natural parallel to research on learner autonomy. More than that, a major claim of the present work is that teacher autonomy is a prerequisite to learner autonomy, on the premise that it is unreasonable to attempt to foster autonomy in anyone if one does not have reasonable degrees of this attitude. The questions raised in this work may be formulated as follows: To what extent does teacher pre-service education determine teachers' autonomous behavior? In which sense does the socio-cultural environment and learning/teaching context influence the outcome of education vis-à-vis autonomy? And what should in-service education offer teachers to make them develop further autonomy?

Keywords: Autonomous attitude, learner autonomy, teachers' in-service education, professional growth.

Introduction

Autonomy in EFL learning has become an attractive educational trend in the last decades as a logical continuum of increasing concern with learner-centered approaches to FL learning and teaching. The notion of

autonomy has gained popularity in various educational contexts, and has widely been debated in terms of learners which gave rise to the well-known coined concept: Learner autonomy. Yet, research in autonomy with respect to the teacher is rather limited. The paper examines the concept of teacher autonomy in terms of its inherent characteristics, namely initiative taking, self-empowerment decisions, freedom of engagement, and so forth. Other than that, teacher autonomy is further addressed in terms of some teachers' misconceptions of the term, i.e. what autonomy is not and what it does by no means imply. This paper highlights issues that may lead university EFL teachers to attain the autonomous behavior needed not only for their own professional growth and practice, but also as teachers who are expected to lead their students towards more independent attitudes.

1. Teacher Autonomy

Teacher autonomy may unjustly be associated to rejecting authority, refusing cooperation. In fact, it is far from meaning individual freedom from control, nor does it stand for isolation or selfishness. More than that, the objective of the autonomous teacher is neither to impose rules on students nor to deny their rights. "Autonomy does not mean isolation, individualism or self-sufficiency. Negotiation, cooperation, sharing, promoting, listening and respecting others and their views are essential components of participation and collaboration" (Cardenas, 2006:194). Besides, teacher autonomy goes beyond selecting pedagogical material, deciding on instructional and teaching methods or designing evaluation tools. Barfield et.al.2001 confess that teaching is always contextually situated and teacher autonomy involves:

- Negotiation skills;
- Institutional knowledge on teaching and learning;
- Willingness to confront institutional barriers in socially appropriate ways to turn constraints into opportunities for change;
- Readiness to engage in lifelong learning to the best of an individual's capacity;
- Reflection on the teaching process and environment;
- Commitment to promoting learner autonomy.

Based on the premise that the teacher is a lifelong learner, Smith (2003) suggests the combined notion of "teacher-learner autonomy" that he regards as follows:

"Teacher-learner autonomy, by analogy with previous definitions of language learner autonomy, might be defined as the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in co-operation with others."

It is worth stressing that teachers may well cooperate and collaborate with colleagues and other institution partners, and still keep an autonomous attitude.

1.1. Teacher autonomy and learner autonomy

If we consent that the teaching/learning experience is cooperative by nature, and that the two partners (teacher and learner), in a joint effort, interact, exchange, send and get feedback, we then can realistically assume that the two influence each other in more than one aspect. "Teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are implicitly linked with one another by the nature and purpose of what we believe public education to serve" (Larson, 2011). Also, starting from the premise that even though these last decades have recognized an increasing role to learners, it remains that the teacher is a highly influential partner. Hozayan (2011:122) asserts that teachers have an essential role in promoting autonomous learning.

It seems sound to presume that dependent or reliant teachers will probably find it hard to push their learners towards autonomy, as they are not aware of the attitudes and manifestations this concept entails.

"Teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are closely linked and without sufficient knowledge and guidance, teachers are unlikely to develop the skills to be able to foster autonomy in their own classrooms (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011)".

Moreover, we can suppose that it might be demanding for a teacher who is not autonomous in his/her profession and classroom practice to guide learners towards autonomy. Having said that, we must admit there is little evidence in the literature about teachers' own perception about this concept (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Duong & Seepho, 2014; Shahsavari, 2014).

Teacher autonomy is an issue which deserves the attention of the language professionals, as it is indeed a prerequisite to any step towards leading learners to autonomy. In this same vein, Thanasulas (2000) simply declares that "to posit ways of fostering learner autonomy is certainly to posit ways of fostering teacher autonomy". In the same respect, Larson (2011) simply argues that if we want autonomous learners, we have to

have autonomous teachers. Sharing a similar view, Cardenas asserts, "learner autonomy is concomitant to teacher autonomy" (2006:184).

The autonomous teacher will thus not only seek to foster this attitude in his/her learners, but above all will be a good model to 'imitate'.

1.2. Learner autonomy

Autonomy has been examined and defined by various language professionals, each referring to it by a particular token and stressing one aspect of it or another. Consequently, labels such as self-reliance, independent learning, and self-direction often accompany learner autonomy in the literature of FL learning/teaching. Concern about this issue has gained so much popularity across borders, inasmuch as we came to refer to "the autonomy movement" (Smith, R. ibid). Learner autonomy may be seen as that responsible decision-making attitude the student has throughout his learning experience. Autonomy often carries the connotation of freedom to act, freedom from the teacher's control (rather than from peers or teaching material and facilities), freedom to choose or, in short, to influence one's own learning. *"*The autonomous learner is one that constructs knowledge from direct experience, rather than one who responds to someone's instruction" (Benson, 2001). Echoing a similar view as Holec (1981), who is the leading figure of autonomy, Dam (1990) restated that the autonomous learner not only sets objectives for his/her own learning, but also selects materials, activities and evaluation tasks that best fit this experience.

Autonomy in FL teaching pedagogy by no means suggests "teacherless learning" to borrow Sheerin's terms (1997) cited in Thanasulas, D. (2000). Sinclair, B. (1997) cites several aspects of autonomy in language learning such as:

-   Autonomy involves a learner's capacity and willingness to take responsibility for making decisions about their own learning;
-   These capacities are not innate;
-   There are degrees of autonomy;
-   Different teaching and learning contexts require different approaches to the promotion of learner autonomy.

The issue that may be pointed out in view of the above is the implication(s) that the implementation of learner autonomy will inevitably have on the learner. If/ when autonomy is adopted in the EFL classroom, students are undoubtedly:

1- Discouraged to rely heavily on the teacher;
2- Expected to develop their own leaning strategies;
3- Required to make decision about what they learn, how and with whom they learn it;
4- Expected to evaluate their own progress and weaknesses.

2. Autonomy in Context

Language education is context-related: various parameters like participants (learners, teachers, and influential partners!), socio-educational institution, teaching practices, material facilities, etc. vary from one environment to another. Autonomy is no exception, and thus may not be equally valued nor manifested (Cardenas, 2006). This is also what Murphy (2011) explains, pointing out that autonomy can take a variety of forms, depending on learning context and learner characteristics.

There has been an argument that learner autonomy is a concept which is based on Western educational tradition and that as such it can only fit in the western educational context. In this respect, Harmer (2005) explains that "attitudes to self-directed learning are frequently conditioned by the educational culture in which students have studied or are studying… autonomy of action is not always considered a desirable characteristic in such contexts." This same line of reasoning operates in L. Dam's conception of "differential teaching and learning" (interview 2006) when she explains that variations like learners'/teachers' background, language, culture, educational context are all significant. Also, in a research study on the implementation of autonomy to higher education learners in Macedonia Xaferi & Xaferi, G. (2011, p.152) interestingly claim that changes are needed to lead such learners from traditional teaching to independent practice. A major finding of this study is that "… 85% of the participants believe that learner autonomy is very important but they mostly do as the teacher instructs". In a research study about Egyptian learners' readiness for autonomy, Hozayen found out that though students are willing to be independent, they largely wish to be conducted by their teachers as "they are still torn by their inherited and culturally bound beliefs that the teacher should be at the center of their learning and that the teacher is capable enough to plan their learning goals and road map the miraculous pathways that would lead them to their successful learning" (2011:122).

This is no surprise as learners' conceptions of their roles as well as their teachers have been shaped by previous conventional practice. Being

in a similar situation (as the Macedonia and Egyptian learners), Algerian students of English often show comparable reactions.

The level of autonomy experienced by teachers is highly determined by a variety of factors:

1- *Personality:* some teachers are independent by nature, and therefore naturally behave so in their profession. Those whose personality tends rather towards reliance need to be made aware of that and be trained subsequently.
2- *Experience:* life calls us to do things, try new ones, fail and start again; this is the way we learn and this is the way we often gain in autonomy.
3- *Context of education*: teachers may experience and show varying levels of autonomy depending on whether they are engaged in primary, tertiary or higher education.
4- *Socio-cultural environment*: while some cultures value the teacher who takes decisions and acts by himself/herself, others expect their teachers to follow and apply what is directed to them by their hierarchy.

3. Educational Institutions Restrictions

Absolute autonomy is not only an unrealistic thing to advocate, but it is often not a desired objective. Institutional teaching takes place in a context that needs to be regulated by rules and principles for it to be organized and acceptably harmonized. By contrast, too much restriction and endless control do not allow the teachers to function according to their personal aspirations.

Many teachers progress in strongly regimented institutions where freedom of decision and action is extremely limited. Many external obligations such as class size, syllabus, exam schedules and evaluation procedures often constitute a barrier to teacher autonomy. Larson (2011) explains that "…we become obedient and compliant. We are likely to follow bad advice from superiors in order to please them, than to challenge bad ideas." Among the restraints of autonomy in teaching, Cardenas (2006) includes apprehension of change, fear to lose control, resistance to implication, and educational institutions' control over teachers' achievement.

4. Action towards Increasing Teacher Autonomy

Human beings (as other species) are born highly dependent and gradually gain autonomy as they progress in life. Thus, autonomy is best seen as a process that keeps developing through time. Furthermore, an awareness and need of further autonomy may make individuals adopt certain attitudes in order to cultivate it. Following this, when autonomy becomes a target in education, some actions need to be taken by both the teachers and the institutions where they progress.

4.1. In- (pre) service training

Despite the fact that the concepts of learner autonomy and to a lesser degree teacher autonomy are increasingly being debated in pedagogical circles at an international level, many teachers have vague and limited information about such issues. Besides, as Lai (2011) rightly puts it, despite the presence of some useful models for teacher development for the promotion of learner autonomy in the classroom, on-going in-service teacher training seems to be lacking in most schools and universities. Many teachers do not know what to do in order to become more autonomous themselves, nor which decisions to take for the provision of autonomy in their classes. In this state of facts, it is quite clear that not only do teachers need training in relation to how to foster autonomy in their learners, but also in terms of their own autonomy as practitioners. To put it simply, teachers need to be trained on how to become autonomous and how to help learners become autonomous.

Awareness raising manifestations such as seminars and conferences, study days and the like should become part of the academic life of language practitioners. Such events constitute a space where discussions and exchanges are made possible. It is also often in such meetings that teachers encounter or gain awareness on new trends in teaching/learning. These may be starting points for changing attitudes or taking new actions. Dam (2010) suggests a teacher in-service training model consisting of four steps that teachers need to follow in order to move towards self-autonomy. These involve "experience", "awareness", "influence on and participation in decision making" and "responsibility". Endo (2011) in his turn suggests three other steps that lead to teacher autonomy, namely planning, performing and reflecting. Teachers gain from training both before they start teaching and all along this on-going process. Both theoretical incentives and practical techniques may make them acquire more autonomy.

4.2. Provision of material tool

Using material tools inside and outside the classroom extends teachers' (and learners') opportunities to adapt to new practices. Stressing the link between autonomy and resources, Hozayen (2011:123) explains:

> …Successful learning may be mainly dependent on giving the learners a chance to display the characteristics of autonomous learning, provided that all necessary learning facilities and resources are available." Following this, it is reasonable to assert that pedagogical instruments, media means, and technological facilities are also required by   teachers try out independent actions in their classes.

Language teaching/learning is increasingly supported by technological resources, which are no more regarded as accessories.

4.3. Opportunities for taking action

Teachers cannot develop further autonomy if they are not allowed a space for that. This may be achieved if educational organization become more flexible, and put more trust on teachers. Deciding on what actions to take, what tasks and activities and what assessment criteria to set for their students make teachers realise the important role they play. If we start from the premise that it is the teacher who best knows learners, it becomes clear that he/she is the one who is fit to respond to their needs by tuning his/her teaching accordingly.

5. Why Advocate Teacher Autonomy?

A reasonable degree of autonomy is needed for any involvement and contribution to stem from teachers. Self-empowerment requires that teachers make their own decisions regarding the skills and areas they need to develop. Besides, the self-perception of teachers as autonomous agents is likely to bring them satisfaction, and thus naturally increase their motivation. In other words, autonomy is likely to bring about contentment, and this in turn may lead to increased motivation. Pearson's and Moomaw's (2005:42-43) go so far as to claim:

> Teacher autonomy or the lack thereof seems to be a critical component in the motivation of teachers to stay or leave the teaching profession. The degree of autonomy perceived by new teachers is indicative of current job satisfaction and a positive reaction to teaching, and teachers who had

higher autonomy scores expressed a willingness enter teaching again if faced with that decision.

Furthermore, it stands to reason to assume that whenever the teacher gains autonomy, he/she bears more responsibility and consequently becomes more accountable for his decisions and actions. Finally, a teacher who experiences the emancipating impact of autonomy may naturally strive to lead his/her learners towards autonomy.

6. Conclusion

In order to adapt to the changing demands of his profession, the teacher needs to become enrolled in both theoretical and practical research. The teacher-researcher (Farrell, 2015) will need to use related literature to make a link between theory and practice. Moreover, action research, which is concerned with professional practice issues, will enable him to use his practice as a starting point to find solutions to pedagogical problems and explore the attitudes and manifestations of autonomy in both teachers and learners. This may furthermore establish the link between teacher and learner autonomy, and the impact they have on one another. Yet, if teacher autonomy is not a prerequisite to learner autonomy, how can autonomous learners interrelate with a dependent teacher? Does the young digital generation generally tend to be more autonomous than their own teachers? And if so, can such learners influence the attitudes of non-autonomous teachers? Teacher issues such as reflective practice, continuing information, teacher self-education, and promoting teacher training for autonomy have indeed become challenging opportunities for promoting EFL teachers' autonomy.

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SHAKESPEARE'S UNRULY WOMEN

LUKE PRODROMOU

Abstract

In this article, I explore how Shakespeare 's plays show women making the most of their potential and power to influence their environment; in his comedies, especially, but also in his tragedies, Shakespeare empowers women with a voice, and some of the most inspiring words ever produced in the English language. We explore the complex and bold way Shakespeare presents women in his plays, from his early comedies to his final romances. I illustrate the fascinating and subversive approach that Shakespeare takes to many of his heroines (Katerina, Viola, Rosalind, Portia, Desdemona et al) and highlight the relevance of his unruly women to the 21st century. Finally, we will illustrate how Shakespeare extended the boundaries of what women could say and do in a world dominated largely by men.

Keywords: women, power, gender, disguise, patriarchal, property, language convention

Introduction

The ELT profession is dominated, at least in quantitative terms, by women. Their voices are often not as influential as their numbers would suggest. This article, about Shakespeare's struggle to give women a voice in a patriarchal society, is dedicated to the women in ELT.

In this article, I will illustrate the fluid, diverse and often contradictory way in which Shakespeare approaches the role of women in Elizabethan and Jacobean society. We will encounter women in conflict with the conventions of the time and we will see how those conventions attempt to constrain and restrict the unruly tendencies of females in search of their own identity - or identities.

Shakespeare's unconventional dialogue

Throughout his career as a poet and playwright, Shakespeare was engaged in dialogue with writers who held conventional views of women. Until Shakespeare came along, for example, the sonnet was largely a poem dedicated to idealizing women as inaccessible goddesses: their beauty was incomparable; they were ethereal beings of almost divine perfection. Poets under the influence of the great Italian, Petrarch (1304-1374) would write about women using romantic metaphors and similes, through which the object of the poet's love was compared to the sun, the stars and the moon etc. In this context, we can imagine the impact of the following poem describing Shakespeare's imperfect but passionately real Dark Lady:

> My mistress' eyes
> (Sonnet 130)
> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
> Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
> If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
> If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
> I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
> But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
> And in some perfumes is there more delight
> Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
> I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
> That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
> I grant I never saw a goddess go;
> My mistress when she walks, treads on the ground.
> And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
> As any she belied with false compare.

This is the poet Shakespeare speaking, bringing women literally 'down to earth', as creatures of the real 'breathing world'.

The boy actor: types of ambiguity

An equally good place to begin in order to understand the fluid and contradictory nature of women in Shakespeare's world is the theatre – and, in particular, the convention of the boy actor on the Elizabethan stage. It is crucial to remember when exploring the diversity of women in Shakespeare's plays that they were all played by boys:

Rosalind, Viola, Juliet, Cordelia, Imogen, Desdemona, Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth, with the vast range of human emotions they expressed,

were played by incredibly versatile boy actors, whose voice had not yet broken.

This means that automatically a certain degree of ambiguity is introduced in the presentation of masculine and feminine gender in Shakespeare's comedies, histories and tragedies. The fixed, binary nature of gender – either masculine or feminine – is disrupted by the convention of the boy actor and Shakespeare's dramatic use of disguise through cross-dressing. There is a built-in complexity to his women, not necessarily present in the male characters simply because they embody both male and female qualities.

An even more complex picture is created in cases where the boy who played a girl then pretended to be a young man, as is the case of Julia in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* Viola in *Twelfth Night* (Cesario) and Rosalind in *As You Like It* (Ganymede), Portia in the *Merchant of Venice* and Imogen in *Cymbeline*.

This multiple 'role-play', based on disguise, allows Shakespeare to experiment with gender, and, in particular, to extend the boundaries of male and female.

It is this bold 'gender bending' on the stage that made the municipal authorities of London persecute the actors; for the local authorities and the puritans of Elizabethan London, the theatre's presentation of boys as girls and girls as boys disturbed the established order. A boy dressed as a girl disturbed the established order; a boy dressed as a girl who then pretends to be a boy who pretends to be a girl disrupts the social order even more profoundly. This is what happens in *As You Like It* with the role of Rosalind.

But it is not only the form of the plays that is subversive: it is also what women say that shakes the established patriarchal order.

Comedy: the equality debate

In the *Comedy of Errors*, possibly Shakespeare's earliest comedy, the unruly Adriana – referring to men - asks her conservative sister: 'Why should their liberty than ours be more?' Adriana is reacting to her husband's freewheeling life about town while she is stuck virtuously at home. Her more conventional sister defends the role of men in controlling women's passions ('will', here, refers to desire but also sexual passion)

LUCIANA
O, know he is the bridle of your will.

ADRIANA
There's none but asses will be bridled so.

The plays that follow the *Comedy of Errors* explore and negotiate the question 'Why should their liberty than ours be more?' And they explore the conflicting claims made by these two sisters.

The issues of equality and submission are debated in the *Taming of the Shrew*: an irate father wishes to marry his daughter off by force. The bridegroom-to-be is a dowry hunter; the girl is an extension of the father's property. The daughter, Katerina, resists and in her battle with the male chauvinist, Petruchio, who tries to tame her, she gives as much as she takes, in terms of blows and insults.

In the end, she submits, and marries her tamer. She says, addressing herself to women:

KATERINA
Such duty as the subject owes the prince
Even such a woman oweth to her husband

Does Shakespeare present this submission sincerely or ironically?

The controversial ending of the *Shrew* goes against the progressive currents of thought of that time – both in the theatre and in humanist or even puritan philosophy. It also goes against the spirit and letter of Shakespeare's work, as we shall see.

The early modern - or 'Renaissance' - view of gender referred to a greater balance and reciprocity between male and female – albeit within the culturally loaded framework of marriage.

That the ending of the *Shrew* is ironic and not to be taken at face value (as regards the submission of the female) is suggested by the words of Adriana in the *Comedy of Errors* – 'why should their liberty than ours be more?' and 'only asses will be bridled so' - as well as all the plays that followed. These plays present a more complex view of the role of women in society than that suggested by Katerina's apparent submission,

The fact is that for Katerina there is no escape: she's trapped. There is no dream forest or disguise to hide in or to transform her oppression to empowerment as we shall discover later in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*.

Thus, in comedy, the conflicts of gender end in a harmony which is frequently unconvincing: a harmony which is forced onto difficult theatrical material. What happens in tragedy?

Tragedy and the woman as property

Romeo and Juliet includes the familiar motif of a father – Capulet – attempting to impose patriarchal authority by force as he attempts to marry off his daughter, 14-year old Juliet. Her father threatens her with violence and treats her like an extension of his real estate; he refers to her as 'baggage'. Overpowered by the discovery of her own adolescent sexuality, Juliet resists her father and social convention and takes the brave decision to fulfill her love for Romeo:

> JULIET
> Come, civil night,
> Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
> Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,
> With thy black mantle, till strange love grow bold,
> Think true love acted simple modesty.
> Come, night, come, Romeo, come, thou day in night;
> Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,
> Give me my Romeo... (*Romeo and Juliet* Act 3 sc. 2)

But this is not comedy; there is no wood and no disguise in which lovers can lose themselves or reinvent themselves. Juliet does not manage to impose her personal choice but she does make the adults and political authorities recognize the error of their ways and to blame masculine violence for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.

A Midsummer Night's Dream begins with an explosion of anger from a father who wishes to impose his will on his daughter, with the help of the Athenian state and its draconian laws. Hermia is threatened with the loss of freedom, an imposed chastity and even death if she doesn't accept the husband chosen for her by her father.

> DUKE THESEUS
> Either to die the death or to abjure
> For ever the society of men.
> Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
> (*A Midsummer Night's Dream* Act 1 sc. 1)

As with Adriana, Katerina and Juliet, the female, Hermia is expected to tame her passions, to channel them where patriarchy dictates. Hermia refuses this cruel choice. An escape is provided in the wood near Athens, the wood where dreams are free. There, eroticism as allowed free play and Freudian fantasies are allowed to roam freely through the forest. In the end, the couples return to court or conventional society and they all marry

and all's right with the world. The girls, Hermia and Helena do get their way and their man. The fantastic wood has facilitated the successful expression of their personal wishes.

In the case of Portia in the *Merchant of Venice,* her father tries to shape her choice of partner even after his death, through the device of the caskets: gold, silver and lead. The correct choice intended by Portia's father is that the right man for her should choose on the basis of love and respect for the girl's personality and not for money and power; thus, lead is the correct choice. This marks some progress in the view of woman as property and an attempt of rein in the dowry hunting instinct of the men.

Notice that when Portia is disguised as a man she acquires power over herself and the world of men, a world dominated by money, racial conflict and debt. It is Portia's hybrid masculine – feminine judgment that saves the men Bassanio and Antonio from death and resolves the conflict between the debtor and the moneylender on the basis of the law but of humane justice, too.

