STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF ANXIETY,
MOTIVATION, AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH
DURING TASK-BASED LANGUAGE LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN
SECOND LIFE: THE CASE OF METU

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ABSTRACT

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3D virtual worlds are emerging distance education technologies that offer collaborative learning environments and provide effective ways to apply task-based activities. The aim of this case study was to examine the contribution of task-based language learning in 3D virtual worlds to speak English as a foreign language among university preparatory class students in terms of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. Therefore, different English speaking practice tasks/activities were designed in Second Life. Participants had different roles based on the determined tasks and had speaking experiences with native speakers, friends, and instructors of METU preparatory school. Fifteen upper-intermediate level preparatory class students in the Department of Basic English at Middle East Technical University participated in the study which comprised a four week time span in May 2011.

Data of the study included the qualitative data, gathered from the interviews. Those interviews were administered after the study to understand the effectiveness of task-based language learning in Second Life for students' anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence towards speaking English.

According to the results, this study revealed important findings for language education field. The results of this study demonstrated the effectiveness of task-based language learning in Second Life environment which had positive impact on students. In this respect, it is suggested that the Second Life experience provided students to gain motivation and self-confidence and overcome their anxiety related problems towards speaking English. Therefore, this study may offer an insight for further studies to investigate the effectiveness of 3D virtual environments in language education, especially in Turkey.

Key Words: Task-Based Language Learning, Second Life, Anxiety, Motivation, Self-Confidence.

ÖZ

SECOND LIFE ORTAMINDA GÖREV TEMELLİ DİL EĞİTİMİ
ETKİNLİKLERİNDE ÖĞRENCİLERİN İNGİLİZCE KONUŞMAYA
YÖNELİK ENDİŞE, GÜDÜLENME VE ÖZGÜVENLERİ AÇISINDAN
TECRÜBELERİ VE ALGILARI: ODTÜ DURUM ÇALIŞMASI

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Yeni gelişen uzaktan eğitim teknolojilerinden biri olan üç boyutlu sanal dünyalar, işbirlikçi öğrenme ortamları sunmakta ve görev temelli etkinlikler uygulamaya yönelik etkili seçenekler sağlamaktadır. Bu durum çalışmasının amacı, üç boyutlu ortamlarda görev temelli dil öğreniminin ve öğretiminin, üniversite hazırlık sınıfı öğrencilerinin İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik endişe, güdülenme ve özgüven açısından etkisini incelemektir. Bu nedenle, Second Life ortamında farklı İngilizce konuşma görevleri/etkinlikleri tasarlanmıştır. Belirlenen görevlere göre katılımcılar, farklı rollere bürünmüş ve İngilizce'yi ana dili olarak konuşan kişilerle, arkadaşlarıyla ve ODTÜ Temel İngilizce Bölümü eğitmenleriyle İngilizce konuşma pratiği yapmışlardır. Çalışma örneklemi, Türkiye'de bulunan Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Temel İngilizce Bölümü'nde orta-üstü seviye dil eğitimi alan 15 hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisidir. Araştırma, Mayıs 2011 döneminde dört haftalık zaman dilimini kapsamaktadır.

Çalışma verileri görüşme yoluyla elde edilen nitel verileri içermektedir. Çalışma sonrasında, Second Life ortamında görev temelli dil eğitiminin öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik, endişe, güdülenme ve özgüvenlerine etkisini incelemek için görüşmeler uygulanmıştır.

Sonuçlara göre, bu çalışma dil eğitimi alanında önemli sonuçlar ortaya çıkarmıştır Araştırma sonuçları, Second Life ortamında yürütülen görev temelli dil eğitiminin öğrenciler üzerinde olumlu bir etkisinin olduğunu ve öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik olumlu tutum geliştirmesini sağladığını ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Bu bağlamda, denilebilir ki Second Life deneyimi öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik olarak güdülenme ve özgüven kazandıklarını ve endişe problemlerini aşabildiklerini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu nedenle, bu araştırma üç boyutlu sanal dünyaların dil eğitiminde, özellikle Türkiye' de etkililiğini inceleme amaçlı yapılacak diğer çalışmalara iyi bir örnek teşkil edebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Görev Temelli Dil Eğitimi, Second Life, Endişe, Güdülenme, Özgüven.

To my parents,

Şadıman and Zamit KAMALI

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ABBREVIATIONS

CALL   Computer Assisted Language Learning

CMC   Computer Mediated Communication

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

VLEs   3-D Virtual Learning Environments

MUVEs   3-D