Compared to the dull, one-dimensional Bassanio, Portia, both as a woman and when disguised as a man, shows a richness of personality that the men cannot compete with. One wonders how happy this intelligent and complex woman will be with her new husband. How happy is the happy ending of this so-called comedy?

As you like it: several types of ambiguity

In *As You Like It*, these patterns of gender and power are developed even more fully than in previous plays. Celia and Rosalind are cousins. Celia's father banishes Rosalind as part of his feud with her father over property and power. Celia expressing female solidarity with Rosalind and escapes with her to the forest of Arden. Rosalind is disguised as a young man.

This disguise allows her to experiment with her identity. Rosalind moves back and forth from feminine to masculine and she acquires, as do the audience, greater understanding of what it means to be both male and female. Thus, we have a good example of the way the custom of the boy-actor gave Shakespeare an opportunity to explore the nature of gender.

The theatrical device of the boy-actor was a necessity but Shakespeare turned it to good advantage. It gave Shakespeare an opportunity to endow women with masculine attitudes and skills, in combination with feminine qualities. Thus, when Rosalind speaks to Phoebe and to Orlando as Ganymede she shuttles back and forth from one gender to the other.

Her game of love and marriage with Orlando disguised as she is as Ganymede the beautiful boy-servant of the gods of Olympus, highlights the fluidity of gender roles in the play. This gender-bending recalls sonnet 20, the famous 'master-mistress' sonnet:

Sonnet 20
A woman's face with nature's own hand painted,
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion…

Rosalind doesn't only change her appearance; she changes her identity and she redefines the choices open to her. Like Portia, Rosalind shows initiative, she solves problems. All this is made possible while the interlude in the forest of Arden lasts and before the return to the patriarchal conventions of the city. With the return to normality, the fantasy of transformation ends. The fluid nature of gender is re-stabilized. The free woman in love in the forest is contained and constrained as she returns to the urban world of marriage conventions and the re-assertion of the patriarchal system. Rosalind's last speeches are a 'voluntary' re-entry into patriarchy; to both father and husband she says:

ROSALIND
'To you I give myself for I am yours'

But before Rosalind's return to social convention she and the play have performed for us a kind of desire which is rich and ambiguous. But the performance of a liberated sexuality is confined to the forest, far removed from the reality of power and rigid social hierarchies. But the world of alternative possibilities remains as a half-explored potential. It cannot be erased from the art-form, the poetic theatre of the mysterious William Shakespeare.

The music of love in *Twelfth Night*

The story of gender ambiguity is taken up in Shakespeare's next great comedy: *Twelfth Night.* The date in the title refers to epiphany. This date was originally a Catholic holiday and it had become a day of revelry and social disorder. Servants often dressed up as their masters and men as women. It was a day of Carnivalesque festivity, when the world was turned upside down.

The place: Illyria is a place where strange things can happen, where the normal order is subverted. It is a place of passion, like the wood in a

Midsummer Night's Dream and *As You Like It*, where the madness of love reigns.

The character who embodies the master-mistress in this play is Viola: in her disguise as a young man – Cesario – she falls in love with Orsino, who begins with being in love with Olivia and ends up with Cesario-Viola. Olivia marries Viola's twin, Sebastian and Sir Toby marries Maria. Illyria is like the magic flower of Cupid in a *Midsummer Night's Dream* which makes people mad with love.

Shakespeare once again uses the device of disguise as a pretext to explore the nature of women and to subvert gender stereotypes. Viola, pretending to be a man, demonstrates she can do what men do quite successfully: to take initiatives, solve problems and in the end, to be a more complete woman than if she had not played the part of Cesario. As in all of the comedies, at the end, we return to reality, but it is not a return to things as they were before the play. Viola, like Rosalind, identifies with her role and she is so closely integrated with it that Shakespeare finds it difficult to return her to everyday routine.

The ending is awkward, as is often the case: the harmony of comedy is forced, far-fetched – it does not accommodate the Viola who has grown before our eyes. The girl's conventional clothes no longer fit Viola or Rosalind – they are both more developed characters when they pretend to be young men than when they return to everyday reality. The men who are assigned to them in marriage – Orlando and Orsino – seem too small for them. Is Olivia really going to be happy with a monosyllabic and one dimensional Sebastian? Is Orsino really going to settle down happily with a wife who was more exciting and more intelligent when disguised as a man?

The men too, it seems, are in need of transformation.

Desdemona and Cordelia

Desdemona in *Othello* asserts her right to choose her man, lover and husband, Othello, the moor of Venice, against her father's wishes. She is one of the boldest of Shakespeare's women – she has the courage to break the boundaries of family, society and race, in choosing a black outsider. She insists on going with him to the war zone of Cyprus where she hopes to live freely with her chosen partner in life. But Cyprus is not the forest of Arden. It is a place of strife. In Cyprus, masculine and indeed military authority rule. The 'moth of peace', Desdemona, is crushed by masculine violence.

The tragedy begins in Venice. It stems from Desdemona's transfer of her submissiveness from her father to her husband. She rejects her father's authority but accepts Othello's. The seeds of Desdemona's tragedy are sown from the beginning when she transfers her loyalty from one male 'lord' – her father - to another: her husband. She submits her will to the male so when the time comes to resist she is powerless. She has handed in her weapons: when Othello treats her unjustly she is silent, consistent with the traditional role of women. Desdemona is the victim of women's silent submission to patriarchy.

Notice the key words in Desdemona's speech to her father:

DESDEMONA
My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided **duty**:
To you I am **bound** for life and education;
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you; you are the **lord of duty**;
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,
And so much **duty** as my mother show'd
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor **my lord.**

If Desdemona has agreed to be dutiful and silent, even when she is wronged by gender violence, her servant Emilia is not; she is articulate in her defense of women in words which recall those of Adriana in the Comedy of Errors.

EMILIA:
I will not charm my tongue;
I am bound to speak

Emilia questions and rejects the silence of women when she sees the unjust consequences of this silence:

EMILIA
Let husbands know
Their wives have sense like them: they see and smell
And have their palates both for sweet and sour,
As husbands have. What is it that they do
When they change us for others? Is it sport?
I think it is: and doth affection breed it?
I think it doth: is't frailty that thus errs?
It is so too: and have not we affections,
Desires for sport, and frailty, as men have?

Then let them use us well: else let them know,
The ills we do, their ills instruct us so.

But unfortunately, *Othello* is a tragedy and the wood that gives silence meaning and voice and gives women the chance to activate their potential is absent.

Finally, Cordelia in *King Lear,* like Desdemona, remains silent when she is confronted with the irrational demands of male authority. The play begins with the father attempting to impose an eccentric plan whereby the personality of the daughters is identified with property; they will receive property and power according to how much love they express for their father, in words:

LEAR
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
GONERIL
Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter

Cordelia, the youngest of the three daughters, refuses to play the game of money-for-love and remains silent: 'What shall Cordelia speak? Love and be silent'.

Cordelia's silence is a challenge to patriarchal authority, an act of resistance to the father-master. At this stage, the father figure assumes that silence is empty:

LEAR
Now, our joy,
…what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.
CORDELIA
Nothing, my lord.
LEAR
Nothing!
CORDELIA
Nothing.
KING LEAR
Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.
CORDELIA
Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth

It is a sign of Cordelia's sincere love and independence of spirit that she refuses to debase it by exchanging it for power and property. Thus, he

symbolically breaks the power of patriarchy over her and goes her own way, into exile from England.

By the end, in the wild heath, shorn of his wealth and trappings of power, Lear will come see the light: he will come closer to nature and discover the value of Cordelia's silence. She returns from exile, a warrior of freedom and figure of justice, a symbol of feminine virtues which, the play tells us, are close to the 'blessed secrets of the earth'.

In *King Lear*, we do not have a magic wood but we do have the wild heath in which Lear discovers the truth and rewrites reality: he condemns the corrupt system of power and property that led to his own patriarchal authority and to his daughter's exile and death.

Conclusion

Feminism in Shakespeare is expressed by the constant expansion of the limits of masculine and feminine, but particularly the feminine. The device of disguise or cross-dressing redefines the way the audience sees the potential of women and enriches their repertoire of roles. Society in the real world does not change but it is undermined and subverted in the poetic world of the play, in the exploratory, experimental nature of Shakespeare's theatre. When the play is over, things can never be quite the same again.

In other words, the radical dimension of Shakespeare's work does not lie in specific proposals for a new social order. It is to be found, rather, in the characteristic polyphony of his theatre – the multiplicity of perspectives and voices with which women are presented; the drama is a site full of conflict and contradictions that need to be resolved; but we are often left with a fluidity and an open-endedness, in spite of attempts to fix and tie up the loose ends tidily, according to prevailing conventions of marriage and property. There is no political social or feminist manifesto in Shakespeare, though Lear on the wild heath, in the storm, which is both real and spiritual, exposes and denounces the system of power and property that makes injustice possible.

Today in the 21st century, what do these plays have to tell us about the role of women in society? Let us not forget that there, at this moment, millions of women trapped in the tyranny of conventions of dress and behavior imposed by men on women; women trapped in the suffocating roles men allow them, women trapped in invisibility and silence.

Further reading

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Luke Prodromou: Luke graduated from Bristol University and has an MA in Shakespeare Studies (Birmingham University) a Diploma in Teaching English (Leeds University, with distinction) and a Ph.D (Nottingham University). He is the author of 20 or so coursebooks; he has worked for the British Council (Head of Teacher Training, Thessaloniki), the University of Thessaloniki (Shakespeare Course), the University of Edinburgh (Drama for TEFL), ESADE Barcelona (Drama and Mixed Ability Classes), Pilgrims, Canterbury and NILE, Norwich. His Phd: English as a Lingua Franca: a corpusbased approach, was published by Continuum (2010). He is also co-author, with Lindsay Clandfield, of the award-winning teachers' 219 Shakespeare's Unruly Women handbook: Dealing with Difficulties. Luke is a founder member of Disabled Access Friendly Campaign for which he wrote - and performed, with D. Gibson - the 'Wheelchair Sketch'; he now performs as Luke and friends. He has run courses on English literature (Shakespeare, Austen, Dickens, the modern novel) for state school teachers in Madrid. He currently teaches on the MA ELT Methodology course run by City College-Sheffield University, in Thessaloniki.

PART FOUR:

LEARNER BELIEFS AND PERCEPTIONS

PERCEPTIONS OF EFL LEARNERS TOWARDS THE IMPACT OF VERBAL TEACHER IMMEDIACY BEHAVIORS ON THEIR MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH

ZEYNEP ÜNLÜER AND IŞIL GÜNSELİ KAÇAR

Abstract

Motivation is regarded as a key factor in language learning. It is acknowledged that teachers play a crucial role in student motivation throughout the learning process. In fact, the investigation of teacher verbal immediacy behaviors (i.e., *the use of humor, teacher praise, etc*) revealed that there is a relationship between teachers' verbal immediacy behaviors and student motivation. Some of these behaviors were found to enhance student motivation whereas others were shown to diminish it. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at the English preparatory school of a large urban state university in Turkey in relation to the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation levels to learn the target language. It also aims to explore the perceptions of the upper-intermediate students studying at this level for the first time and those repeating the intermediate level concerning the effect of verbal teacher immediacy behavior on student motivation. Moreover, this study examines the differences between the perceptions of these two groups. The participants were 41 Upper-Intermediate students and 31 upper-intermediate students repeating this level. The data in this mixed-method research study was collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that teacher praise, the use of humor and the student chat with teachers outside the classroom made the greatest contribution to student motivation. On the other hand, teachers' humiliating and criticizing students in class and forgetting their names or confusing them with others were perceived as the most demotivating behaviors for students. The results showed two groups differ from each other in some respects.

Keywords: Motivation, learner motivation, teacher immediacy behaviors

1. Introduction

Student motivation has been one of the major concerns among language teachers and educators (Hsu, 2010; Yıldırım, Güneri & Sümer, 2002) since it plays a vital role in rendering second language teaching and learning effective (Ebata, 2008) and is "probably the most frequently used catch-all term for explaining the success or failure of virtually any complex task" (Brown, 2000, p. 160). There are a number of research studies conducted as to what is good for teachers to do in the classroom and what is good for students to do to enhance their motivation. However, research upon how teachers must act in the classroom is relatively scant (Swenddal, 2011). This is surprising on the grounds that teachers are one of the most important factors that make language learning and teaching effective. Teachers who have an opportunity to comprehend such a complex internal construct as learner motivation and thereby identify what motivates learners can determine effective learning techniques and strategies and can create useful learning tools (Hackman & Walker, 1990). Not only the teachers' ways of teaching but also their behaviors have a considerable impact on fostering student motivation. Swenddal (2011) remarks if teachers are seen as a crucial component of the language learning environment and can affect the mood of learners, it should be taken into consideration how teachers' intentional and unintentional social behaviors act on their intentions and impact learners' motivation in a positive or negative manner.

In this study, the impact of the verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on student motivation to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) was investigated. There is a close relationship between teachers' immediacy behaviors and student motivation. Edwards (2001) states that "the teacher's immediacy behaviors in the classroom influence the students' perception of the teacher's interest and involvement in the course content" (p. 3). Moreover, teacher immediacy behaviors contribute to lowering students' affective filters, which results in their feeling more comfortable in class, thereby setting the stage for motivation to learn (Swenddal, 2011). However, little is known about the extent to which students are aware of the influence of their teachers' immediacy behaviors on their own motivation and whether there is a difference between the perceptions of the students studying at the upper-intermediate level for the first time and those of the repeat students studying at the upper intermediate level

regarding the impact of teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation. Moreover, most of the research studies conducted in relation to the immediacy behaviors to date have aimed to reveal mostly the effects of teachers' non-verbal immediacy behaviors on the development of learners' communicative skills and have mainly involved teenage students at the secondary level as participants. There are relatively few studies conducted on the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors with young adults at the tertiary level, particularly in Turkey. Hence, considering the research gap in this respect, this study aims to investigate the impact of teachers' verbal immediacy behaviors on the level of student motivation at the tertiary level as well as students' perceptions concerning these behaviors and addresses the following research questions:

1) What are the students' perceptions in relation to the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their level of motivation in the process of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) at the tertiary level?

2) Does the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on student motivation to learn English as a foreign language (EFL) differ for students studying at the upper-intermediate level for the first time and the ones who are repeating at the upper-intermediate level?

2. Literature Review

Definition of Motivation

Motivation is, in general terms, having a desire or being willing to do something. Yıldırım, Güneri and Sümer (2002) define the term *motivation* as "being moved to do something" (p. 143). Despite the fact that it is a term frequently used in numerous studies, to date, there has been little discussion about what it exactly is (Dörnyei, 1998). In fact, there is no agreement on its definition as it is a broad term encompassing many interrelated concepts and it is hard to define ((Dörnyei, 1998; Kimura, Nakata & Okumura, 2000). In fact, it is not quite possible to account for all aspects of motivation via a single theory. Brown (2000) identifies the term *motivation* from three distinctive perspectives: behaviorist, cognitive and constructivist. The behaviorist perspective is concerned with "the reinforcement of desired behaviors", which involves providing students with positive rewards after they demonstrate a desired response in order to encourage them to produce the similar response again. From the cognitive perspective, individuals' decisions or choices and interpretations related to

external events are much more significant (Brown, 2000; Yıldırım, Oya & Sümer, 2002). This perspective is in accordance with the notion that human beings who are active and curious seek information about the world to solve relevant problems. It can be interpreted that learners with internal motivation has a need for achievement for themselves. That can explain why some learners have a high level of motivation, whereas others possess a low level of motivation. In accordance with this approach, teachers should know learners' needs and assign more challenging tasks to those with high achievement needs, while they provide less challenging tasks for those with low achievement needs. On the other hand, the constructivist perspective places much more emphasis on the social context as well as individual choices. This perspective is based on the view that motivation is related to an individual's cultural and social identity and environment which shape his/her motivation, resulting in distinctive motivations (Brown, 2000). In line with this constructive perspective, there is a seven-level hierarchy of needs, originally proposed by Maslow (1954), with "psychological needs... at the bottom of the hierarchy followed in order by safety, love and belongingness, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, and self-actualization needs" (Yıldırım, Oya & Sümer, 2002, p. 147). The constructivist perspective is adopted in this study.

Types of Motivation

According to the self-determination theory, based on the idea of learners' experiencing a sense of choice in their own actions (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989), motivation can be analyzed in two ways: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Brown, 2000; Yıldırım, Oya & Sümer, 2002; Keblawi, 2012). Learners with a desire or a curiosity coming from inside have intrinsic motivation. Those who possess such motivation learn a language for fun and need challenges. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is pertinent to external factors like rewards and punishments. Learners with this type of motivation aim at obtaining external rewards from somebody else. Intrinsic motivation is stronger than extrinsic motivation as it is difficult to lose it. However, unless a learner internalizes the goals which are suppressed by external factors, extrinsic motivation can decrease or disappear.

Motivation and Teacher Immediacy Behaviors

Teacher immediacy has its bases on motivational theories which are the behavioral-approach avoidance theory and the cognitive expectancy-value theory (Gorham, 1998; Velez & Cano, 2008). The behavioral-approach related to the behavioral drive/reinforcement theory is concerned with students' trying to feel comfortable as a result of their interaction with their teachers or their avoidance of teacher immediacy (Weiner, 1992). These types of behaviors take place when "both fear and hope are associated with the same action" (Velez & Cano, 2008, p. 78). In other words, according to this theory, students have a desire to take part in classes, hoping that they will succeed but, at the same time, they are worried due to some unknown course-related factors such as teacher behaviors (Weiner, 1992). As for the student approach-avoidance tendency, it can be associated with "learned drives" (Velez & Cano, 2008). When students feel comfortable, secure and motivated, their avoidance tendency will be reduced (Christophel, 1990). In the light of this theory, teacher immediacy plays a crucial role in providing a less stressful environment for students and in fostering learner motivation. The expectancy-value theory involves the relationship between the expectancies of students for success and the value they place on a goal. Wigfield and Eccles (2000) stated that "individuals' expectancies for success and the value they have for success are important determinants of their motivation to perform different achievement tasks" (p.50). For learners, the expectancy for success may depend on the value given to a goal. In line with Velez and Cano (2008), there is a close link between these expectancies and the task value; thus, teachers' classroom behaviors play a significant role in increasing or decreasing the students' value of success. Therefore, it can be stated that teacher immediacy behaviors are vital for developing student motivation by providing them with a less stressful and a more secure atmosphere and by increasing their value of success.

In the light of these theories, teacher immediacy can be considered a significant factor that elevates or diminishes student motivation. As Edwards (2001) pointed out, students' perceptions of teachers' interest, their participation in the lesson and their motivation to learn are influenced by teacher immediacy behaviors, which is addressed in this study.

Teacher Immediacy Behaviors: Verbal and Non-verbal

The investigation of teachers' immediacy behaviors during instructional communication pointed out that there is a strong association between teachers' immediacy behaviors and more positive student affect, along with increased cognitive learning, and more favourable teacher evaluations (McCroskey & Richmond, 2000).The term *teacher immediacy* could be defined as "those nonverbal behaviors that reduce physical and/or psychological distance in interpersonal communication" (Mehriban,, as cited in Bozyaka and Aydın, 2008, p. 2). They could be classified as verbal and non-verbal behaviors decreasing the psychical and psychological distance between students and teachers. Immediacy can be associated with a reduced feeling of isolation (Thweatt & McCroskey, 1996).

Immediacy can be grouped into two sub-categories: verbal and non-verbal (Velez & Cano 2008). Verbal teacher immediacy behaviors refer to directly verbal behaviors displayed by teachers, which results in students' positive or negative attitude towards them (Velez & Cano, 2008). These include such behaviors as talking about experiences that have occurred outside class, communicating with learners before and after classes, using humor to attract attention, encouraging learners to actively participate and ask questions, addressing learners by name, praising learners' work or comments, and providing feedback on learners' work, giving personal examples, asking learners' opinions, use of praise and jokes while teaching, talking to students outside the class, addressing them by their names, making comments about student work, giving positive or negative feedback to them and making ownership statements like calling the class "our" class (Gorham, 1988; Bozkaya & Aydın, 2008; Velez & Cano, 2008; Rashidi and Kia, 2012). Such behaviors foster the establishment of a close association among individuals. In addition, it has been indicated that verbal immediacy can enhance student motivation, perceived cognition by increasing student willingness to participate in and contribute to class discussions. (Christensen, Curley, Marquez, & Menzel, 1995; Menzel & Carrell, 1999). Apart from leading to an increase in cognitive learning, verbal immediacy can also promote affective learning and promote intimacy among individuals (Christophel, 1990; Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1987) On the other hand, non-verbal teacher immediacy, a psychological trait, involves the manifestation of behaviors such as eye contact, body posture, gestures, physical proximity, touching, and smiling. As indicated in Mehrabian (1971), nonverbal clues may result in more intensive immediate and affective interactions owing to an increase in the sensory

stimulation induced by non-verbal clues. Facing toward someone, standing close to someone, and touching can be considered some examples for such nonverbal behaviors (Mehrabian, 1971). The perceptions of immediacy are indicated to be shaped by cultural norms and a failure to meet cultural non-verbal immediacy norms leads the teacher to be perceived as non-immediate, which results in a loss of motivation, affective and perceived learning (Bıçkı, 2008). In fact, a study by Bıçkı (2008) comparing two EFL lecturers in the Turkish context, a native and a non-native one, in terms of their non-verbal immediacy behaviors. suggested that the native lecturer, the Turkish one, is perceived to be more immediate by students than the non-native teacher, the non-Turkish lecturer, in cultural, though not in personal, terms, which is in line with some other studies in the non-Turkish context, indicating the positive pan-cultural impact of the perception of immediacy on learning (Love, 2001; Newliep, 1997; Sanders & Wiseman, 1990). The verbal and non-verbal immediacy behaviors of teachers were indicated to foster student liking for instructors and for courses and the subject matter and to decrease student apprehension (Butland & Beebe, 1992; Rodriguez, Plax, & Kearney, 1996; Plax et.al., 1987).

   Of the two different types of teacher intimacy identified in the literature, the verbal teacher immediacy behaviors are the focus of this study.

Studies related to the Teacher Verbal Immediacy Behaviors

   There is a paucity of research related to the influence of teachers' verbal behaviors on students' motivation. One of them was conducted by Edwards (2001) with 26 students enrolled in the upper division Survey Research Methods course. She aimed to investigate the link between the teacher verbal immediacy behaviors and student motivation and whether there is a difference in gender in terms of the types of teacher verbal immediacy behaviors. The study revealed that there was a positive relationship between teachers' reported verbal immediacy behaviors and student motivation, but that there was no significant difference between the perceptions of male and female students with regard to teacher verbal immediacy behaviors. It also indicated that the levels of learning behaviors of the students without any plans to attend graduate school were not as high as those who wanted to go to graduate school. Another study in this respect was carried out by Velez and Cano (2008) with 41 freshmen/sophomores in a course on agriculture at the tertiary level. The findings were quite in line with those of Edwards (2001), demonstrating a

strong positive correlation between the verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors and cues and the students' level of motivation. In a similar mixed-method study, Rashidi and Kia (2012) explored the role of teachers' immediacy plays in the motivation level of 30 Iranian learners of English to communicate and their involvement in classroom talk in English classes, employing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The results of this study showed that teachers' verbal immediacy behaviors are positively correlated with the students' willingness to communicate in EFL classrooms. The findings of the studies in computer-mediated teaching contexts reinforce those in the non-computer-mediated ones. For instance, in a quantitative study, Shu-Fang and Aust (2008) investigated undergraduate and graduate students' perceptions related to the impact of teacher verbal immediacy behaviors on students' level of satisfaction, perceived learning and online discussion frequency in online courses. The teacher verbal immediacy behaviors were found to be the only significant predictor of online discussion frequency.

Apart from the studies concerning verbal teacher immediacy behaviors conducted outside Turkey, there were some studies in the Turkish context in this respect that indicate similar findings to those conducted elsewhere. To illustrate, Bozkaya and Aydın (2008) investigated the relationship between teacher immediacy behaviors and learners' perceptions of social presence and satisfaction in open and distance education at a large urban state university with 213 learners enrolled in the course "Introduction to Economics" who were also benefitting from face-to-face Academic Tutoring service. The findings of the study displayed that the satisfaction levels of learners are enhanced by teacher verbal immediacy behaviors. A recent study by Öztürk and Ok (2014) in relation to the motivational behaviors of teachers in Turkish EFL classes also reinforced the results of the previous studies in this respect, indicating the most and least motivating behaviors in EFL language classrooms. The findings demonstrated that the most motivating teacher behaviors incorporate verbal immediacy behaviors such as putting a smile on her / his face in the classroom, giving positive feedback and having a sense of humor whereas the least motivating behaviors include the teachers' changing their tone of voice while lecturing and posing immediate questions to students.

Although a variety of studies have been conducted into the teacher immediacy behavior, particularly into the impact of non-verbal teacher immediacy behavior on the motivation of teenage students context to date, there is scant research on the verbal teacher immediacy behaviors in the Turkish EFL context, particularly those that involve young adults in the

tertiary education settings. Hence, this research study is an attempt to explore such behavior in the Turkish higher education context.

3. Methodology

Participants

The participants were 72 students, 41 of whom were the students studying at the upper-intermediate level for the first time and 31 of whom were the repeat students (those repeating the upper-intermediate level for the second time). All the participants were enrolled in an intensive English program for about 8 months at the English preparatory school prior to their involvement in the study. Their ages ranged from 17 to 22. 38 of the participants were male and 34 were female. They were chosen via random sampling procedures. As far as their language learning background is concerned, 43 of them studied English for more than 4 years, 12 of them for between two and four years, while the rest received instruction in English for one year.

Research Design

This 14-week case study adopted a mixed-method research design with a quantitative and qualitative aspect. A case study, is an exploration of individuals or organizations through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs (Yin, 2003). The phenomenon is explored within its context using different data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The case study was chosen as the research design as the study is concerned with a systematic investigation of the perceptions of EFL learners towards the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation. For the quantitative data collection, a questionnaire was administered a questionnaire, while semi-structured interviews were held with several participants as part of the qualitative data collection procedure. The qualitative data was collected to complement the quantitative data in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires

The quantitative data was collected from the students via a questionnaire which included two parts: the *Demographic Questionnaire*

and the *Verbal Teacher Immediacy Behaviors Questionnaire.* The *Demographic Questionnaire,* was composed of the biodata about the students' ages, proficiency levels, their English language learning background and the number of times the students repeated their levels. On the other hand, the *Verbal Teacher Immediacy Behaviors Questionnaire*, there were 18 items to obtain information about the participants' perceptions on the impact of their teachers' verbal behaviors on their motivation. In this part, each item was scored using a Likert-type response format, and a Likert Scale with seven items was used for responses (extremely negative (-3); quite negative (-2) ; slightly negative (-1); not at all (0); slightly positive (+1); quite positive (+2); extremely positive (+3)).

Most of the items on the *Verbal Teacher Immediacy Behaviors Questionnaire* in the study were adapted from the verbal immediacy scale used in a study carried out by Gorham (1988). The questionnaire was piloted on 30 students composed of upper-intermediate and repeat students at the preparatory school before it was administered to the participants. In line with the feedback obtained from the piloting phase, certain alterations related to the wording and formatting issues were made before the administration of the instrument in the study. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as .85. The questionnaire was administered to all the participants in class at the same time. However, as two participants from the repeat group failed to complete all the items in the questionnaire properly, their responses were not taken into consideration.

Interviews

The data collected through semi-structured face to face interviews with the participants constitute the qualitative part of the study, which served as an in-depth investigation and the interpretation of the data gathered via the quantitative analysis. Two students from the repeat group and two students from the upper-intermediate group were selected randomly to be interviewed. All the interviews were recorded after having obtained the interviewees' consent in order not to miss any key points during the data analysis process. During the interviews, the repeat students were asked one more question in order to investigate their attitudes on whether the lack of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors played a role in their failure.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS20® (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*). Descriptive statistics were calculated through cross-tabulations for frequency and the independent-sample t-test. Also, some correlations were calculated to find out whether there were any significant differences between the upper-intermediate groups' and the repeat groups' responses. The *Verbal Teacher Immediacy Behaviors Questionnaire* utilized in the study can be considered a reliable one (Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .85). The qualitative data from the interviews, however, was used to complement the quantitative data from the questionnaire. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.. The content analysis was used to analyze the data in the study. By constantly comparing and contrasting the themes emerging from the qualitative interview data, the main and sub-codes were determined. In the course of data analysis, the researcher, also the classroom teacher, and an experienced colleague from the same department who was an expert in qualitative research were involved in the coding process. They coded the data independently initially. Later on, the codes by both coders were compared and contrasted. The similar codes were merged under a different category and the main and subcategories were finalized. The inter-rater reliability for the raters was found to be 85%. In addition, member checking was also applied to explore the credibility of results, to strengthen the validity. The data, the categories and the interpretations were returned to participants to be checked for the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4. Results

Quantitative Results

4.1 The perceptions of the students towards verbal teacher immediacy behaviors as a motivating factor to learn the target language

The perceptions of the students in relation to the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation to learn the target language can be seen on Table 1 below.

Table 1. The perceptions of the students towards verbal teacher immediacy behaviors as a motivating factor to learn English as a Foreign Language

The perceptions of the students towards verbal teacher immediacy behaviors as a motivating factor to learn English as a Foreign Language			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q11 praising a student for her/his good work, comments or performance, i.e., saying well-done, that's great, etc	72	2,0000	1,40422
Q1 using humor and jokes	72	1,8750	1,22115
Q2 chatting with students outside the class	72	1,8056	1,30696
Q8 chatting with students about their interests, daily life topics, current issues in class	72	1,5972	1,28545
Q17 meeting a student when s/he needs help with her/his personal problems	72	1,5556	1,46209
Q13 asking how a student feel about the course design, books, assignments or lessons	72	1,3472	1,22371
Q7 referring to class as "our" class or what "we" are doing	72	1,2222	1,28065
Q6 asking personal questions about the topic of the lesson	72	,9167	1,47991
Q4 giving personal examples or talking about her/his experiences while teaching	72	,6111	1,45888

The first research question is concerned with how verbal teacher immediacy behaviors affect student motivation. The analysis of the means and the standard deviations for the verbal constructs is reported in Table 1. As it can be seen in the table, Item 11, which is related to *teachers' praising student work* (M = 2,00), was considered to make the greatest contribution to students' motivation. This item is followed by Item 1 and 2, which means that *instructors' using humor and jokes in class* (M = 1,87) and *their chatting with students outside the class* (M= 1,80) were perceived to have a very positive impact on students' motivation. Furthermore, Item 8, concerned with *instructors' chatting with students*

about their interests, *daily life topics and current issues in class* (M = 1,59), and Item 17, which is related to *instructors' meeting students when they need help with their personal problems* (M = 1,55), were also regarded by the students as having quite a positive effect on their own motivation to learn the target language. Item 13, *instructors' asking for students' opinion about the course design, books, assignments or lessons* (M = 1,34), and *instructors' referring to class as "our" class and what "we" are doing,* which is Item 7 (M= 1,22), were found to be to be quite positive behaviors for student motivation. On the other hand, the effects of *instructors' asking students' personal opinions about the topic of the lesson,* which is Item 6 (M= 0,91), and *instructors' giving personal examples or talking about their experiences while teaching* (Item 4) (M= 0,611) were found to be slightly motivating.

The study reveals that although some teacher behaviors such as the ones indicated above affected students positively, there were some others having a demotivating impact on them such as the ones indicated in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The teacher immediacy behaviors that affect student motivation negatively

The teacher immediacy behaviors that affect student motivation negatively			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q18 humiliating students saying bad words	72	-2,6806	,91661
Q5 criticizing students (e.g. their behaviors) in front of their friends	72	-2,3194	1,04580
Q10 forgetting a student's name or confusing her/him with another student	72	-1,4306	1,30898
Q14 referring to class as "your" class or what "you" are doing	72	-1,4306	1,49012
Q3 choosing certain students to answer questions	72	-1,2083	1,59168
Q16 always speaking loudly	72	-1,0556	1,86055
Q9 choosing a student to answer questions even if s/he has not raised her/his hand	72	-1,0278	1,80744
Q15 getting into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this does not seem to be a part of her/his lecture plan	72	-,8056	1,85107
Q12 criticizing a student or pointing out faults in her/his tasks, actions and comments	72	-,1944	2,02546

As it can be seen in Table 2 above, some teacher behaviors were perceived to have a negative effect on student motivation. Accordingly, of all the verbal teacher immediacy behaviors that the students considered to affect their motivation in a negative way, Item 18, *instructors' humiliating students saying bad words* (M= -2,68) and Item 5, concerning instructors' *criticizing students (e.g. their behavior) in front of their classmates* (M= -2,31), were regarded as the most negative factors affecting their motivation. *Instructors' usually forgetting a student's name or confusing*

her/him with another student (Item 10) and their *referring to class as "your" class or what "you" are doing* (Item 14) seemed to have the same negative impact on students' motivation as both have the same mean (M= -1,43). Item 3, representing *instructors' selecting certain students to answer questions* (M= -1, 20), Item 16, *instructors' speaking loudly all the time* (M= -1,05) and Item 9, *teachers' choosing a student to answer questions even if s/he has not raised her/his hand* (M= -1,02), had quite a negative impact on students' motivation. Item 15 and 12 had a slightly negative influence on students' motivation, which indicated that *instructors' discussing something irrelevant to the lesson with students in class* (M= -0,80), and *their criticizing students or pointing out faults in their work* (M= -0,19) were slightly negative behaviors that influenced student motivation to learn the target language.

4.2. The impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on student motivation to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL): the upper-intermediate and repeat students

The purpose of the second research question is to compare two distinctive groups - the upper-intermediate group of students who were studying in the upper-intermediate level for the first time and the repeat group students who were studying in the intermediate level for the second time - so as to see whether there existed any differences in their perceptions.

The independent sample t-test was performed to find out whether there are significant differences between the responses of the two groups on an item basis. The significance of the mean differences between the upper-intermediate group and the repeat group was calculated using two independent sample t-tests with the following null hypothesis:

H0: There is no difference between the responses of the upper-intermediate group and the repeat group to the questions.

The H_0 was rejected and it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between the sub-groups under 95% confidence level (p $\leq$0.05). The items which revealed significant differences between the two sub groups are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3.The differences between upper-intermediate students and repeat groups in relation to the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on student motivation

		The differences between upper-intermediate students and repeat groups in relation to the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on student motivation						
		Sig.	Sig. (2-tailed)	T	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Mean	
Q12	criticizing a student or pointing out faults in her/his tasks, actions and comments	,065	,001	-3,342	-1,47128	,45254 ,44030	Upper-int: ,4390 Repeat: -1,0323	
Q6	asking personal questions about the topic of the lesson	,460	,004	-2,962	-,98662	,33457 ,33304	Upper-int: 1,3425 Repeat: ,3548	
Q13	asking how a student feel about the course design, books, assignments or lessons	,724	,019	-2,398	-66640	,28230 ,27795	Upper-int: 1,6341 Repeat: ,9677	
Q3	choosing certain students to answer questions	,297	,000	3,731	1,32887	,34690 ,35613	Upper-int: -1,7805 Repeat: -,4516	
Q15	getting into discussions based on something a student brings up even when this does not seem to be a part of her/his lecture plan	,797	,007	2,812	1,18804	,42037 ,42253	Upper-int: -1,3171 Repeat: ,1290	

Table 3 indicates that for Item 3, the responses of the upper-intermediate students were different from those of the repeat group (t = 3,731, p= 0.000≤0.05). Item 12, which is about teachers' *criticizing students and finding and stating faults in their work*, caused a significant difference between two groups (t = -3,34, p= 0.001≤0.05). The upper-intermediate students regarded this behavior as making a slight positive contribution to their motivation (M= ,4390), whereas the repeat group perceived it to be quite negative for their motivation to learn English (M= -1,03). The second significant difference can be seen for Item 6, which is related to *instructors' asking students' personal views about the topic of the lesson* (t = -2,262 p= 0.004≤0.05). In fact, this construct was considered to have a positive impact by both of the groups yet, it was found to influence the upper-intermediate learners' motivation in a considerably positive way (M= 1,34). However, the impact of this behavior was perceived to be nearly insignificant by the repeat group (M= 0,35). The results indicated that the impact of instructors' asking *students' opinions about the course design, books, assignments or lesson* on student motivation, Item 12, indicated a variation between two groups. This construct was considered positively by both of the groups; however, for the upper-intermediate students, this was quite positive (M= 1,6341), while for the repeat students, it is nearly insignificant (M= 0,96) (t = 2,398, p= 0.019≤0.05). On the other hand, Item 3, which is concerned with how instructors' *choosing certain students to answer questions affects students' motivation*, was found to affect both groups negatively. On the other hand, for the upper-intermediate students, this verbal teacher immediacy behavior had quite a negative impact on their motivation while learning (M= -1,78), whereas it was slightly negative for the motivation level of the students repeating the intermediate level (M= -0,45). For the last item (Item 15), the responses of the upper-intermediate students differ from those of the repeat group. It can be interpreted that there was a slight difference between two groups (t = 2,812, p= 0.007≤0.05). According to the results, both groups regarded *instructors' getting into discussions based on something that is not a part of their lesson plan* as a negative thing for their motivation. However, it affected the upper-intermediate group more negatively than the repeat group (the upper-intermediate group M= -1,31; the repeat group M= -0,12).

Qualitative Results

The qualitative part of the research study involved semi-structured interviews that were conducted in the second term of the academic year.

The interviews were conducted with four participants in the researcher's office. Two of the participants were from the upper-intermediate group and studied English at the preparatory school for 8 months. The other two students were from the repeat group who studied at the intermediate level for the second time and who were at the preparatory school for eight months.

During the interviews, the interviewees were asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of verbal teacher immediacy conducts, instructors' using humor and jokes, chatting with students outside the classroom, praising their tasks and work, forgetting students' names or confusing them with others, humiliating and criticizing them and pointing out their faults in tasks. Also, only the repeat group was asked whether verbal teacher immediacy behaviors had an impact on their (students') failure or not. The main and sub-themes related to the students' perceptions of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors that emerged in the interviews could be seen in Table 4 below.

Table 4. The main and sub-themes concerning the students' verbal teacher immediacy behaviors in the interviews

The main and sub-themes concerning the students' verbal teacher immediacy behaviors in the interviews	
Themes	**Codes**
Definition of verbal behavior	• Making jokes • Politeness • Praising them • Commenting about their tasks
Effect of humor and jokes	• Motivating • Energizing • Activation • Wake-up call • Drawing attention
Praise	• Motivating • Good Feelings • Self-confidence
Chatting with students outside	• Motivating • Close relationship • Positive feelings • Caring

Forgetting their names or confusing them with another student	• Demotivating • Bad feelings about themselves • Not caring • Unwillingness to do an exercise in that lesson
Humiliating	• Demotivating • Depression • Reluctance to attend classes • Loss of self-confidence
Criticizing students & pointing out faults in their tasks	• Not making the same mistakes again • Understanding mistakes • Caring • Depending on the teachers' manner • Saying bad words- demotivating

4.2.1 The perceptions of students towards verbal teacher immediacy behaviors

The qualitative data from the open-ended part of the questionnaire was concerned with the perceptions of students towards verbal teacher immediacy behaviors. Item 1 was about the views of the students concerning verbal teacher immediacy behaviors. All the students gave similar responses; they found close to themselves teachers who are polite, make jokes, praise and comment about their tasks. One of the upper-intermediate students explained:

> Teacher immediacy behaviors are teachers' smiling at us, being sincere, making jokes and praising us by saying good words. Teacher immediacy behaviors are important and necessary for student motivation. Teachers who are unfriendly and impolite make me demotivated and I do not want to participate in such teachers' lessons. When they comment about my tasks, I feel motivated as I have a chance to understand my mistakes. These immediacy behaviors affect my motivation to learn English, which can contribute to my success (P1).

On the other hand, one of the repeat students reported the following in relation to his views on the impact of his teacher's verbal immediacy behaviors:

> Teacher immediacy behaviors make me feel better as these behaviors show that the teacher cares about me. I am more motivated and willing to attend his/her lessons. His/her talking to me about my tasks and caring about me are immediacy behaviors for me. Also I am motivated when teachers tell jokes, praise me and talk in a polite way. These behaviors are one of the most influential ones on our motivation. We like these teachers most (P4).

As it can be seen from the student comments, there is a close relationship between teacher immediacy behaviors and student motivation. Teachers who display immediacy behaviors make a considerable contribution to student motivation during teaching/learning process. Students are more willing to attend and participate in such teachers' lessons.

 Item 2 is related to the impact of instructors' use of humor and jokes in class on students' motivation to learn English. For all the participants in the study, this conduct has a positive effect on their motivation. All of them agreed that this conduct is motivating and energizing as it is a means of activation and a wake-up call and draws their attention. One of the repeat students remarked the following in relation to his opinion of the use of humor and jokes in class:

> It affects my motivation in a very positive way. I think we cannot study a subject during the whole lesson. If we study, we tend to get sleepy or lose our concentration. When they tell jokes and make us laugh, they attract our attention to the lesson and so our motivation increases to some extent (P3).

One of the upper-intermediate students noted the following with regard to the instructors' use of humor and jokes in class:

> Instructors' using humor and telling jokes is certainly motivating for students. However, personally I am in favor of studying the subject in the lesson. In order to get students' attention, teachers should display this behavior especially when students get sleepy and thus motivation decreases. For example, it increases at the beginning of the lessons whereas it starts to decrease towards the end of the lessons or the week such as Friday (P4).

It can be inferred from the explanations of the students that instructors' use of humor and jokes had a positive impact on their motivation. Most of them thought that teachers with this behavior increased their motivation to learn English by waking them up when they get sleepy or lose their concentration, enabling them to be more active and energetic and drawing their attention to the lesson.

The third question was concerned with instructors' praise, which was thought to be motivating as well. It can be deduced from the student views that this behavior is motivating, arousing good feelings and self-confidence.

An upper-intermediate student stated her views in this respect in the following way:

> Instructors' praising our work has a very positive impact on our motivation as we feel ourselves very good and proud. It makes me confident (P1)

A repeat student made a similar comment about the instructor's praise in the following way:

> It has a positive impact as when s/he gives me a positive feedback, I see that I can succeed in doing that task (P4).

In the light of these comments, the study revealed that teacher praise makes a positive contribution to student motivation. The participants reported feeling self-confident and proud when they understood they could do well the tasks assigned to them. They felt the positive reinforcement by the teacher in relation to their performance led them to invest more time and effort in the task at hand.

Another issue discussed in the interviews was related to the instructors' dialogue with the students outside the classroom. All the participants in the study indicated that they liked communicating with their teachers outside class time and found it motivating to learn the target language. They reported establishing a close relationship with the teacher and seeing the caring attitude of the teacher generated positive feelings in them. One of them made the following comment in this respect:

> We have a close relationship with the teachers who chat with us about not only academic but also personal issues outside the classroom and we like these teachers and feel comfortable in the lessons as personally we feel unique and precious. Therefore, our motivation is affected positively by these teachers (P3).

The other repeat student reported the following in relation to their views concerning the instructor's talk with them outside class:

> I do not like taking to teachers about my private life. I like talking to them about the lesson, current issues or social life. My motivation is influenced in a positive way as when we talk, I understand that we have a close relationship with a teacher and s/he cares me (P4).

It can be understood that the motivation level of all the participants increased thanks to communicating with teachers outside class. In general, they reported that they liked talking about the lessons, their improvements and social issues, although some indicated that they did not enjoy sharing their private lives with the teacher. All the participants emphasized that they appreciated studying in such a positive learning environment which helps them become more receptive to new ideas and more self-confident and promote favorable group dynamics in class, which is conducive to the quality of classroom instruction. The results of the qualitative data showed that teachers' forgetting students' names or confusing them with others is demotivating for students. The findings indicated that this behavior generated unpleasant feelings among students and they did not feel the teacher cared for them and thus they became unwilling to participate in the lesson. In fact, a repeat student put forward the following in relation to this issue:

> It has a negative impact on my motivation as I feel myself unimportant. If the teacher forgot my name, I would think that s/he does not care about me. Even when s/he wants me to do an exercise, I do not want to do it as their addressing me by my name is very significant for me (P4).

Students' comments revealed that they did not want their teachers to forget their names or confuse them with others. They regarded this as a demotivating teacher behavior, making them feel unimportant or even depressed and affecting their willingness to be engaged in an activity during a lesson. They tended to hold the opinion that the teachers with such behaviors do not take care about the students.

Among the demotivating behaviors that participants indicated in the questionnaire, the most negative conduct, which was teachers' humiliating students, was also discussed in the interviews. The teachers' humiliating attitude caused students to get demotivated and depressed, and show reluctance to attend classes and thereby losing their self-confidence. One of the repeat students expressed his feelings in this regard below:

> When our teachers say bad words and humiliate us in the class, I feel depressed as I lose my motivation and confidence. Therefore, I do not want to come to the lessons and I don't like such teachers who humiliate us (P3).

Another issue was concerned with the instructors' criticizing students' work and pointing out their faults. All of them had the same idea that being shown their mistakes is a good thing but what is most important for them is the instructors' manner of doing that. Below are two quotes by the interviewees in this respect:

> Instructors' pointing out faults in my work is good as I have a chance to understand my mistakes. Also, I think my teacher wants me to improve. However, this is contingent on teachers' manner. If the manner is insulting, my motivation is touched in a negative way and it decreases (P3).

> My motivation is touched by it in a positive way. When a teacher shows my faults, I think that s/he wants me to improve myself. However, her/his manner is important. If s/he points out my faults in a humiliating way in front of my friends, this will be demotivating for my motivation…They should point out my mistakes so that I will not make them again (P3).

It can be deduced from the abovementioned student comments that teachers' pointing out students' faults in a task is a motivating factor for students as they do not want to make the same mistakes again and they believe that teachers want them to improve themselves, thereby taking care of them. However, the manner in which teachers do this is important. If they find and show faults in a humiliating way, students feel insulted and demotivated.

Lastly, during the interviews, only the repeat students were asked whether verbal teacher immediacy was an influential factor that caused them to fail in the level. Both of the students agreed on its impact; however, they admitted not studying hard enough. One of them indicated the following in relation to this issue:

> (…) yes, it was. Instructors' not being close to me was influential to some extent but I failed due to not studying hard enough (P4).

The other one expressed his views in the following way:

> (…) I failed as I did not study. However, teacher immediacy has an impact on my failure to some extent (P3).

5. Discussion

This research study aimed to explore EFL students' perceptions of the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation to learn English using a mixed-method case study design. In other words, it investigated the role that teacher verbal immediacy behaviors played on student motivation to learn in an EFL context. As the findings of the study revealed, all the 18 immediacy behaviors in the questionnaire were found to have a motivating impact on the participants' level of motivation to varying degrees. The findings are quite in line with the related literature as previous research shows, there is a close relationship between the teacher immediacy behaviors and the student motivation to learn (Gorham, 1988;

Christophel, 1990; Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Kay, 1995; Edwards, 2001; Velez & Cano, 2008; Bozkaya & Aydın, 2008; Hsou, 2010; Rashidi & Kia, 2012). Bozkaya and Aydın (2008) stated that "…it is observed that verbal immediacy behaviors increase the satisfaction levels of learners" (p.69). This finding was also revealed in the qualitative part as all of the interviewees were of the opinion that teacher immediacy behaviors are significant for their motivation to learn the target language.

In relation to the first research question in the study, the perceptions of EFL students concerning the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation level in the process of learning English, the quantitative findings in the study revealed that teacher praise was the most motivating behavior for the students. Likewise, the instructors' use of humor and jokes as well as their chat with students outside the classroom were indicated to be among the behaviors that make the greatest contribution to student motivation, which was also supported by the qualitative analysis results. These findings were also explored in previous studies such as Gorham (1988), Keller and Kopp (1987), Wlodkowski (1981), McDowell and McDowell (1990), Kay (1995). Gorham (1988) indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between the teacher immediacy behaviors, such as the teachers' use of humor, their initiation of conversation with students, and praise of student work, and student motivation. Moreover, it was stated by Brophy (1986), Keller and Kopp (1987) and Wlodkowski (1981) that teacher praise stimulates student motivation. The findings of the study was not in line with McDowell and McDowell (1990), which indicated teachers' having conversation with the students outside class was found to be most motivating behavior for the students. In this study, these findings were also obtained from the analysis of the qualitative data. The results of the qualitative analysis of the data from the semi-structured interviews revealed how these immediacy behaviors contributed to students' motivation to learn English. To illustrate, as regards teacher praise, a teacher immediacy behavior found to enhance student motivation in the study, the participants reported that when teachers praise their work, they feel self-confident and proud and understand that they can succeed in carrying out that activity. It can be concluded that teacher praise promotes self-confidence that develops student motivation (See Ebata, 2008) and positive feelings in process of language learning. Moreover, the interviewees found teachers' telling jokes motivating. They reported that this kind of behavior was engaging for them and it enables them to sustain their motivation to learn, making them active and energetic during the lesson, which is quite in line with Velez and Cano (2008) and McCroskey and Richmond (2000).

In addition, chatting with instructors outside class was mostly reported to increase student motivation in class by improving the relationship between the students and the instructor and, thus, leading to the establishment and maintenance of good classroom dynamics, a positive and constructive learning environment in class (Bozkaya & Aydın, 2008; Rashidi & Kia 2012). This was also emphasized in the literature related to teacher immediacy. According to the behavioral-approach avoidance theory (Gorham, 1988), when students interact with their teachers, they feel comfortable in lessons.

In addition to these conducts, instructors' talking to students about their interests, daily life and current issues, meeting them when they need help, asking for their opinions about the course design, books, assignment, or lessons were found quite motivating for students. Furthermore, uttering ownership words such as "our" class or what "we" are doing, which shows belongingness and, thus, is based on Brown's (2000) constructivist perspective, were considered to have a quite motivating effect on the students' motivation to learn. These findings were consistent with the results obtained by Bozkaya and Aydın (2008).

On the other hand, in line with the participants' views, instructors' humiliating students is the most unfavorable conduct that decreases student motivation, which is in line with Gorham and Christophel (1990) and Edwards (2001). In fact, the students reported when they were humiliated, they lost their self-confidence and did not want to participate in lesson as they felt depressed, which were also suggested in Thweatt and McCroskey, (1996). Also, teachers' criticising students in class, forgetting their names or confusing them with others was indicated to influence student motivation quite negatively in the study. Such teacher behaviors gave students the impression that they were not cared, nor valued, leading to students' reluctance or refusal to participate in class. In the same vein, instructors' referring to the class as "your" class, selecting certain students to answer questions and speaking loudly all the time were found to be quite demotivating for students. Being chosen to answer questions and discussing with the instructors about irrelevant issues are other behaviors that were reported to affect student motivation in a negative way. The findings demonstrated that instructors' discussions with students about the things that are not a part of the lesson were not found motivating for students, which is also supported by the interviews as three students interviewed remarked that this makes them distracted and causes them to lose their attention during the lesson. The qualitative findings related to the qualitative part of the study reinforced those related to the quantitative part in this regard. In the interviews, the participants stated they wanted their

teachers to find and show their mistakes in order not to make the same mistakes again and so as to improve themselves; however, they emphasized how the teachers do this is crucial in this respect. In the light of these findings, it can be concluded that students become demotivated because of these abovementioned conducts and hence feel insecure and uncomfortable. As it can also be inferred from Christophel (1990), students' avoidance tendency is likely to decrease when they feel secure and motivated, but it is likely to increase when these demotivating behaviors were displayed.

With respect to the second research question in the study, whether there is a distinction between the upper-intermediate students and the students in the repeat groups in terms of the influence of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation to learn English, the results revealed the perceptions of the two groups significantly differed for certain verbal teacher immediacy behaviors. The most significant difference between the two groups was reported to be related to the participants' views on the impact of teachers' over-critical attitude towards their mistakes. The upper-intermediate students perceived it as slightly positive. In contrast, the repeat students regarded it as quite negative. However, in the interviews all the students reported that teachers' pointing out students' mistakes is an appropriate strategy so as not to repeat the same mistakes. Nevertheless, all of them explained the manner in which the teachers indicate student mistakes is very important. It can be concluded that particularly the students in the repeat group may give more importance to how the teacher correct the mistakes than what their mistakes are, while being pointed out faults may be more significant than teachers' manner for the upper-intermediate students. Alternatively, most of the repeat students may have associated the word "criticizing" more negatively than the upper-intermediate students. Moreover, the two sub groups differed in teachers' asking the students' personal views about the topic of the lesson. The upper-intermediate students considered this conduct significantly positive for their motivation, whereas the repeat students did not regard it this as motivation enhancing. Another point in which the two groups differed from each other was instructors' asking for their opinions about the course design, books, assignments or lessons. The upper-intermediate students were much more impacted in a positive way than the repeat students in this respect. This shows that the upper-intermediate students were more motivated and willing to talk and express their feelings and views about academic issues or the tasks that they are supposed to carry out. A further behavior that the views of the two groups differed from one another was instructors' choosing certain students in order to answer

questions in lessons. It was not surprising to find out that this conduct had a slight negative impact on the repeat students, while this impact was quite negative on the motivation of the upper-intermediate students. It may be due to the fact that repeat students generally tend to be less motivated than those who do not fail. Finally, both groups' responses differed as far as teachers' getting into discussion with students about irrelevant things is concerned. The upper-intermediate students perceived this behavior as quite negative, whereas the repeat students regarded it as slightly negative.

Limitations

There are three main limitations in the study. The first one is concerned with the sample size in the study. The study was carried out with 72 participants at an English preparatory school in a large urban state university. The second one is related to the proficiency level of the participants. Only the upper-intermediate and repeat students were involved in the study. The third limitation is pertinent to the duration of the study. The data collection was limited to one academic semester (14 weeks), the spring semester of the academic year 2013 and 2014.

6. Conclusion and Implications

This particular research study was conducted with EFL students at the English preparatory school of a large urban state university in Turkey. The study investigated the perceptions of students about the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their motivation level in their learning process and the views of the students studying at the upper-intermediate level for the first time as well as those in the repeat group studying at the intermediate level regarding the influence of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors. It offered insights into the differences in the perceptions of the students from two distinctive groups. Based on the inferences drawn from the analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative data and a review of related literature, it revealed that teachers have a significant role in motivating students (Swenddal, 2011) and that verbal teacher immediacy behaviors have an impact on student motivation in a positive and negative way (Edwards, 2001). Students reported becoming highly motivated when their teachers praised them uttering such words and phrases as *well-done, very good, etc*, and made them laugh by telling jokes and chatting with them in relation to academic and personal issues outside the classroom, which were similar to the findings of other studies conducted so far. However, when teachers humiliated or criticized their behaviors harshly

and forgot their names or confused them with others, students got really demotivated. For the upper-intermediate students in the study, teacher praise, the use of humor and the chat with teachers outside class are motivating, whereas teacher humiliation and criticism in class and teachers' choice of certain students to answer questions were demotivating. On the other hand, the repeat students found teacher praise, the chat with teachers outside class and teachers' use of humor highly motivating, while teachers' humiliating and criticizing them, forgetting their names or confusing them with others caused their motivation to decrease. In the light of these findings, it can be concluded it is necessary that teachers be careful with their behaviors in class as their behaviors can cause student motivation to enhance or decrease. Also, it is recommendable for teachers to enable learners to feel comfortable (Brophy, 1986). They should display the behaviors that have a positive impact on their students' motivation as motivation is a key factor in learning process. Moreover, it is essential for them to avoid displaying such behaviors as humiliating, criticizing them in the class and forgetting their names, which make students demotivated. Some teachers may not be aware of the impact of some of their behaviors on student motivation. They should not ignore the fact that everything they do in the class may have an impact on students. Therefore, they must pay attention to their behaviors as their behaviors create external motivation for students. Getting rewards from their teachers, students can internalize this external motivation and turn it into internal motivation which is shown to be associated with deep learning, better performance and well-being (Deci & Ryan 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The findings of the study are likely to shed light on the teacher verbal behaviors which affect students positively and negatively in EFL classroom settings. Hence, they are likely to provide a road map beneficial for the novice and experienced teachers alike to pave the way for the establishment of a more effective learning environment characterized by good classroom dynamics, a low affective filter, a sense of acceptance and mutual respect.

Another important issue that was discovered in this study is the motivating and demotivating verbal teacher behaviors for repeat students. It is acknowledged by lots of teachers and practitioners that repeat students' motivation generally tends to be at a low level, as Gan, Humphreys and Hamp-Lyons (2004) also revealed in their study, which was carried out with Chinese university students. Teachers generally try to enhance their motivation, which is sometimes really difficult. Thus, the findings of this study may be useful for teachers working in the tertiary education contexts, particularly those who seek to motivate not only new

but also repeat students and to sustain a high level of motivation among students in class. Furthermore, the adoption of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors such as the ones indicated in the study is likely to lead to a high level of student task engagement and commitment to the learning endeavor at English preparatory schools in tertiary education settings. Moreover, considering that this study revealed significant differences in the perceptions of students who were in the upper-intermediate and in the repeat group concerning the impact of verbal teacher immediacy behaviors on their level of motivation, the findings may help teachers raise their awareness of how verbal immediacy behaviors help or hinder student motivation and which verbal immediacy behaviors they need to display with different learner profiles in different classes so as to enhance student motivation. The findings of this study may also lead teachers to be more attentive towards classroom dynamics while providing instruction for different learner profiles with different levels of motivation. Furthermore, course developers can take the findings into consideration while developing the methodology courses in the English Language Teaching departments for undergraduate and graduate courses and integrate different aspects of motivation into the course syllabus such as different types of motivation, motivation theories and how to arouse and sustain student motivation. The findings of the study can also be useful for the teacher trainers, both in the field of initial teacher education and in-service teacher education in that they will act as a road map in terms of how they can guide novice as well as experienced teachers to integrate verbal immediacy behaviors in their classes that are conducive to student motivation, It is likely to be a good asset for pre-service teachers to be informed of the importance of verbal immediacy behaviors in their classes and their potential impact on the student motivation. The teacher trainers could integrate input sessions for novice teachers on the types of verbal immediacy behaviors and to point out which behaviors enhance learners' cognitive gains and create positive affect and which ones are likely to result in the development of negative attitudes towards learning and teaching on the part of the learners. The findings may also be useful for teacher educators who are involved in the development of induction and training programs for in-service teaching programs to encourage them to be involved in ongoing professional development by doing self and peer observations of their verbal immediacy behaviors. Moreover, the curriculum developers at university language education departments who are responsible for the design, assessment and revision of the course content, course materials and training programs might benefit from the findings with a view to developing undergraduate and graduate courses

that aim to raise prospective and practising teachers' awareness towards various different types of motivation, motivation strategies in the EFL classes, motivation strategies, and the ways to create and sustain a high level of student motivation through various classroom activities.

Through the teacher development sessions, the prospective teachers and in-service teachers may be given opportunities reflect on and critically analyze their own teaching in relation to the verbal immediacy behaviors. They might be asked to videotape their own classes and then analyze the video recording to identify the frequency of the immediacy behaviors at different stages of the lesson and check the types of behavior and the reactions of students towards these behaviors. Later on, they may be promoted to write self-reflections based on their video-based analysis for professional development purposes. Such reflective practice might help them raise their awareness towards their own deliberate or unintentional behaviors and the impact of such behaviors on their students' motivation levels. Accordingly, they may decide on which immediacy behaviors to integrate into their lessons conduct to contribute to cognitive and affective learning gains of different learner profiles and to raise student interest in the lesson. They can also reflect on how to use verbal teacher immediacy behaviors to create a more relaxed atmosphere characterized by mutual respect and a strong bond between class members and the teacher to allow for an ample exchange of ideas and a more fruitful language teaching process.

Taking the limitations and implications into consideration, more studies should be conducted with larger student samples and with different learner profiles in different institutions, or comparative studies can be carried out with the students at the same proficiency level in different institutions such as those at a private university and a state university, or with those having different levels of proficiency. Moreover, an in-depth investigation could be carried out into other factors that are likely to affect student motivation either positively or negatively via different qualitative data collection instruments such as focused group interviews, reflective journals, stimulated recall procedures and classroom interaction analysis, classroom observations, along with the quantitative data collection instruments such as questionnaires and surveys. Further studies can be carried out particularly with repeat students about the factors that arouse and sustain their motivation since their motivation generally tend to be at a low level or decrease easily.

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Perspectives of Students as Regards Group Work: A Case Study

Esra Ataman, Elif Aksoy and Şeniz Bilgi

*''Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.''*
—Henry Ford

Abstract

Group work is a common technique used frequently in Foreign Language Education (FLE) classrooms. Although there was a group of studies about the benefits of group work, students' perception of group work was not researched thoroughly. Therefore, this study investigates junior students' perception of group work in FLE classrooms of Middle East Technical University (METU). Data were collected through an adapted questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The results show that the students have a positive tendency towards group work. In addition to the many advantages mentioned by the students, group work has some disadvantages especially related to the time concern and free-riders.

Keywords: group work, perception, advantage, disadvantage, FLE

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

Group work is a prevalent learning technique used in every step of education from lower to upper grades. The studies found in the literature strongly support the idea that group work is beneficial (Hammar Chiriac, 2014). Past research emphasizing the benefits of group work in classroom context has resulted in a transition from the conventional method used in

teaching based heavily on individual work to the academic group work. Although there is a broad history of research about the benefits of group work, relatively less amount of research has been conducted on students' attitudes towards group work. The fact that group work is beneficial does not ensure its integration into the classroom because students' attitudes towards group work may not be positive (Martinez, et al. 2002). In other words, students' attitudes may not be in line with the benefits of group work.

1.2. Rationale behind the Study

Considering the inadequacy in the studies conducted on students' perception of group work, this study is intended to be complementary to the gap in the literature. In this regard, students in the department of Foreign Language Education (FLE) at METU are frequently encouraged to study in groups. It also seems that the group studies constitute the great percentage of grading in many courses.

1.3. Purpose of the study

Based on FLE students' continual experiences of group work, this study aims to investigate students' attitudes towards group work in METU FLE classrooms.

To this end, this study consists of both a questionnaire as a quantitative data collection tool (Cantwell and Andrews, 2014) (Kouros & Abrami, 2006) (Kutnick & Layne et al., 2006) and an interview (Gaudet & Ramer et al., 2010) as a qualitative component supporting the quantitative data.

1.4. Limitations of the Study

Some limitations may arise from the data collection tools. For instance, in the quantitative data collection part, participants may be reluctant to answer all of the questions in the questionnaire. As interview is a qualitative data collection tool, it may be hard to interpret participants' subjective account. Since there are two researchers to interpret the qualitative data, there may be some parts in which two researchers' interpretations do not overlap. Furthermore, this study cannot be generalized into all students of METU since it is carried out with a limited sample only in the department of FLE.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition

The terms group work, collaborative study and cooperative work can be used interchangeably for the purpose of this study although there are minor differences in their meaning.

Group work is a collaborative study in which students work on a graded assignment during many class hours and if necessary, outside the class (Manful, Takyi, & Ampiah, 2014). Gomleksiz (2007) defines collaborative learning as a goal-directed study generated by a group of students (Taqi & Al-Nouh, 2014). Likewise, it is emphasized that collaborative learning is an instruction method revolving around students' common academic goals (Gokhale 1995). Additionally, group work can be summarized as any learning and teaching task in which students are expected to complete the activities in groups (The University of Sydney, 2012). According to Donelson R. Forsyth, a group can be defined as 'two or more people connected to each other with social bonds' (2006: 2-3 as cited in (Smith 2008)).

In addition to the group work, this study focuses on the 'perception'. Although previous studies put emphasis on the 'attitude' concept, the term 'perception' is used as an umbrella term, which embodies 'attitude' in this study. The term 'attitude' has several definitions. Primarily, attitudes are the indicators of people's mental states which urge them to take any action (Kouros & Abrami, 2006). In the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), the attitude is defined as 'the way someone thinks and feels about somebody or something' (p. 85). In other words, attitude is a psychological tendency which is put into words through the evaluation of a specific item by liking or disliking. This term contains the main elements of attitudes, which are tendency, entity and evaluation. Therefore, while the inner tendency is the attitude itself, expression of attitudes can be seen through evaluative responses (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007). In general, attitude is described as an inclination to show a positive or negative reaction to a certain entity (Martino & Zan, 2010).

2.2 Significance

2.2.1 Importance and Popularity of Group Work

There is a huge amount of research on the efficacy of collaborative work in the educational field (Williams, 2011). For instance, in the university

context, group work is regarded as an effective strategy which encourages learners to evaluate their own learning and get the help of their peers (Manful, Takyi & Ampiah, 2014). Group work is a popular learning technique used in every step of education from lower to upper grades (Hammar Chiriac, 2014). As group work enables active learning for students and minimizes the differences between learners in the classroom environment, it becomes a trend in the educational system (Nair et al., 2012). In addition, it contributes to the students' social and cognitive development (Kouros & Abrami, 2006).

The reason for the great interest in collaborative work is that it has a great success in the history of education (White, Lloyd & Goldfried, 2007). Another reason for this interest is the fact that collaborative learning is associated with lifelong learning (White, Lloyd & Kennedy et al., 2005). That it promotes lifelong learning results from the fact that it represents a miniature of the society.

2.2.2 Importance of Students' Perception

Kouros and Abrami (2006) suggest two reasons for the importance of students' attitudes towards group work. The first one is related to its integration into the classroom because students' attitudes are regarded as the main factor indicating how to apply cooperative learning in the best way. Secondly, if students' attitudes are found to be negative, this data can be used to ameliorate the learning process in a group.

In case of students' having negative attitudes, other potential methods can be integrated to ameliorate the inconvenience in group work. Namely, with the improvement of students' attitudes, they can feel ready to learn the new and necessary knowledge to adapt to changing conditions (2004). Similarly, in group work, students' attitudes can be improved to help them obtain the same results.

To sum up, gaining insight into students' attitudes towards studying collaboratively will provide a chance for the future development of group work as an instructional method.

2.3 Previous research on Students' Experiences

Since the group work became popular in 21st century, the number of studies being conducted on the attitudes towards group work has been growing. For example, on the one hand, a study investigating whether students find collaborative work enjoyable or not was conducted in a school in the East Coast state of Terengganu in Malaysia. As a result of

this study, group work appeared as an influential learning technique. Moreover, it is concluded that group work makes lessons more enjoyable by enabling interaction among students, which results in positive student attitudes (Nair et al., 2012).

Another study conducted on graduate students' attitudes towards group work in Indiana University showed that students have a neutral attitude in terms of preference, enjoyment and satisfaction in group work since the main tendency of students was the "it depends" answers for these aspects (Martinez et al., 2002).

On the other hand, it is observed that some students may not be willing to participate in group activities as they regard it as a burden. For example, while the majority of the undergraduate students in Ghanaian University have a positive perception of group work, some of the students have a negative impression about it due to the negligence of other group members (Manful, Takyi and Ampiah 2014).

2.4 Students' Perception of Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

There are many advantages and some disadvantages of group work as a prevalent technique in the 21st century. Moreover, students consider the advantages and disadvantages of group work while they are forming their attitudes towards working in groups.

First, during interactive group work, students can improve their higher-order thinking skills and they become more motivated to succeed in this way (Hammar Chiriac, 2014) (Taqi & Al-Nouh, 2014). Second, students feel more motivated as what they learn is considered important in group work (Gillies, 2004). Third, group study provides students with the opportunity to discover their unnoticed skills (Manful, Takyi & Ampiah, 2014). Moreover, students take more responsibility for their own learning in group work since they discuss with their peers and improve their critical thinking skills (Taqi & Al-Nouh, 2014). According to Campbell and Li (2006), group work helps students to interiorize learnt knowledge and makes students feel more satisfied with their learning experience. In addition to the listed advantages, group work enables students to show respect to other group members and improves students' attitude towards learning in general (Alghamdi, 2014). To sum up, previous research points out that group work is useful in exploring distinctive ideas, better knowledge retention and dealing with extremely broad projects easily. As a result, students gain confidence during group studies (Martinez et al., 2002).

A study was conducted on the perceptions of senior business degree students at the University of South Australia. Considering the comments of the participants on the study, it has been inferred that there are several advantages of group work, and these advantages bear a resemblance to the other advantages summarized by other cited studies (Burdett, 2003).

When it comes to the disadvantages of group work, it is time-consuming since it requires a lot of extra work outside the class and there is a possibility of unjust work-load distribution among peers (Manful, Takyi & Ampiah, 2014). The cited study at the University of South Australia also adds to the list another disadvantage, which is lack of staff support (Burdett, 2003). Moreover, group members may have an impact on students' motivation for group work. For instance, there are students who do not make any contribution to the work, which is a common trouble for many students during group work. Students are usually unwilling to penalize this type of group members who are also called free-riders. Thus, they develop negative feelings towards group work, and they think that they will also have such type of students in their new groups (Hammar Chiriac, 2014).

There is also a study showing that working in a group does not ensure that students' learning will improve. Students' attention is divided between the work and the interaction with peers during collaborative work. However, some students may push most of the work off on other peers by paying all their attention to social communication. On the other hand, students who end up doing most of the work may not get the reward they deserve. Another problem during group work is that one student may intervene in the cognitive process of another about an issue since they stay focused on each other's ideas. As an example, there may be students who want to attract attention on themselves by decreasing the opportunity of others to share what they learn efficiently (Sears & Pai, 2012).

Nowadays, the disadvantages of group work are mainly seen to be related to the group assessment (Burns & Sinfield, 2012). However, group assessment will be out of the scope of this study.

2.5 Implications for Education

In line with the constant changes in the field of education, there is a growing demand for group work skills. Nowadays, students are frequently encouraged to work in groups for different assignments in different courses and the skill of working collaboratively will be a demanded quality for the future achievement (Kouros & Abrami, 2006).

Despite this fact, it does not mean that it is applicable in every classroom environment since it may be problematic for some students who dislike group work. Therefore, in addition to the studies conducted on the benefits of group work, many more studies need to be carried out to reveal students' perceptions of group work. As attitude towards group work is the main factor that influences the effectiveness of group work, after finding out students' attitudes, it would be possible to make necessary arrangements in order to integrate group work into the classrooms.

In a study conducted on British psychology students' perceptions of group work, it is recommended that instructors in universities should take the perspectives of students into consideration while devising their own teaching technique. Moreover, courses that students take can be reshaped based on the students' personal views (Walker, 2001).

2.6 The Statement of the Problem Regarding Students' Perceptions of Group Work

Despite the broad history of research about the benefits of group work, relatively less amount of research has been conducted on students' attitudes towards group work, and this constitutes a gap in the literature about group work. For instance, the fact that some students do not enjoy group work may cause the instructor to be torn between the integration of group work into the curriculum and the exclusion of it. Whereas group work seems reasonable to the instructor due to its benefits, the fact that some students have a negative attitude towards group work may eliminate the good impact of it. Therefore, the instructor may tend to show unwillingness towards using group work in the class. To solve this problem, students' attitudes should be enhanced. In order to enable this enhancement, it is crucial to find out the students' attitudes and the factors affecting these attitudes (Martinez, et al. 2002).

While there is a supporting literature for the benefits of group work, this fact does not provide any clues about the students' perceptions of group work (White, Lloyd & Kennedy et al., 2005). In other words, there are few studies about students' experiences (Gillies, 2004). The existing literature also lacks studies on what is happening during collaborative work and what kind of factors influence students' capability of learning. The basic area of interest is how students explain why they think some group work is a positive experience which brings success while the consequence is the opposite in some others (Hammar Chiriac, 2014).

3. Methodology

The main questions which will be addressed in the study are as follows:

1) What is the students' perception towards group work/collaborative work in FLE classrooms?
2) What do the students think about the advantages and disadvantages of group work/collaborative work in FLE classrooms?

Twenty-six female and eight male students whose ages range from 19 to 22 participated in this study. All participants were randomly chosen from junior students of Foreign Language Education department at METU. All of the participants had had group work experience before.

3.1 Age Profile
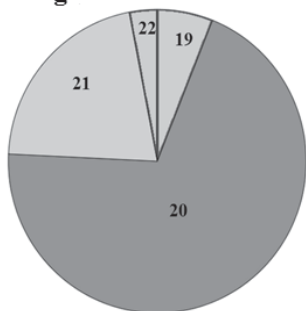
3.2 Gender Profile
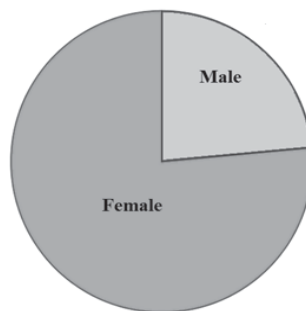
For this study, an adapted questionnaire, which has forty statements designed with Likert scale, and a semi-structured face-to-face interview, which has seven questions, were used to collect the data.

Thirty-one of the statements were retrieved from three different questionnaires and adapted while nine of them were generated by the researchers to support the adapted statements. The main criterion addressed in the selection of the participants was easy accessibility.

Firstly, thirty-four junior FLE students were given a consent form to ensure that they participated in the study voluntarily. Then, the group work questionnaire was distributed. In the questionnaire, the participants were first supposed to fill in the general information part in which they give personal information like their gender, age or the courses taken. In the second part of the questionnaire, they were expected to evaluate the statements about group work based on their own perception. Afterwards,

the questionnaires and consent forms were collected separately to be evaluated objectively by the researchers and not to interfere with the participants' confidentiality.

For the interview, four participants, two of whom were male and two of whom were female, were chosen randomly among the participants who had written their contact address. All interviews were audio-recorded. During the interviews, the students were asked to approve that they participated in this interview on their own will. Then, they were asked to introduce themselves briefly. The pre-designed questions requiring the participants to give specific examples from their own group work experiences were asked. In addition to the pre-designed questions, some questions related to the answers in the questionnaire were asked to the students. Finally, the students were asked if they had anything to add and they were expected to give an overall summary of their speech.

4. Data Analysis

For this study, both quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis were used. Pie charts were added to show the percentage of participants' age and gender profiles. All statements were coded into *SPSS* V22.0, and tables for all designed categories were formed to show the general tendencies. Then, the participants' tendency was analyzed descriptively by calculating percentages, standard deviations and mean scores so that the trends in the data could be displayed. In the interview, audio-recordings were transcribed. The parts that are relevant to the main research questions for this study were underlined to support the descriptive data obtained from the questionnaire.

5. Results

This part summarizes the participants' choices of items in the second subsection of the questionnaire titled as 'Perceptions on Group Work'. The results which answer the main research questions of this study can be found in this section. Moreover, the percentages, the means and the standard deviations of the statements which students rank from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) in the Likert scale are demonstrated.

5.1 The Results for Perception of Group Work

As can be seen below, in Table 1, 64,7% (total of 'agree' and 'strongly agree') of students think that group work is fun. Likewise, in Table 2,

52,9% (total of 'agree' and 'strongly agree') of students enjoy working within a group. As it is understood from these tables, there is a positive tendency of students towards group work. In spite of the existence of 'undecided' responses in both tables, it can be seen that there are no 'strongly disagree' responses. Moreover, the percentage of 'disagree' responses is 11,8% in both tables, and this is a small proportion when the overall responses are taken into account. In other words, the data show a trend towards positive.

5.1.1 Statement 2: Group work is fun.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Disagree	4	11,8	11,8
	Undecided	8	23,5	23,5
	Agree	16	47,1	47,1
	Strongly Agree	6	17,6	17,6
	Total	34	100,0	100,0

5.1.2 Statement 4: I enjoy working within a group.		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Disagree	4	11,8	11,8
	Undecided	12	35,3	35,3
	Agree	17	50,0	50,0
	Strongly Agree	1	2,9	2,9
	Total	34	100,0	100,0

In line with Tables 1 and 2, in Table 3 below, 61,7% (total of 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree') of students believe that working in groups is not a waste of time. Interestingly, although 'undecided' responses exist among the responses, there are no 'strongly agree' responses to this statement. Furthermore, the percentage of 'agree' responses is 11,8%, and this is a small proportion when the overall responses are considered. In other words, the data show no significant trends towards negative.

5.1.3 Statement 3: I feel working in groups is a waste of time.				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	2,9	2,9
	Disagree	20	58,8	58,8
	Undecided	9	26,5	26,5
	Agree	4	11,8	11,8
	Total	34	100,0	100,0

When the means and standard deviations of statements 2, 4 and 3 are examined, it can be seen that there is a tendency towards 'agree' **(M=3,7059, SD=0,90552 and M=3,4412, SD=0,74635)** response in the positive statements (2 and 4) about group work whereas there is a tendency towards 'disagree' **(M=2,4706, SD=0,74814)** response in the negative statement (3). Moreover, there is not a huge response range (like 1 to 5) between minimum and maximum.

5.1.4 Descriptive Statistics of statements 2, 4 and 3					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
2. Group work is fun.	34	2,00	5,00	3,7059	,90552
4. I enjoy working within a group.	34	2,00	5,00	3,4412	,74635
3. I feel working in groups is a waste of time.	34	1,00	4,00	2,4706	,74814

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

Based on Table 5 below, there is a tendency towards 'undecided' in statements 12 **(M=3,3824, SD=1,01548)** and statement 23 **(M=2,5882, SD=0,85697)** about the integration of group work into the curriculum. In other words, the students in general are not sure whether they feel happy about the integration of group work into their academic curriculum.

5.1.5 Descriptive Statics - Integration of Group Work into the Curriculum					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
12. I feel happy that group work is a part of my academic curriculum.	34	1,00	5,00	3,3824	1,01548
23. I feel unhappy about the integration of group work into my courses.	34	1,00	5,00	2,5882	,85697

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

5.2 The Results for the Perceptions of Students about Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

In Table 6 below, as it can be seen from the responses to statements 11, 18, 22, 34, 27 and 30, students think that they learn more information **(M=3,8529, SD=0,74396)**, they enjoy the learning material more **(M=3,5588, SD=0,74635)**, the workload becomes less **(M=3,5882, SD=0,92499)**, they are encouraged to think more **(M=3,5000, SD=0,74874)**, the learning material is easier to understand **(M=3,6061, SD=0,86384)**, and they are able to express their opinions **(M=4,0882, SD=0,45177)** during group work. The students show a tendency towards the 'agree' response about these advantages.

On the other hand, the students show a tendency towards 'undecided' response in statements 6, 9, 26 and 38. The statements about which the students are undecided include that the learning material is more interesting in groups **(M=3,3529, SD=0,84861)**, they feel more accepted by others **(M=3,0588, SD=0,91920)**, group work encourage them to think more **(M=3,2941, SD=0,90552)**, and the work is better organized in groups **(M=3,2941, SD=0,93839).**

Overall, they are in agreement with the response 'agree' about the advantages of group work. They believe that they learn more information while working in a group. Moreover, the first and the second interviewees add that they can come up with new ideas during group work.

5.2.1 Descriptive Statistics – Advantages of Group Work					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
6. The learning material (reading material etc.) is more interesting when I work with other students.	34	2,00	5,00	3,3529	,84861
9. I feel more accepted by others after working within a group.	34	1,00	4,00	3,0588	,91920
11. I learn more information when I work with other students.	34	2,00	5,00	3,8529	,74396
18. I enjoy the learning material more when I work with other students.	34	2,00	5,00	3,5588	,74635
22. The workload becomes usually less when I work with other students.	34	2,00	5,00	3,5882	,92499
34. I am encouraged to think more in groups.	34	2,00	5,00	3,5000	,74874
26. Group work encourages me to work hard.	34	2,00	5,00	3,2941	,90552
27. The learning material is easier to understand when I work with other students.	33	2,00	5,00	3,6061	,86384
38. My work is better organized when I am in a group.	34	1,00	5,00	3,2941	,93839
30. When I work in a group I am able to express my opinions.	34	3,00	5,00	4,0882	,45177
Valid N (listwise)	33				

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

As it can be seen in Table 7 below, the students show a tendency towards 'disagree' response in statements 14, 17, 25 and 32 about the disadvantages of group work. They do not think that it is hard to express their thoughts **(M=1,9706, SD=0,67354)**, their group members do not care about their feelings **(M=2,0588, SD=0,60006)**, they are nervous when they

are supposed to share their ideas **(M=2,2353, SD=0,98654)**, and they feel less motivated to learn **(M=2,3529, SD=0,69117)** during group work.

Moreover, the students are 'undecided' about statements 15, 10 and 33. They are not sure whether the work becomes too confusing in groups **(M=2,7353, SD=0,89811),** they end up doing most of the work in group work **(M=3,1471, SD=0,92548)**, and if the work takes longer to complete in groups **(M=2,9706, SD=1,02942).**

On the other hand, they have a tendency towards 'agree' response about the time management related disadvantages of group work in statements 16 and 37. The students think that they spend too much time talking about other things in groups **(M=3,6765, SD=0,97610)**, and group work requires too much out-of-class time **(M=3,9118, SD=0,96508)**.

5.2.2 Descriptive Statistics – Disadvantages of Group Work					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
15. I often think the work becomes too confusing when it is done in a group rather than individually.	34	1,00	5,00	2,7353	,89811
10. When I work in a group, I end up doing most of the work.	34	1,00	5,00	3,1471	,92548
16. When I work with other students we spend too much time talking about other things.	34	2,00	5,00	3,6765	,97610
37. Group work requires too much out-of-class time.	34	2,00	5,00	3,9118	,96508
14. I find it hard to express my thoughts when I work in a group.	34	1,00	4,00	1,9706	,67354
17. My group members do not care about my feelings.	34	1,00	3,00	2,0588	,60006
25. I sometimes feel nervous when I am supposed to share my ideas in a group.	34	1,00	4,00	2,2353	,98654
32. I often feel less motivated to learn within a small group.	34	1,00	4,00	2,3529	,69117

33. The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students.	34	1,00	5,00	2,9706	1,02942

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

5.3 The Other Significant Results for Perceptions of Group Work

Based on the means of all statements in Table 8 below, there is a positive trend in the data towards the enjoyment of group work. In other words, students agree with the idea that they like group work. Moreover, they do not feel less motivated or less relaxed within a group.

5.3.1 Like - Dislike					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
4. I enjoy working within a group.	34	2,00	5,00	3,4412	,74635
32. I often feel less motivated to learn within a small group.	34	1,00	4,00	2,3529	,69117
5. I rarely feel relaxed within a group.	34	1,00	4,00	2,6765	,94454
2. Group work is fun.	34	2,00	5,00	3,7059	,90552

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

Based on the means of all of the statements except statement 10 in Table 9 below, there is a tendency towards 'agree' response about the students' personal contribution to group work.

In other words, the participants think that they contribute to their group strongly. They also regard themselves as an active member of their group. However, they are unsure whether they end up doing most of the work within a group in general **(M=3,1471).** For example, the first and the second interviewees agree with the idea that they are responsible and hard-working members of their group. However, their reasons behind that are different. The first interviewee tells that she is an active member of her group because she is a person who can take responsibility. On the other hand, the second interviewee says that he over-contributes to his group because his group mates are his close friends and they are a bit lazier than him.

5.3.2 Personal Contribution to Group Work					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
7. I feel I am an active member of the group to which I contribute.	34	2,00	5,00	3,8529	,70205
19. I usually make a strong personal contribution to group work.	34	3,00	5,00	3,7941	,47860
10. When I work in a group, I end up doing most of the work.	34	1,00	5,00	3,1471	,92548
13. I like to share what I know with others in the group.	34	2,00	5,00	4,0882	,75348

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

Based on Table 10 below, the mean of the statement reporting that the students spend too much time talking about other things in a group is 3,6765. In other words, the students seem to agree with the idea that they spend too much time talking about other things within their group.

5.3.3 Time management					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
16. When I work with other students, we spend too much time talking about other things.	34	2,00	5,00	3,6765	,97610

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

According to Table 11 below, there is a trend towards 'disagree' response about statement 28 **(M=2,2941)**. In other words, the students generally feel responsible for their peers' learning in their group. However, the third interviewee does not agree with the idea because he thinks that learning is an individual concern.

5.3.4 Responsibility for Others' Learning					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
28. I do not feel responsible for others' learning in groups.	34	1,00	5,00	2,2941	1,05971

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

As Table 12 below shows, the students have a significant tendency towards 'agree' response in statement 30 **(M=4,0882).** None of the students marked this statement as 'strongly disagree' or 'disagree' as can be seen when the minimum score is examined. Moreover, there is a significant trend in the data towards 'disagree' in statements 14 **(M=1,9706)** and 25 **(M=2,2353)**. In general, the data display that the students can express their opinions in their group.

5.3.5 Sharing Ideas					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
30. When I work in a group, I am able to express my opinions.	34	3,00	5,00	4,0882	,45177
14. I find it hard to express my thoughts when I work in a group.	34	1,00	4,00	1,9706	,67354
25. I sometimes feel nervous when I am supposed to share my ideas in a group.	34	1,00	4,00	2,2353	,98654

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

According to Table 13 below, the students tend to 'agree' with statement 11 **(M=3,8529).** In other words, they agree with the idea that they learn more information during group work.

5.3.6 Work habits					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
11. I learn more information when I work with other students.	34	2,00	5,00	3,8529	,74396

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

Based on Table 14 below, there is a trend in the data towards 'agree' response for statements 22 and 29. In other words, the students believe that the workload becomes less in groups **(M=3,5882)** and they have to work together to get a job done in their group **(M=4,3529).**

5.3.7 Workload					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
22. The workload becomes usually less when I work with other students.	34	2,00	5,00	3,5882	,92499
29. To get a job done in a group, group members have to work together.	34	2,00	5,00	4,3529	,91725

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

Considering Table 15 below, there is a positive trend **(M=4,4412)** among the students towards 'strongly agree' response in statement 39 whereas there is a negative trend **(M=1,6765)** in statement 21. In other words, the students are determined to choose their own peers on their own while working in a group. Accordingly, the third interviewee states that he prefers working in a group only if he chooses the members of the group on his own.

5.3.8 Preference for peers					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
39. I prefer to choose the peers whom I work with.	34	2,00	5,00	4,4412	,74635
21. It is better if the teacher chooses my group mates for me.	34	1,00	5,00	1,6765	,94454

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

When Table 16 below is examined, it can be seen that there is a positive tendency towards 'agree' response in statement 37 **(M=3,9118)** whereas there is a negative tendency towards 'disagree' response in statement 31 **(M=2,2941).** Namely, the students think that group work requires too much time out of the class.

5.3.9 Outside work					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
37. Group work requires too much out-of-class time.	34	2,00	5,00	3,9118	,96508
31. I don't have to spend so much time outside the class for my group work.	34	1,00	5,00	2,2941	1,14228

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

When Table 17 below is examined, while students seem to agree with the idea that there are too many courses for the group work in their department **(M=3,7647),** they do not think that they are doing little group work **(M=2, 0294).** In other words, they believe that the number of courses for group work is enough **(M=4,0294).** Moreover, considering the interview results the first, the second and the third interviewees share the same idea; however, the fourth interviewee thinks that her department exaggerates the number of the courses in which they work in groups.

5.3.10 Amount of Group Work					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
24. The number of courses in which we do group work is enough.	34	2,00	5,00	4,0294	,83431
40. There are too many courses in which we study in groups.	34	2,00	5,00	3,7647	1,15624
35. I believe that we do little group work.	34	1,00	5,00	2,0294	1,05845

(1, strongly disagree; 2, disagree; 3, undecided; 4, agree; 5, strongly agree)

6. Discussion

6.1 The Discussion of All Results & The Links to the Past Relevant Research

As it is stated in the background to this study, relatively less amount of research has been carried out so as to gain insight into students' perception of group work in spite of the broad history of research related to the benefits of group work. To this end, this study investigated students' perception of group work in general and their perception of group work's advantages and disadvantages, and gave an answer to the question which remains unanswered in the existing literature.

As Nair et al. (2012) found out, group work makes lessons more enjoyable by enabling the interaction among students, which results in positive student attitudes. Likewise, the result of descriptive analyses conducted for this study suggests that the students perceive group work positively in general, and they agree with the idea that group work is enjoyable, preferable and fun. Moreover, they feel motivated and relaxed within a group.

In the study conducted on graduate students' attitudes towards group work in Indiana University, Martinez et al. (2002) suggest that the students have a neutral attitude in terms of preference and satisfaction in group work since the main tendency of students was the "it depends" answers for these aspects. On the other hand, according to the results of the questionnaire in this study, the students usually prefer group work. Nevertheless, the interviewees usually give 'it depends' answers to the

preference of group work. The first and the fourth interviewees say that their preference for group work depends on the content of the course. In addition, when it comes to the satisfaction issue, whereas the participants of the questionnaire disagree with the idea that they do not really feel satisfied in group work, the second and the third interviewees tell that their satisfaction in the group depends on the members of the group.

Even though it is not mentioned in the literature, the students regard 'preference for peers' as a must to prefer working in a group in the study. In fact, the participants of the questionnaire state that they should choose their peers for group work on their own. Likewise, the third interviewee says that:

> Researcher: Okay, personally do you prefer working in a group?
> Interviewee: If I choose the members of the group, yes I do.

In this sense, this study coined 'preference for peers' category into the existing literature on students' perception of group work.

When the advantages of group work are considered, Hammar Chiriac (2014) suggests that students can improve their higher-order thinking skills during their interaction in group work and they become more motivated to succeed in this way. Likewise, the first interviewee in this study has stated that group work increases the motivation and it should be included in the school curriculum. On the other hand, the fourth interviewee does not agree with the general view. She says:

> I feel negative because the group work is a waste of time out of the class.. I think so.. and.. it may.. it may sometimes effective but not really.

Previous studies also point out that group work is useful in exploring distinctive ideas, better knowledge retention and dealing with extremely broad projects easily. Consequently, students gain confidence during group studies (Martinez, et al. 2002). In parallel with this, considering the descriptive results of the study, the students generally support the idea that workload becomes less during group work. Likewise, the second and the third interviewees tell that the workload becomes less in group work. As regards to the division of labor, the participants generally remark that the group members should work together to get a job done in a group. Regarding the distinctive ideas issue, the second interviewee says that his group members can come up with the new ideas he did not think before. Furthermore, the fourth interviewee summarizes the self-confidence issue:

Interviewee: … When I was.. When I was studying in.. alone, I feel nervous and I think I couldn't be successful and I think it is wrong when I write something.
Researcher: So, it gives you self confidence.. working in groups?
Interviewee: Yeah.

Although there are not any advantages about 'sharing ideas freely in group work' listed in the existing literature, this study added to the list the idea that the students can share their ideas within a group comfortably. Interestingly, the participants generally strongly agree with the idea that they feel free to share their opinions during group work.

As it is stated in the literature related to the disadvantages of group work, it is time-consuming since it requires a lot of extra work out of the class and there is a possibility of unfair division of workload among peers (Manful, Takyi and Ampiah 2014). Similarly, the students accept the fact that group work requires too much out-of-class time. The first interviewee clarifies this problem saying:

Sometimes.. ranging suitable time for every member might be a problem, I mean, we can't.. we can't choose a date for our work…

Sears & Pai (2012) also say that students' attention is divided between the work and the interaction with peers during collaborative work. Furthermore, the students say that they cannot manage time effectively since they spend too much time talking about other things when they come together.

Despite the disadvantage related to the time concern, the fourth interviewee suggests that group work sometimes decreases the time spent out of the class compared to the individual work. Additionally, the first interviewee says that the students may still spend a lot of time even when they work individually although she accepts the fact that group work requires a lot of time outside the class. On the other hand, the third interviewee claims:

…it also takes it might also take longer time comparing to the individual work, so time could be a problem.

Hammar Chiriac (2014) states that group members may have an impact on students' motivation for group work. For instance, there are students who never contribute to the work, which is a common trouble for many students during group work process. When the members of a group are not responsible enough, it may be regarded as a disadvantage for the students.

For instance, the second interviewee of this study describes his group work experience as follows:

> For example, in in most of my courses that we had group work my group members are my close friends and I can say that they are a little lazier than me, so sometimes I had to work more than them, and that can cause some problems in the group.

Likewise, Manful, Takyi & Ampiah (2014) have found out that some of the students have a negative impression of group work because of the negligence of other group members while the majority of the undergraduate students in Ghanaian University have a positive perception of group work. Similarly, the fourth interviewee in this study recounts her group work experience as follows:

> Interviewee: …We.. before we met for doing the group work, one of our group members didn't come at the.. on time. And, she also didn't work individually beforehand. And she didn't do…
> Researcher: So, she didn't do her.. her part, then?
> Interviewee: Yeah. She didn't get prepared.

In addition to the disadvantages stated in other studies in the literature, the second interviewee regards disagreement between peer ideas as a significant limitation of group work.

All in all, Kouros and Abrami (2006) emphasize the importance of students' attitudes towards group work. It is related to the integration of group work into the classroom because students' attitudes are regarded as the main factor indicating how to apply cooperative learning in the best way. To this end, the results of the questionnaire in this study show that the students usually seem to be 'undecided' about the integration of group work into their courses. Nevertheless, the first and the fourth interviewees clarify that the content and the course should be taken into account while integrating group work into the curriculum. For instance, the first summarizes that the topic of the courses should be suitable for working in groups while the fourth interviewee states:

> Researcher: But do you prefer working in a group or working individually mostly?
> Interviewee: It depends, actually. For example, I... I'm learning Japanese and I prefer learning Japanese by myself.
> Researcher: Individually?
> Interviewee: Individually. Not group work. But Research and…
> Researcher: ELT Methodology II?
> Interviewee: ELT Methodology and this stuff requires group work.

According to the accounts of the interviewees, how to integrate group work into the real classroom in the best way should be determined by taking the students' perceptions into consideration.

6.2 Limitations of This Study

The equal number of students from all sections could not be found since the convenient sampling was used to collect the data. If equal number of students from each section could have been found for the study, the healthier generalization could have been made out of the data.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Brief Summary of Overall Findings

Upon both descriptive and interpretive results of this study, it is concluded that the students perceive group work positively. They also enjoy and prefer working in a group in general. Moreover, they accept the fact that group work has many advantages. For instance, they learn more information, they enjoy the learning material more, the workload becomes less, they are encouraged to think more, the learning material is easier to understand, and they are able to express their opinions during group work. On the other hand, the students think that they spend too much time talking about other things in groups, and group work requires too much out-of-class time. In other words, the disadvantages of group work seem to be related to time concerns in general. Nevertheless, irresponsible group members may also be one of the disadvantages of group work according to the interviewees.

7.2 Future Directions and Recommendations
for Further Research

This study investigated students' perception of group work. Based on the results, the students have a positive perception of group work. There seems to be some significant correlations between some categories. As a follow up to this study, the reasons behind the students' positive perception and the direction of these correlations can be investigated. This may be done through examining possible reasons and conducting a study with an appropriate questionnaire and a wide range of participants. Furthermore, the effect of 'group size' was out of the scope of this study; however, the impact of 'group size' on students' perception of group work

and the effectiveness of group work can be investigated so as to contribute to the development of 'group work' as a technique.

When the interviews are examined, the interviewees say that the effectiveness of group work for them depends on the content. Namely, the courses into which group work is integrated may not be suitable for the equal division of work. The course also may not lend itself to work collaboratively. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should take the content and the profile of the students into account while integrating group work into their courses.

7.3 Concluding Remarks

There was an inadequacy in the studies carried out to gain insight into students' perception of group work. This study was a step to fill in this gap in the literature by investigating mainly students' perception. Furthermore, it helped the students give voice to their ideas related to the advantages and disadvantages of group work. In this sense, this study was significant for the future development of group work as a teaching-learning technique and its reasonable integration into the classroom context as long as the student profile and the content are taken into account by the teacher.

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Appendix A. Questionnaire

GROUP WORK QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

First of all, thanks for your contribution to our study. This study aims to investigate FLE students' perceptions of group work. The information obtained from the present questionnaire will only be utilized for the study entitled as 'Student-teachers' Perception of Group Work in Foreign Language Education Classrooms of METU'. Thank you for sparing your time for this study.

<div align="right">Elif AKSOY – Esra ATAMAN</div>

1. GENERAL INFORMATION	
1.1. Name (or nickname):	**1.2. Age:**
1.3. The courses taken (please mark (X) the one or the ones you are taking) **- ELT Methodology II** ☐ **- Advanced Writing and Research Skills** ☐	**1.4. Department:**
1.5. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐	**1.6. Grade & Section:**

If you want to help us by participating in our interview, please write your contact address below.

E-mail address: _____

2. PERCEPTIONS OF GROUP WORK

Please read the statements below and mark (X) the table on the right according to your perception. (There is no right or wrong answer, please mark the one which describes you best.)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I prefer working within a group rather than working alone.					
2. Group work is fun.					
3. I feel working in groups is a waste of time.					
4. I enjoy working within a group.					
5. I rarely feel relaxed within a group.					
6. The learning material (reading material etc.) is more interesting when I work with other students.					
7. I feel I am an active member of the group to which I contribute.					
8. Even when the group is achieving its goals, I don't really feel satisfied.					
9. I feel more accepted by others after working within a group.					
10. When I work in a group, I end up doing most of the work.					
11. I learn more information when I work with other students.					
12. I feel happy that group work is a part of my academic curriculum.					
13. I like to share what I know with others in the group.					
14. I find it hard to express my thoughts when I work in a group.					
15. I often think the work becomes too confusing when it is done in a group rather than individually.					
16. When I work with other students, we spend too much time talking about other things.					
17. My group members do not care about my feelings.					

18. I enjoy the learning material more when I work with other students.					
19. I usually make a strong personal contribution to group work.					
20. Even when groups are well-organized, I don't believe they are an effective way of using class time.					
21. It is better if the teacher chooses my group mates for me.					
22. The workload becomes usually less when I work with other students.					
23. I feel unhappy about the integration of group work into my courses.					
24. The number of courses in which we do group work is enough.					
25. I sometimes feel nervous when I am supposed to share my ideas in a group.					
26. Group work encourages me to work hard.					
27. The learning material is easier to understand when I work with other students.					
28. I do not feel responsible for others' learning in groups.					
29. To get a job done in the group, group members have to work together.					
30. When I work in a group, I am able to express my opinions.					
31. I don't have to spend so much time outside the class for my group work.					
32. I often feel less motivated to learn within a small group.					
33. The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students.					
34. I am encouraged to think more in groups.					
35. I believe that we do little group work.					
36. When I work with other students, I am able to work at my own pace.					
37. Group work requires too much out-of-class time.					
38. My work is better organized when I am in a group.					

39. I prefer to choose the peers whom I work with.				
40. There are too many courses in which we study in groups.				

Appendix B: Interview

Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about group work? Do you have a positive or negative idea?
   a. Do you feel satisfied with your learning when you work in groups?
   b. Are you happy that group work is a part of your academic curriculum?
2. Do you prefer working in a group?
   a. If so, why do you prefer it?
   b. If not, why?
3. Do you think group work is advantageous or disadvantageous? In what aspects, it is advantageous or disadvantageous? (time, workload, effectiveness etc.)
4. a. What do you think about your contribution to your group work?
   b. What do you think about others' contribution to group work?
5. Did you experience any problems or limitations during your group work?
   a. What kind of limitations did you encounter? (Gaudet, Ramer, et al., Small-Group Learning in an Upper-Level University Biology Class Enhances Academic Performance and Student Attitudes Toward Group Work 2010)
6. Can you give specific examples from your group work experience?
7. Do you have anything to add?

ADVANCED PERCEPTION CAPACITY OF BLIND INDIVIDUALS AND ITS UTILISATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

NIHANSU YURTSEVEN

Abstract

Neuroscientists claim that brain plasticity allows the body system to strengthen one organ when there is a functional disorder in another. Based on this view, blind learners of foreign language would perceive sounds more accurately and as an indirect consequence they can produce well-pronounced utterances. This paper is an attempt to inquire the phenomenon further specifically from foreign language learning perspective. Up to date, there is very little research conducted by linguists and educators to identify what is happening in the mind of blind individuals while learning a foreign language. Discovering the capacity and capabilities of blind learners can be a light for teachers who experience difficulties in addressing to these learners. The study is performed both quantitatively and qualitatively. For the quantitative part, an experiment was conducted with congenitally blind and 4 sighted participants who are elementary level EFL learners. They were given a listening comprehension test composed of different type of questions. For the qualitative part, the blind participants were interviewed. It is found that there is no striking difference in Elementary level English of sighted and visually impaired individuals in terms of listening and short memory storage.

Keywords: Brain plasticity, blind learners, foreign language learning, visually impaired EFL learners

1. Introduction

For many years, it has been thought that a loss of a perception organ can be compensated with the development of other organs. This assumption has led people to think that blind individuals have exceptional hearing abilities, more sensitive tactile data collective abilities or immense memory storage. After all these years, neuroscience researchers have declared a term 'brain plasticity' to account for an evidence for the earlier belief (Hugdahl, et al. 2003, Amedi, et al. 2005).

It is seen that in schools teachers are opt to show more affectionate attitude towards blind students instead of lecturing them in an effective way. Most of the time, they do not know how to address these learners and fail to present meaningful activities that can allow for improvement in learning (Fazzi, Lampert ve Pogrund 1992). The potential of blind learners has to be noticed by the teachers as they are capable of becoming strong communicators in different languages. There is an old example which can be a proof for blind learners' self-accomplishment in learning languages. The case takes place in western Canada. There is a blind student who speaks both English and French. He has been supplied with a scholarship to be an exchange student in France and resident in a house of a local family. Next, he spends a year studying in Switzerland. Then, he becomes a French teacher of a junior class. It is a great chance that course books are available in Braille alphabet through which he knew spelling of each word, which is very important for teaching purposes and even more important when the issue is about two non-phonetic languages French and English (Scott 1982).

Up to date, there is very little research done by linguists or educators to identify what is happening in the mind of blind learners while acquiring a second language. How much they can proceed, in what ways they are advantageous or what the possible strengths should be questioned within the learning process in order to have better prepared lessons for them. The available sources fail to monitor the learners during the development of the target language. Trainers of blind learners can benefit from this study when they encounter visual impairment in a foreign language teaching context.

Even though some extensive studies can be seen in western European countries and United States of America, the number of them is not so high. The studies cannot represent today's knowledge on education and disability as most of them are not current. Unfortunately, in Turkish context, it is not likely to find a study that explores the process of the blind and sighted language learners in terms of listening comprehension and

detail recollection. Hence, this study can help visually impaired learners to improve the ability to teach and learn a foreign language by observing their strengths.

Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, which is known as one of the most reactive institutions to disability in the country, does not provide the listening part of the English proficiency exam to blind learners as visually impaired students are subject to exemption from this part. In fact, students with dysfunctional visual system can do better in vocal, oral or memorial tasks compared to the sighted learners if techniques and tests are presented accordingly. Upon this foundation, there must be some changes in the way of assessment of blind individuals as well as teaching process.

In this study, it is expected to recognize the abilities of the blind learners in their foreign language learning process, specifically, in English. Educators can be enlightened by observing their students' weaknesses, strengths and needs. With this respect, they can improve methodology or organize aims and objectives. It is possible that this study will lead other minds to do further research on the subject as this topic is questioned rarely. This study will be an attempt to get more detailed insight into the area of blind students' language abilities in second language acquisition using their strong remembering and listening performance. In addition, ways of finding alternative teaching methods are to be sought in the process. The study aims to be a response for the following research questions:

1. Do blind second language learners have any advantages over sighted learners while perceiving sounds in L2?
2. To what extent do blind learners make use of their empowered short term memory and profound audio collection skills for listening comprehension?
3. How can the findings of this research be used for educational purposes?

2. Literature Review

Either in the first or second language acquisition, the input is crucial. First language acquisition is a lasting and demanding process that requires sensitive, perceptive and cognitive development of a child (Fromkin, Rodman ve Hyams 2011, 2007, 2003). Sounds do not become a language unless they are categorized with correspondence meaning. For blind children, it is more demanding as they are not exposed to images of

objects, actions or even feelings which will lead them to meaning easily by seeing or with social interaction (Landau ve Gleitman 1985). Visual input is the main way to reach conceptualized categories in the mind whenever a word needs to construct an offset with its meaning. It is effortless for the sighted children to find the correspondence of words by seeing and matching sounds since they grasp underlying realization of a word quickly and as a whole when it is compared to laborious tactile input (Finello, Kekelis, & Hanson, 1998; Matthjis & Postma, 2012). Hence, it can be said that first language acquisition can be more challenging and tiresome for the blind learners.

Although the process lasts longer and is harder for the first language acquisition of blind individuals when compared to the sighted, the former group can be advantageous while learning a second language (Smeds 2008). Neuroscience research studies show that brain plasticity allows the brain for changing sensitivity levels of other perceptive skills whenever it confronts with a physical handicap. To illustrate, neural imaging techniques help to clarify the well-known hypothesis that disability in one part of the body empowers remaining senses (Hugdahl, et al., 2003; Amedi, Merabet, Bermpohl & Pascual-Leone, 2005). According to a comparative research study conducted by Amedi and his colleagues (2005), the verbal items were presented to blind and sighted controls. After a six-month period, the subjects were asked to restate the words. The results show that sighted controls fall behind the blind while using their long-term memories. According to data supplied by this study which was carried out with six blind and five sighted controls, blind individuals can recollect almost 80% of the words, while sighted ones find approximately 70% of them (as cited in Amedi, Merabet, Bermpohl, &Pascual-Leone, 2005). This study proves that blind individuals are better equipped to store information in their minds.

Another research study shows detailed evidence of blind learners' powerful hearing and speaking abilities. The participants of this study heard 36 different consonant- vowel syllables with the help of headphones using both ears. The study was conducted with 14 blind and 129 sighted individuals. All of the participants were Finnish speakers. Their task was to reproduce orally the exact sound they heard. The findings of the study indicate that blind controls' responses are 10.49% more correct than the seeing participants (Hugdahl, et al. 2003). It has been scientifically proved that blindness can lead to development of sound recognition and the blind have extended memory storage compared to sighted people (Tihamir 1987).

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Six subjects (one female and five males) participated in the main experiment. Their age was between 18 and 25. Two of the participants were congenitally blind individuals and the remaining of the group was sighted. None of the subjects had problems with hearing. They were selected from the Department of Basic English, Middle East Technical University. All the participants were English learners in EFL context and they were all in the elementary level of the institution. These features of the focus group allowed tracking the L2 speakers in the process of learning.

3.2 Materials

For the experiment, listening tests were taken from the exam archive of the Middle East Technical University Self Access Center. Note-taking questions with multiple choice items were selected according to the level appropriacy. The questions were of completely different topics (e.g. scientific, historical) and they were chosen from various years. Each question had four options and among them just one item was correct. There were five different listening passages, each one of which contained four questions, which were in total 20 listening multiple choice questions. This amount was specified for the effective data collection goal of the researcher as the quantity of the participants was not high. More than 20 questions may have resulted in tiredness of the mind, which would affect the reliability.

The aim was to compare the understandability of the English utterances heard by blind and sighted learners under equal conditions. Before the preparation, ideas on testing those two control groups in the same way were discussed with some blind English learners. To serve the aim, the researcher provided a voice record of questions and options read by a native speaker. The recordings and the actual tests were modified through Windows Movie Maker. In the end, the audio material contained an instruction, a listening text, questions and options. Among five different listening texts, each one was voiced by another person. However, questions and options were voiced by the same person, which enabled participants to differentiate the listening text and questions from each other just by voice. Each listening text was composed of either a lecture or an interview. For the fill-in-the-blank sections, the audio was interrupted by a beep sound. In order to have a clearer overview, each question was named

with a letter according to its listening text. There were five letters (A, B, C, D, E) which represented five texts and numbers representing questions (A1, A2…). The listening texts which the participants listened to can be found in Appendix A.

3.3 Procedure

3.3.1 Interview

Blind learners of English were exposed to five short interview questions that explored their sight condition and educational background (App. B), which enabled the researcher to see what differences can be observed among two blind participants.

3.3.2 Listening Test

The goal was to create a procedure that could be the most suitable for the blind learners regarding the methods of assessment at hand. All of the participants were tested individually. Firstly, they were introduced to the test and given a brief instruction in Turkish. In fact, the same instruction was given in English when the audio started. The translation into L1 for the instruction was thought as a compulsory element considering the fact that the proficiency level of the learners was not high enough to concentrate on and understand the instruction in English precisely. Each one heard the audio track of the listening test without seeing anything relevant (i.e. any written document, picture, etc.). No one was permitted to read any material on paper, and noting down some details was not allowed. The participants could listen to the audio only once. Each question had 10 seconds of waiting time before the following one started. The participants were expected to answer orally in this period of time. There were two minutes of break between each listening text. Namely, the researcher tried to start the new listening part with a refreshed mind so that the concentration of the participants would not affect their performance. Each test taker came in the afternoon time. They answered all the questions orally to the researcher and the researcher coded the answers.

3.3.3. Data Analysis

After the implementation of the test, questions were categorized according to their types as fill in the blanks and detailed questions. Correct, incorrect and empty responses of the participants were counted

and then charted by using MS Office Excel program. They were divided into categories and colored with this respect. Whether benefitting from SPSS as a comparing tool of items or not was consulted to the experts and due to limited number of the participants, it was not regarded necessary. I expected the blind participants to give more correct answers to the questions since the studies show their profound listening skills by using both their sensitive ears and expanded short-term memory.

4. Results

In this part, the results of the data collected within a week are going to be presented. The period of data collection is not very long since it is aimed to see L2 learners' performance when they are almost at the same point of learning process. The obtained results are of two control groups which are presented in the methodology part. This section has two sub-headings that will try to display the results: qualitative data and quantitative data.

4.1 Qualitative Data

This part of the study aims to identify the characteristics of blind English language learners in Turkey by detecting the similarities between the two participants via interview questions. Both of the blind participants are congenitally blinds. Both of them started their educational life in a special training school for blind students. Reading started with the instruction of Braille alphabet, six dots. After primary school, they attended regular public high schools and then finally they started studying at METU. Their instructors are trying to use more audio materials although it is not possible for them to engage these students all the time. They study English on computer most of the time. Watching series and listening to music in English are very helpful for them.

4.2 Quantitative Data

Below, there is a colored chart which shows the listening test performances of the participants both blind and sighted. The supplied ruler will be an illustration of the colors and letters. As seen in the chart, the questions are classified according to their types.

	P1 (B)	P2 (B)	P3 (S)	P4(S)	P5(S)	P6(S)
A1 (not mentioned)	C	E	I	I	I	I
A2 (fill in the blank)	I	C	I	I	C	C
A3(fill in the blank)	I	E	I	I	I	I
A4 (detail)	I	E	I	I	E	C
B1 (fill in the blank)	I	C	C	I	I	I
B2 (fill in the blank)	I	C	C	C	C	C
B3 (fill in the blank)	I	C	I	I	C	I
B4 (fill in the blank)	I	I	I	I	I	I
C1 (detail)	I	I	I	I	E	C
C2 (fill in the blank)	E	I	I	I	I	I
C3 (fill in the blank)	C	I	C	C	C	I
C4 (not mentioned)	C	C	C	I	I	I
D1 (detail)	I	I	I	E	C	I
D2 (detail)	I	C	I	C	I	I
D3 (not mentioned)	I	I	I	C	E	C
D4 (detail)	I	C	C	I	C	I
E1 (fill in the blank)	I	I	I	I	E	I
E2 (not mentioned)	C	I	I	I	C	I
E3 (not mentioned)	E	I	I	C	I	I
E4 (not mentioned)	C	I	I	I	I	I
TOTAL CORRECT	5C	7C	5C	5C	7C	5C

	higher success in blind learners		E for Empty	
	equal number of correct answers		I for Incorrect	
	higher success in sighted learners		C for Correct	
	equally difficult for all participants		S for Sighted/ B for Blind	

Table 1: The analysis of listening test

First of all, in this case study the results interestingly seem to be very close to each other. This is a striking finding since, according to the theory, blind learners were expected to score more correct answers on this

kind of a test. On the surface considering the blue line in the table, there are four participants: One blind and three sighted that collect five correct options. The maximum score presented in the test performances of the language learners is seven, and correct answers were given by one blind and one sighted participant.

Counting correct answers of each listening text (A=5C, B=8C, C=7C, D=7C, E=4C) leads the researcher to think that the subjects could not concentrate well on the first and the last passages. According to the comments of the participants, the first passage is the process of understanding the test and the time passing here is used to develop strategies while listening. For example, some of the sighted subjects needed to close their eyes while listening to the audio. The last passage was on a topic which was very challenging and it has to be regarded that after having more than 20 minutes testing, they were still trying to listen and remember the items while their brains had worked very much already. By then, it was virtually impossible for them to retrieve the information required.

Investigating the quantitative data deeper, namely, by looking into each question one by one, it can be discovered that only two of the questions demonstrate equal percentage of correct answers. There are four questions that are found equally difficult for all participants. All of these four questions are fill-in-the-blank type of questions of different listening texts. The difficulty of the searching this data through the text must be very demanding for these participants. In addition, item B2 reflects impressive result, which is known precisely by all participants apart from one blind learner. Like B2, C3 is also answered correctly by most of the participants (1 blind and 3 sighted). The fact that both items contain numbers in their answers can be the reason why they could be remembered in such a high rate. These common features can be tracked on the chart below. However, if the data are correlated, the blind learners fall slightly behind the sighted ones. These data contrast with the previous studies conducted on this topic.The balance is kept if the questions are examined one by one. Blind learners have been more successful in seven questions than the sighted ones. The case continues to be so for the sighted learners; they have more correct answers in percentage compared to the blind participants.

After observing the similarity of the results for the both counters, the researcher questioned the test material. Maybe the emphasis on the memory part was so excessive that a second language learner or even a native speaker would not be able to recollect. Therefore, the listening test was given to five native speakers in the same conditions. It was seen that native speakers were able to perform well as expected.

5. Discussion

What is investigated with this study is whether the blind learners of a second language have an advantage over collecting audial data and keeping them in mind for a longer period. The findings reveal the similarity between the results of both control groups. In the literature, there is no source that can support this research because there is no study conducted on elementary level English learners in an EFL setting. It is probable that elementary level students may not give the expected results as the language is unsettled and still needs to be improved. Perhaps, the results will be more in line with what is in the literature if the research is carried out with intermediate or higher level of learners.

The first blind participant has given an outstanding result as he answered four questions out of 5 correctly in one part of the test. This may suggest that the participant is more successful in a certain type of questions and finds it easier to deal with. This observation can be found in the correct answer features of the other blind learner. The second blind participant is able to detect 4 fill-in-the-blanks and 2 detailed questions. However, such a cumulative outcome of the specific type of the test is not witnessed for the sighted participants. The sighted individuals have presented a more homogenous distribution in the question types. However, the argument can be relevant for this specific group since every student with or without visual impairment has a different learning style and a strategy to apply for various problems.

Earlier studies are mainly to detect the differences in sound level (Hugdahl, et al. 2003) or word level (as cited in Amedi, Merabet, Bermpohl, &Pascual-Leone, 2005) .They all state that blind individuals are more advanced in capturing audial material. The results of the present study are just the opposite, which is probably because this study is focusing on the comparison of paragraph level listening ability.

The research is also regarded important as it questions the current way of assesing blind students. For example, the reading parts of the proficiency exams are read by other people for the blind students. Especially, reading comprehension is a part that is long and has to be heard several times to reach the correct answer. These methods may not be the most appropriate way of assessment.

5.1 Limitations and Suggestions

The number of the participants in this study is not very high, which makes generalization impossible. At the Middle East Technical University

setting, there are not many blind students in the Department of Basic English. In addition, this study centers upon elementary level learners of English. For further research, it is suggested that students from higher levels, intermediate and advanced, are included in the experiment as well.

Finding a suitable listening test for elementary level students is not easy. The tests are to be piloted. After searching all of the archive, the tests found have very long note-taking questions, which are carefully selected according to the criteria which are specified in agreement with their level expectations. Still, the texts can be very long for anyone to remember while answering questions; they are long as the goal is to figure out the memory of the learners. Nevertheless, future studies may adopt tests with shorter listening texts. Another option for future studies is to give fewer questions. That is, for this study there were 5 listening texts. In another study, a research can use 3 texts if the practical issues and mind's concentration time are considered.

Questions of the study are all comprehension questions. It is probable that with different types of questions, results can change. There are some other possibilities like asking cloze test or error correction questions.

6. Conclusion

On the basis of the available sources, one may declare that blind learners are better equipped to hear or store the sounds. Regarding this view, the research has been conducted on the abilities of blind learners in order to examine their strength on listening in a second language. It was hypothesized that the listening test performance of the blind L2 learners would be higher.

To reach concrete results, a listening test has been issued to the blind and sighted subjects of elementary level students of the Department of English as METU. The data has been surprising since the test results show an equal distribution of correct answers for both the sighted and the blind learners.

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Grammatical Competence in Exam Writing and Take-Home Assignments

Kadriye Aytaç
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Abstract

This study is primarily concerned with how the students' grammatical competence is put into actual use in their writing tasks; exam writing and take-home assignments. The main purpose is to investigate whether the students' flawed performance in writing results from the lack of knowledge or other psychological factors such as lack of attention, lack of practice, anxiety, etc. Relevant data are gathered by means of five sources; students' grammar scores in English Proficiency Exam, questionnaires, interviews, students' writing in an exam and their writing in a take-home assignment. Results show that students mostly believe that grammar is very important not only for writing but also for the other skills. Although there is a tendency for the students with high grammar scores to have fewer grammar mistakes and for the students with low grammar scores to have more grammar mistakes in their writing, it is difficult to generalize it because of some other psychological factors. In terms of the content, organization and vocabulary, students' take-home writings are mostly better than their exam writings. However, they mostly have more grammar mistakes in their take-home writings. For most of the students, the main focus for exam writing is grammar while for take-home assignments, it is the organization. This study suggests that even though students might have similar grammatical competence, their actual performances are varied because of their diverse motivations, personalities and needs. For teachers, the results call attention to a deeper understanding of the psychological factors that affect students' performance.

Keywords: grammatical competence, performance, exam writing, take-home assignments

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The difference between the concepts of *competence* and *performance* has been one of the most controversial topics in linguistics. Previous studies have been interested in whether the knowledge of language is transferred to the actual use of language in real situations without any difficulty. As proposed by Chomsky (1965), other factors affecting the performance of language users have been a topic of interest.

Actualization of grammatical competence in writing has been another controversial topic in language and education studies. Some research findings indicate that teaching of grammar certainly affects the language learners' writing performance (see Schleppegrell, 2003; Hudson, 2004; Dakhmouche, 2008; Shen, 2012), while some others claim that there is no or little relationship between grammar teaching and writing performance (see Huang, 2011; Andrew et al. 2006).

Although there is no study focusing specifically on the students' writing performance in exams and take-home assignments, in literature, exams have usually been regarded as stressful and strained, which might have a negative effect on the students' performance. On the other hand, take-home assignments are supposed to be less stressful providing the students with the opportunity to perform better and put their linguistic competence into practice. Whether the exams and other tasks have such impacts on students' performance is also another focus of the present study.

1.2 Purposes of the Study

This study mainly aims to find out how the students' grammatical competence is put into actual use in their writing tasks. It also aims to show the differences in their grammatical competence in exam writing and take-home assignments. The main purpose is to investigate whether the students' flawed performance in writing results from the lack of knowledge (competence) or other psychological factors such as lack of attention, lack of practice, anxiety, etc.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In previous literature, there have been studies concerning competence, performance and grammatical competence in writing. However, as already mentioned, there has not been any study focusing on grammatical competence specifically in two different types of writing tasks which are exam writing and take-home assignments. These two writing tasks are different in terms of their nature and their effects on students' performance. They are examined in this study assuming that by means of their comparison, it will be possible to find out if there are any other underlying reasons for the grammar errors other than the lack of knowledge.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Competence

The term *competence* is one of the most controversial ones in the field of linguistics. In linguistic sense, the term *competence* is usually used to refer to a person's overall knowledge of his language including its linguistic rules. According to Chomsky (1965), who first proposed the notion of *competence*, it is the monolingual speaker-listener's knowledge of language. The term also includes the linguistic rules by means of which speakers can produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in a language. In agreement with Chomsky's definition of the concept, McNeill (1966) indicates that *competence* is a person's knowledge of linguistic rules and categories. He further adds that the actual usage of this knowledge in talking and listening is called *performance*.

2.2 Types of Competence

As is the case with the definition of *competence*, there is not any consensus on the classification of *competence*. According to Hymes (1972), there are two main kinds of c*ompetence: linguistic competence* and *communicative competence*. *Communicative competence* is thought to have at least three subtypes.

2.2.1 Linguistic Competence

Linguistic competence is a term associated with Chomsky (1965). He makes the distinction between people's knowledge of language (competence), and their actual use of that knowledge (performance).

Linguistic competence usually refers to a person's knowledge of the components such as phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and morphology of a language. On the other hand, a more comprehensive view by Hymes (1972) points out that *linguistic competence* deals not only with understanding grammatically correct sentences but also with producing such kind of sentences. In contrast to Chomsky's views of *linguistic competence*, Hymes also includes the notion of *production* in his definition of *linguistic competence* because he believes that linguistic studies should also include the forms along with the ways in which they are used.

2.2.2 Communicative Competence

According to Hymes (1972), *communicative competence* refers to the level of language proficiency by means of which language users convey and understand messages within specific contexts. In this concept of competence, the notion of *specific contexts* is especially highlighted contrary to linguistic competence. In his definition, Hymes also implies that *communicative competence* is related to language learners' ability to make connections between what is learnt in the classroom and how this knowledge is transferred to the outside world. According to Hymes, a competent language user is more than a user who only knows how to produce accurate grammatical structures.

2.2.2.1 Grammatical Competence

According to Canale and Swain (1981), *grammatical competence* is related to features and rules of language including vocabulary, word formation, pronunciation, and sentence formation which enable the language users to make out the others' messages and express their own message accurately in a language. In agreement with this view of *grammatical competence*, Richards and Schmidt (1983) state that "such competence focuses directly on the knowledge and skill required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances; as such, grammatical competence will be an important concern for any second language program" (p.7). However, in contrast to previously mentioned idea according to which competence is highly related to the knowledge of language, Kilfoil and Walt (1997) define the *grammatical competence* as the correct application of grammar rules. They further imply that *grammatical competence* is not only explicit knowledge of grammatical rules.

2.2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

In his view of *sociolinguistic competence*, Hymes is mostly interested in the distinction between what is possible or feasible and what is actually done in the actual use of communicative language. Regarding this opinion, in terms of both form and meaning, *sociolinguistic competence* is mostly concerned with the notion of *appropriateness* which emphasizes using the appropriate language in appropriate contexts. In agreement with the concept of *appropriateness*, Canale and Swain (1979) point out that *sociolinguistic competence* requires *appropriateness* in understanding and producing utterances in different sociolinguistic contexts.

2.2.2.3 Discourse Competence

Canale (1984) describes *discourse competence* as acquisition of rules that determine ways in which language users combine forms and meanings to get meaningful spoken or written texts. Cohesion devices such as pronouns, conjunctions and synonyms enable the cohesion. Repetitions, progression, consistency and relevance of ideas enable the language users to get coherent spoken or written texts. Richards and Schmidt (1983) also have similar ideas on the definition of discourse competence and state that "this type of competence concerns the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres" (p.9).

2.2.2.4 Strategic Competence

Canale and Swain (1981) imply that *strategic competence* is composed of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that are used for the compensation of communication breakdowns. These breakdowns might result from various reasons and insufficient competence might be one of them. Some of the communication strategies used to compensate for communication breakdowns include paraphrase, circumlocution, repetition, reluctance, avoidance of some words, guessing, changes of register and style, modifications of messages, etc. They also claim that these strategies are useful for effective communication.

2.3 Definition of Performance

There are different views on the notion of *performance*. Chomsky (1965) regards *performance* as an imperfect application of *competence*. He also adds that performance does not worth being regarded as a serious discipline because *performance* might be flawed related to psychological factors besides *competence*. In contrast to Chomsky's views of *performance*,

Hymes (1972) regards it as the product of social interaction. Therefore, he concludes that the notion of *performance* is crucial.

2.4 Linguistic Competence and Performance

As already mentioned, Chomsky first introduced the concept of *performance* and *competence* as part of the foundations of his generative grammar. He underlines the difference between the underlying knowledge of language and its actual usage. However, he believes that the notion of *performance* is problematic because performance might be affected by such things as attention, stamina, memory, etc. Therefore, Chomsky argues that only under an idealized situation will performance be a direct reflection of language competence. In this idealized situation, he further adds, the speaker and hearer should not be affected by other factors such as memory limitations and distractions.

2.5 Common Problems in Students' Writing

There have been many studies on the students' common writing problems. These studies reveal that students have different difficulties in writing including problems related to organization, content, ideas, grammar and mechanics. However, most of the serious problems are related to their actual usage of grammar rules that they know.

In his paper, Al-Buainain (2007) investigates the students' common problems in their writing and he finds out that they usually have difficulty in using tenses, verb *be* and articles. He also adds that the students commonly use fragments instead of complete sentences. In a more comprehensive study on the problems in writing, Al-Khasawneh (2010) finds out that students face problems in relation to vocabulary, register, organization of ideas, grammar, spelling, and referencing. Supporting the idea that students have some difficulties in writing related to grammar, Li (2009) states that students experience problems with the usage of correct conjunctions. Murrow (2005) also focuses on the students' errors in writing and finds out that students' main errors are related to verbs, conjunctions, articles, pronouns, and prepositions. Fadda (2011) works on English as a second language students' writing products and his analysis shows that the students face many difficulties and stresses in their academic writing, such as difficulty in distinguishing between spoken and written English, making an outline before writing a draft, identifying the skills needed for successful writing, and avoiding plague words and phrases. Although they do not focus on grammar mistakes, Adas and Bakır

(2013) emphasize the problems with run-on sentences, punctuation and writing organization. Besides common problems such as grammar mistakes, punctuation, organization and content, Farooq (2012) includes lack of vocabulary, poor spelling and a poor understanding of grammatical structure. Investigating the common problems in writing, Hoa and Trang (2008) have shown that the subjects did not pay much attention to grammatical errors or spelling mistakes. They met many problems and used a lot of strategies to solve them.

2.6 Place of Grammar in Writing

There are mainly two groups regarding the issue of the place of grammar in writing. One of them believes that grammar teaching has a positive effect on writing performance while the other group claims that there is not an obvious connection between grammar instruction and writing performance.

Andrew et al. (2006) report on the results of two international research reviews which focus on different aspects of teaching grammar to improve the quality and accuracy of 5–16-year-olds' writing in English. The results of their study show that there is little evidence for the effectiveness of formal grammar instruction. Another study which proposes that grammar teaching and writing performance are not related is conducted by Huang (2011). He tries to examine whether grammar instruction could improve the students' grammatical ability. In this study, the test consisting of a grammar subset and a writing subset was administered to ten senior high school students in a lower-intermediate English class at a cram school in Southern Taiwan. The results indicated that most students' grammar subtests outperformed their writing subtests. The finding implies that there is no strong relationship between the knowledge of grammar and usage among lower-intermediate learners.

On the other hand, Ozbek (1995) investigates the perceptions regarding the teaching of grammar and composition. Based on the results of the questionnaire and interviews, she concludes that it will be more beneficial for the students if the grammar and composition courses are integrated. Omole (2008) examines the relationship between the teaching of composition and grammar, and insists on the idea that any writing instruction cannot succeed without the teaching of grammar. Supporting grammar teaching for improving writing, Schleppegrell (2003) claims that a focus on form and linguistic features of texts is necessary for students to develop competence in writing tasks. Hudson (2004) proposes that grammar is both a tool and a resource that a writer uses, and also it is a

part of the product of the writing process. Using questionnaires in search of the importance of grammar in writing, Dakhmouche (2008) reveals that both students and teachers consider grammar as an important aspect for the improvement of writing skills. In another study, Shen (2012) strongly claims that no language teaching can be successful without grammar instruction and that no writing can achieve its writing purpose without the correct use of grammatical concepts.

3. Research Questions

Considering the findings and the assumptions of previous studies, this study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the students' perceptions regarding the place of grammar in writing?
2. What is the relation between the students' grammatical competence and their writing performance in exams?
3. What is the relation between the students' grammatical competence and their writing performance in take-home assignments?
4. If there is any difference between their writing performances in exams and take-home assignments, what are the possible reasons for these differences?
   a. Are the specific grammatical errors in students' writing related to lack of knowledge or actual usage problems?
   b. Are the students' writing performances in exams and take-home assignments affected by other psychological issues?

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

For the present study, there were 21 intermediate-level participants. They were preparatory class students at Aksaray University. Their departments were English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature. There were 4 male students and 17 female students. At the beginning of the fall term, they took English Proficiency Exam and they were placed to different classes according to their level of English. These students were in class B which means that they got higher scores compared to the other students in the other classes. During one-year preparation class, they have reading, writing, listening, speaking and grammar courses every week. They have their writing course six hours a

week. In their writing class, they do different writing tasks and the book they use also includes explicit grammar explanation and practices. As a part of the process writing, students are asked to write paragraphs and journals every week. When they hand in the first draft of their paragraphs and journals, they are provided with feedback on their content, organization, grammar and mechanics. Considering the feedback they receive, they write their second drafts. Apart from the process writing, they have quizzes and midterm exams. In these exams, they are also asked to write paragraphs on a certain topic with a time limit. They are not allowed to use any dictionary or book while they are writing their paragraphs in the exam.

4.2 Instruments for Data Collection

For the present study, relevant data were gathered by means of five sources; students' grammar scores in English Proficiency Exam, questionnaires, interviews, students' writing in an exam and their writing in a take-home assignment.

4.2.1 Grammar Scores and Writing Performance

For this study, five different data sources were used. First of all, to see the relation between the students' grammatical competence and their writing performance, their grammar scores in the proficiency exam were used. The proficiency exam was held in September just before the fall term started. Grammar questions consisted of 50 multiple choice questions. Students' grammatical performance was compared in their writings in exams and take-home assignments.

4.2.2 Questionnaires

In this study, to gather the relevant data, a questionnaire was used. For the preparation of the questionnaire, another questionnaire by Dakhmouche (2008) was adapted and adopted with necessary changes in the content of questions. The questionnaire consisted of five sections.

The first section of the questionnaire was related to students' general perceptions about learning writing. There were three items in this section. The first item was used to learn about their priorities when they are writing something. In other words, the first item tried to find out the students' main focuses and their order in a writing activity. The second item was investigating their basic motivations towards the writing course and

learning to write. The third item was related to their opinions on whether the time allocated to the writing course is enough or not.

The second section of the questionnaire aimed to learn about the students' general perceptions on grammar and grammar teaching. In this section, there were five items and two of them were open-ended questions. Item 4 was related to students' learning styles and preferences regarding grammar. It aimed to find out whether they would like to be taught the grammar rules explicitly or implicitly. The rest of the items in this section investigated the students' ideas on the difficulty of grammar. They also included items searching for students' opinions about the necessity of grammar instruction.

In the next section, there were 10 items and two of them were open-ended questions. This section aimed to find out the students' perceptions regarding the place of grammar in writing. Items 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 were prepared to find out whether the students find grammar and grammar teaching necessary for the improvement of their writing skills. The last two items were related to their main focus during a writing activity.

Section four was designed to learn about the students' perceptions regarding exam writing and take-home assignments. This section was particularly important considering the purpose of the present study and research questions. There were 12 items in this section and two of them were open-ended questions. Items 19 and 20 were prepared for finding out the students' main focus in an exam writing and take-home assignments. The rest of the items were related to their grammatical competence in these two different writing tasks. Regarding Chomsky's views on performance which indicate that performance is not only related to competence but also to other psychological matters, this section aimed to find out if there are any underlying psychological issues affecting the students' grammatical competence in writing.

The last section asked for other opinions related to the students' grammatical competence in writing in exams and take-home assignments. There was only one item in this section and it was an open-ended question.

4.2.3 Interviews

For this study, interviews were held with each student. The main aim of the interviews was to find out whether the grammar mistakes are results of not knowing the grammar rule (competence) or only production errors affected by psychological issues. With each student, their grammar errors in exams and take-home assignments were discussed. They were asked for

the exact grammar rule for each mistake to find out whether they know the rule or not. If they knew the rule, some questions were asked searching for the underlying reason for their errors such as lack of attention, lack of practice, anxiety, etc.

Another reason for the usage of interviews was to unfold other opinions regarding the issue of the study. There might be some issues that are not included in the questionnaire and students may want to talk about them. If there were any unclear statements in the questionnaires, they were also discussed in the interviews.

4.2.4 Students' Writing in Exams

For the writing course, students have two midterms each term and they also have pop-up quizzes. In these exams, they are required to write a paragraph on a given topic. For this study, their writings in the first quiz were used. Because the main aim was to see the relationship between their grammar scores and grammar mistakes in writing, the first quiz was chosen. The results of the first quiz were much more comparable with the grammar scores they had at the beginning of the term. Because they are constantly improving themselves, later exam writings were not chosen.

4.2.5 Students' Take-Home Assignments

As part of their writing course, students are required to write paragraphs for their writing portfolio. Every week, they are expected to write paragraphs on two different topics assigned by the teacher. When they submit their first draft, they are provided with feedback on their organization, content and mechanics. Following the feedback, they write their second drafts. Their second drafts are graded out of 15 considering the following aspects; organization, content and mechanics. At the end of the term, they submit all of the drafts they have written in a folder as a writing portfolio.

5. Results

5.1 Relation between the Grammar Scores and the Grammar Mistakes

At the beginning of the term, all of the students in preparatory classes took the English Proficiency Exam. In this exam, the students had grammar, reading, listening, and writing questions. Moreover, after the

written exam, they had an oral exam. For this study, to find out the relation between grammatical competence and performance in writing, students' grammar scores in the proficiency exam were used. In Table 5.1, students' grammar scores are given. Moreover, to see their performance, the number of grammar mistakes they had in the exam and in the take-home assignment are provided. These exams and take-home assignments are those written at the beginning of the term. The exam is their first quiz and the take-home assignment is their first take-home assignment in that term. They were specifically chosen from the beginning of the term. For the later exams and take-home assignments, it would not be possible to compare their performance with their grammar scores at the beginning of the term since their grammar and writing are improving.

Table 5.1: Students' Grammar Scores and Number of Grammar Mistakes

Student	Grammar Score	Number of mistakes in the exam	Number of mistakes in the take-home assignment
S1	58	1	3
S2	50	5	11
S3	52	3	5
S4	64	4	6
S5	56	4	4
S6	62	2	3
S7	58	2	4
S8	64	4	3
S9	58	5	3
S10	49	8	10
S11	42	7	8
S12	38	3	5
S13	60	6	4
S14	72	1	3

S15	72	3	4
S16	62	7	6
S17	66	5	6
S18	68	2	5
S19	66	6	6
S20	58	5	6
S21	68	3	2

The results show that it is difficult to talk about a direct relation between the students' grammar scores and their grammar mistakes. Some of the students who had the highest grammar scores tended to have fewer grammar mistakes in their writing. For example, Student 14 had the highest grammar score and he had the fewest grammar mistakes. Some students who had low grammar scores had more grammar mistakes. For instance, Student 10 and Student 11 had low grammar scores and they had many grammar mistakes in their writing. However, higher grammar scores do not always necessarily indicate fewer grammar mistakes. For example, Student 12 had the lowest grammar score but she had only 3 mistakes in the exam. These results show that although there is a tendency for students with high grammar scores to have fewer grammar mistakes, competence does not always result in performance. Moreover, there are some other factors affecting the students' grammar performance in writing. For example, as mentioned earlier, Student 12 had the lowest grammar score but she had only 3 grammar mistakes in the exam. However, her writing was too simple and short. She did not risk trying any complex sentences or different forms. Although she had few grammar mistakes, her overall writing score was not high because organization and content were other factors that were taken into account when assessing the students' writing. Student 12 had 5 mistakes in the exam and 11 mistakes in her take-home assignment. However, her writing was very rich in terms of its content and vocabulary. It also included many complex and compound sentences besides simple sentences. These results are almost consistent with Chomsky's ideas which claim that competence does not always result in performance.

In terms of the difference between their mistakes in exams and take home assignments, the results show that 15 students had more mistakes in their take-home assignments and 4 of them had fewer mistakes in their take-home assignments compared to their exams. However, when their

writings were evaluated overall, it was seen that their take-home assignments were better in terms of their content, vocabulary and organization. Their exam writings were not as good as their take-home writings in spite of the fact that they usually had fewer grammar mistakes in exams. There are other factors affecting their grammar performance. In exams, they are much more concerned about their grades; therefore, they are much more careful about their grammar mistakes. Another reason might be that because they feel a bit more constrained in the exams, they do not usually try different and complex sentences in their exams. Lastly, compared to their take-home assignments, in exams, they write shorter paragraphs because of the time limit and fear of making mistakes.

5.2 Results of the Questionnaire

As mentioned earlier, for this study, a questionnaire and interviews were used. They were carried out with 21 intermediate level preparatory class students at Aksaray University. The questionnaire consisted of five different sections. The results of the each part are provided in the following sections.

5.2.1 Learning Writing

This section of the questionnaire was developed to see the students' perceptions regarding the aim for learning writing and sufficiency of the class hours for writing course. The results of the each item in this section are provided in the following tables.

Table 5.2: Results of the First Item in the First Section

Learning to write enables you to:	Number of the students
Write different types of texts	12
Have good marks in examination essays	8
Succeed in writing like native speakers	9

For the first item, the students were asked to identify their main aims for learning writing. Three different options were provided and the students were allowed to choose more than one option. As seen in the Table 5.2, 12 students indicated that learning writing is important for

writing different types of texts. 9 students believed that it is good for writing like native speakers and 8 of them mentioned that learning writing is important for getting good marks in examination essays. As the results show, most of the students might be said to have intrinsic motivation for learning writing as their main aims are writing different types of texts and writing like native speakers.

Table 5.3: Results of the Second Item in the First Section

The time allocated to teaching writing is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop your writing skills	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	6	15	0	0

The students have 6 hours of writing course each week for the preparatory class. As seen in Table 5.3, all of the students agreed that the time allocated to teaching writing is sufficient to cover most of the aspects needed to develop their writing skills.

5.2.2 Learning Grammar

The second section of the questionnaire was related to the students' perceptions about learning grammar. This section included items related to the students' learning styles and their opinions about the difficulty and necessity of learning grammar.

Table 5.4: Results of the First Item in the Second Section

In learning grammar, you prefer:	Number of the Students
To be given the rules directly by your teacher	16
To find the rules by yourself	5

The first item in this section was related to the students' learning styles concerning grammar. As Table 5.4 shows, most of the students preferred to be given the rules directly by the teacher. Only 5 students preferred to find the rules by themselves. Therefore, the students mostly chose deductive grammar teaching rather than inductive grammar.

Table 5.5: Results of the Second and Third Items in the Second Section

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
English grammar is difficult.	3	12	6	0
Learning English grammar is a waste of time.	0	0	7	14

In the second section of the questionnaire, there were two items related to the students' opinions about English grammar. As the results in Table 5.5 show, most of the students agreed that English grammar is difficult. However, for the next item, none of the students believed that learning English grammar is a waste of time. All of the students agreed that learning English grammar is essential.

There were also two open-ended questions in this part asking students to explain their answers why they think English grammar is difficult or not and why they think learning English grammar is a waste of time or it is necessary.

As already mentioned, almost all of the students believed that English grammar is difficult. They mostly thought that it is too complicated and it has many rules. One of the students who believed English grammar is difficult said "*Because grammar is very complex. I can't learn all of the rules about grammar.*" Another student also stated that "*Because English grammar is very complicated and different from our grammar. Also, English grammar has got many details.*"

Although they are few in number, some of the students thought that English grammar is not very difficult. These students believed that if they study hard, they can achieve it. One of them said "*If you study grammar hard, you can do it very well.*" Another one also agreed and said "*It is not difficult but we have to study and do more exercises.*"

These comments show how big importance the students place on grammar. It might also indicate the common practice of Grammar-Translation Method in teaching English. The students' perceptions regarding the importance of grammar might also result from their teachers' perspectives. In our institution, our teachers mostly value grammar and there is a separate grammar course in preparatory class which is not very common in other preparatory schools in our country. The students are from the departments of English Language Teaching and English Language and Literature. Therefore, as teachers we usually believe that the

preparatory class is the only place for the students to learn and practice grammar in detail. The book used for the grammar course is also very comprehensive and detailed including many rules about grammar.

5.2.3 The Place of Grammar in Writing

The third section of the questionnaire dealt with the students' perceptions considering the role of grammar in writing. Results for the each item are provided in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6: Results of the First Six Items in the Third Section

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Learning grammar will help you express your ideas clearly in writing.	11	10	0	0
Grammar practice in writing course is essential.	11	9	1	0
Linking grammar with the types of texts you are required to write will help you improve your writing.	10	11	0	0
Applying grammar rules in writing helps you to remember these rules.	11	9	1	0
Improving your grammar will contribute to improve your writing.	10	11	0	0
Problems with grammar will cause you to lose marks in examinations.	6	15	0	0

As Table 5.6 shows, for the first item, all of the students agreed that learning grammar will help them express their ideas clearly. All the students believed that grammar is an essential component of writing course. For the next item, except for one student, all of the others indicated that grammar should be practiced in the writing course. However, only 1 student disagreed with this statement and he mentioned that because they have a separate grammar course, there is no need to practice grammar in writing course. There was also an open-ended question in this part of the questionnaire which asked students to explain their ideas regarding the

grammar practice in writing course. One of the students said "*Grammar practice in writing course is essential because they are connected to each other.*" This student believed that not only for the writing course but also for all the other courses, grammar is very important. Another student also believed that grammar and writing are connected to each other and states that "*If you want to write a good paragraph, you have to know the grammar rules. Therefore, grammar practice is very important in the writing course.*"

There was only one student who believed that grammar practice in writing course is not necessary. She said that "*We also have a separate grammar course and we are doing enough practice in that course.*"

These results are consistent with some of the previous studies which support the integration of grammar and writing courses. To illustrate, Ozbek (1995) also concludes that teaching of grammar should be connected to teaching of writing. Although the students have separate grammar and writing courses, they do a lot of grammar practices in their writing class and almost all of the students are contented with this integration.

The third item in this section was also related to the linkage of grammar and writing. All of the students agreed that linking grammar with the types of the texts they are required to write will help them improve their writing. The next item was about the application of grammar rules in writing. Apart from one student, all the others believed that applying the grammar rules in writing help them remember these rules. As Table 5.6 shows, all of the students agreed that there is a correlation between improvement in grammar and improvement in writing. The last item was related to the assessment of writing. Students indicated that any grammar mistake will result in losing marks in examinations. This result showed that one of the motivations towards learning grammar is related to the assessment and evaluation of writing.

Another item in this section tried to find out when the students think about grammar when they are writing. As Table 5.7 shows, most of the students think about grammar when they start writing their ideas on the rough paper. 6 students indicated that they think about grammar when they have finished writing down their ideas on the rough paper. These students firstly organize their ideas and content and then they think about grammar. The other students care about grammar when they are writing their second drafts. The last group of the students mentioned that they think about grammar when they get feedback for their first drafts. Considering the time when the students think about grammar, the results are varied and difficult to generalize.

Table 5.7: Results of the Seventh Item in the Third Section

When you are writing, you take into consideration grammar, when you:	Number of Students
Start writing your ideas on the rough paper	9
Have finished writing down your ideas on the rough paper	6
Start writing the final version	6

The last item in this section aimed to find out the students' main focus when they are writing a paragraph. The results are provided in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Results of the Eighth Item in the Third Section

When you are writing, you are able to focus on:	Number of students
Grammar only	0
Writing down your ideas only	1
Both	20

The results show that almost all of the students believed that they are able to focus both on grammar and content when they are writing something. Only 1 student indicated that he is able to focus on content only. These results also show the importance the students place on grammar. Although the order of importance changes from one student to another, they usually think about both grammar and content of their writing.

5.2.4 Comparison of Exam Writing and Take-Home Assignments

The next part of the questionnaire included questions related to the comparison of exam writing and take-home assignments. The first item in this section was related to the importance students give on the items which are organization of ideas, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation in exams and in take-home assignments. Firstly, they were asked to number them according to the importance in an exam. The results show that students use 7 different orders.

Table 5.9: The First Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Organization	Grammar	Vocabulary	Punctuation	**5**

Table 5.10: The Second Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Organization	Vocabulary	Punctuation	**7**

Table 5.11: The Third Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Organization	Grammar	Punctuation	Vocabulary	**5**

Table 5.12: The Fourth Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Punctuation	Organization	Vocabulary	**1**

Table 5.13: The Fifth Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Organization	Vocabulary	Grammar	Punctuation	**1**

Table 5.14: The Sixth Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Vocabulary	Organization	Punctuation	**1**

Table 5.15: The Seventh Order Used by the Students in the Exams

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Organization	Punctuation	Vocabulary	**1**

These results show that considering the exams, for 10 students, grammar is the most important and the first focus in the writing process. For other 10 students, organization of the ideas is the most important focus. Punctuation and vocabulary are mostly put in the 3rd or 4th place.

The same question was also used for the take-home assignments. Tables 5.16, 5.17, 5.18, 5.19, 5.20, 5.21 and 5.22 show 7 different orders students use when they are writing a take-home assignment.

Table 5.16: The First Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Organization	Grammar	Vocabulary	Punctuation	11

Table 5.17: The Second Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Organization	Vocabulary	Grammar	Punctuation	3

Table 5.18: The Third Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Organization	Grammar	Punctuation	Vocabulary	3

Table 5.19: The Fourth Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Organization	Vocabulary	Punctuation	1

Table 5.20: The Fifth Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Organization	Punctuation	Vocabulary	1

Table 5.21: The Sixth Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Vocabulary	Grammar	Organization	Punctuation	1

Table 5.22: The Seventh Order Used by the Students in Take-Home Assignments

1	2	3	4	Number of students
Grammar	Vocabulary	Organization	Punctuation	1

As the results show, for 17 students, organization of the ideas is the most important and the first focus while writing a take-home assignment. For only 2 students, grammar is the first focus and for 1 student, vocabulary is the main focus. For 15 students, grammar is the second focus. As is the case with the exam writing, punctuation is usually the last item in the order. When the order in exams and take-home assignments are compared, it can be seen that for the exams, the main focus for most of the students is grammar followed by the organization of ideas. On the other hand, for take- home assignments, the first and the most important focus is the organization of the ideas followed by grammar.

There were some items related to the psychological factors that affect the students' performance in writing. The results show that most of the students thought that writing in an exam and writing for a take-home assignment are not the same. They were also asked to explain why they think they are the same or not. One of the students focused on time and said "*When we write paragraphs at home, we have got a lot of time.*" Another student emphasized the usage of vocabulary and stated "*We can write everything and we can look up dictionary. However, in exams we only write what we know.*"

Some of the students focused on their anxiety levels in an exam and in a take-home assignment. One of their comments is "*When I write at home, I am more relaxed. In an exam, I am very nervous.*"

Some of the students believed that there is not any difference between writing in an exam and writing in a take-home assignment. One of them stated that "*There is not any difference between writing in an exam and writing in a take-home assignment for me because my performance is the same in both.*"

The next item aimed to find out the psychological factors that affect the students' performance in exams. Most of the students agreed that because they take it more seriously in exams, they make fewer grammar mistakes. However, 7 students disagreed with this statement. As for the factors affecting writing for a take-home assignment, students mostly disagreed that they make fewer grammar mistakes when writing for take-home assignments because they feel relaxed when they are writing at home. Another item in this section was related to the anxiety in the exams. Almost half of the students believed that because they are nervous in the exams, they make more grammar mistakes. 11 students disagreed with this item. For the next item, almost half of the students believed that because they are too relaxed in a take-home assignment, they make more grammar mistakes while the other 10 students disagreed. For the last item, 11 students indicated that because the teacher provides feedback on grammar for take-home assignments, their main focus is not grammar. However, 10 students indicated that they still focus on grammar even if the teacher provides feedback on grammar.

Table 5.23: Results of the First Six Items in Section Four

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There is not any difference between writing in an exam and writing for a take-home assignment.	1	4	10	6
I make fewer grammar mistakes when writing in exams because I take it more seriously.	0	14	5	2
I make fewer grammar mistakes when writing for take-home assignments because I feel relaxed when I am writing at home.	1	8	12	0

I am very nervous in the exams so I make more grammar mistakes in the exams.	5	5	11	0
Because I am too relaxed in a take-home assignment, I make more grammar mistakes.	6	5	10	0
For take-home assignments, my teacher provides feedback on grammar, so my main focus is not grammar.	2	9	10	0

The last item in this section asked the students whether they are better at writing in exams or writing in a take-home assignment. The results for this item are provided in Table 5.24.

Table 5.24: Results of the Last Item in Section Four

I am usually better at	**Number of students**
writing in an exam	6
take home assignment	15

As Table 5.24 shows, most of the students believed that they are better at take-home assignments. Following this item, there was also an open-ended question asking students to explain their answer. One of the students who believed that he is better at take-home assignments commented on his usage of dictionary "*In a take-home assignment, I can write all things looking at dictionary.*"

Another student focused on his anxiety level in exams and stated that "*When I write in an exam, I am so excited and nervous. However, I am much more relaxed in a take-home assignment.*"

Some of the students indicated that they are better at take-home assignments because they have no time limit. One of their comments is "*I am better at take-home assignments because I have enough time to think.*"

As mentioned earlier some of the students thought that they are better at exams. One of them focused on the importance of exams and stated that "*I must write better at exams than take-home assignments because exams are more important.*"

5.2.5 Further Suggestions

The last part of the questionnaire asked for further suggestions if the students had any. Most of the students did not answer this part and some of them added their comments. They mostly repeated the same things already discussed in the other parts of the questionnaire. One of the students indicated that he is better at writing in exams and said that "*In exams, I am ready for both grammar and writing, so I make fewer grammar mistakes in exams.*"

Some of the other students added their comments on the advantages of take-home writing. One of their comments is given below:

> *When I write at home, I am relaxed and I am not anxious. I have the opportunity to check the things I do not know. I can use the dictionary but I am not allowed to use the dictionary in an exam.*

5.3 Results of the Interviews

Interviews were conducted to find out the exact reason for the grammar mistakes. Students were interviewed one by one and all of their mistakes in the exam and take-home assignment were discussed one by one. Without showing the correct answer, for each mistake, students were asked to give the correct answer themselves. The mistakes mostly included article usage, auxiliary verb, third person singular -*s*, sentence order, etc. The results showed that only in 3 cases, students did not know the correct answer for their mistakes. For all the rest, the students knew the correct answer and they were able to correct their mistakes by themselves. These results showed that knowing a rule does not necessarily result in actual correct usage. When they were asked for possible reasons for their mistakes, the students answered that it might be because of their lack of attention in take-home assignments because they are usually much more relaxed compared to the exams. They also indicated that it might be because of the anxiety they feel in exams. Another reason mentioned by the students is that they do these mistakes because they have lack of practice. Although they know the rule, because of the insufficiency of practice, they make mistakes in actual usage. As Ozbek (1995) suggests in her study, these mistakes might be because of the reason that grammar is mostly taught in isolation.

As already mentioned, compared to their exam writings, they were better at their take home assignments in terms of the content, vocabulary and organization. However, they usually had fewer grammar mistakes in their exams compared to their take-home assignments. These results are

consistent with the results of the questionnaire which show that for exams, grammar is the main focus for the students while for take-home assignments, organization of the ideas is the main focus. Possible reasons for these results were also asked in the interview. One of the students mentioned that her main focus in exams is grammar. Therefore, she has fewer grammar mistakes.

> *As you know, when I write a take-home assignment, I try to use different and complex sentences. This might be the reason why I have more grammar mistakes in take-home assignments. However, in exams I feel much more constrained because I worry about my grade. So, I am much more careful about the grammar mistakes. (Student 2, female, December 22, 2014)*

Some of the students stated that grade is a very important factor for their seriousness in the exams. They also get a grade for each of their take-home assignments, but this does not have any proportion in the overall assessment. To illustrate this factor, comments of two different students are given:

> *For a take-home assignment, you provide feedback for our first draft. That is why I am more relaxed for a take-home assignment. We have the second chance to correct our mistakes. However, for our exams, we do not have any other chances, so my main focus is grammar in exams. For take-home assignments, I can try different sentences and search for the content. I can also use different vocabulary. (Student 14, Male, December 26, 2014)*

> *In an exam, I am more careful because my grades are very important. In a take-home assignment, I can check different words and use them. I also search the web for the content. I mainly focus on content in a take-home assignment but in exams I do not have these chances. So, I focus on grammar mostly. I am afraid of making mistakes and losing points. (Student 10, Male, December 26, 2014)*

According to the results, being too much relaxed might also have some negative effects on their grammar performance. Some of the students believed that at home they are much more relaxed and there are also other factors affecting their grammar performance such as noise and concentration.

> *Sometimes it is difficult for me to concentrate at home. I am too relaxed and my roommates are sometimes noisy. So, I make more grammar mistakes when writing a take-home assignment. I know the rules but I still make mistakes. (Student 6, Female, December 25, 2014)*

Students were also asked to comment on the advantages of take-home assignments. They mostly focused on the vocabulary usage and a rich content. They believed that it is a very good practice for them because almost three days a week, they are writing a paragraph. They also talked about the feedback they get for their each draft.

It provides a good practice for us. According to the feedback I get from you, I try not to repeat my mistakes again. We are always writing something. Sometimes I am tired but I believe it is useful for us. (Student 11, Female, December 24, 2014)

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the Findings

One of the topics discussed in this paper is the students' perceptions regarding the place of grammar in writing. As the results show, students mostly believed that grammar is very important not only for writing but also for the other skills. They were very much focused on grammar and they put much emphasis on it. Even though there were few students who believed that grammar practice is not necessary for the writing course, they mostly supported the combination of grammar and writing.

The results of the comparison between the students' grammar scores and their grammar mistakes show that although there is a tendency for the students with high grammar scores to have fewer grammar mistakes and for the students with low grammar scores to have more grammar mistakes, it is difficult to generalize the results. As already mentioned, sometimes students with relatively low grammar scores had fewer grammar mistakes than other students. Sometimes this resulted from the usage of too simple sentences and writing a short paragraph. Therefore, fewer grammar mistakes do not always suggest a better writing. The opposite scenario is also possible. Students with high grammar scores might have more grammar mistakes in their writing compared to the other students because they sometimes try to use complex and long sentences, which increases their risk of making grammar mistakes.

Another issue discussed in this paper is the difference between the students' exam writing and their take-home assignments. Although the main focus for this paper is the grammar mistakes, students' writings were analyzed generally. In terms of the content, organization and vocabulary, their take-home writings were mostly better than their exam writings. However, in terms of the grammar mistakes, they mostly had more mistakes in their take-home writings. The reason for these results might be

related to the students' main focus considering the exams and the take-home assignments. As mentioned in the results of the questionnaires, students' main focus in exams is grammar while their main focus in take-home assignments is the organization of their ideas. In terms of the content, organization and vocabulary, they have the opportunity to search and use the dictionary for take-home assignments. Moreover, they do not have time limit at home. However, in exams, as they mentioned, students are much more careful about their grammar because they are afraid of losing marks. They do not have much opportunity for searching for a rich content or vocabulary in exams. These results show that for the correct usage of grammar, neither being too relaxed nor being too anxious is good.

As for the possible reasons for their grammar mistakes, the results show that only in few cases, they did not know the correct answer for their grammar mistakes. For almost all of the mistakes, the students were able to give the correct answer themselves. The reasons for their grammar mistakes are mostly related to psychological factors and lack of practice. For their take-home assignments, lack of attention and being too much relaxed might be some of the reasons for their grammar mistakes. On the other hand, for their mistakes in the exams, too much anxiety might be regarded as a reason. The other important reason for some of the grammar mistakes is the lack of practice. The most common mistakes in their writings were related to the usage of articles, third person singular -*s*, auxiliary verbs, and plural and singular nouns. Although they know the rules very well in theory, when they are required to apply them, they usually have difficulty.

6.2 Implications for Further Research

In this study, to see the relationship between the students' grammar scores and the number of grammar mistakes they had in writing, their paragraphs were used. However, as mentioned in the results part, although some of the students had low grammar scores, they had fewer grammar mistakes. The reason for some of the cases was the usage of too simple sentences and short paragraphs. Therefore, for a further study, it might be suggested to use some guides for the students' writing so that they might be more comparable. For instance, to achieve the standardization in students' writing, there might be a word limit for the paragraph. Moreover, students might be asked to write different types of sentences such as complex and compound sentences.

Another limitation for this study was that because of the time limitation, for each student, two paragraphs were used. However, the

students are constantly writing their paragraphs. Therefore, for a more comprehensive study, it might be better to use more than two paragraphs to compare their exam writing and take-home writing. Students might have regular grammar tests and these results might be compared with their different paragraphs.

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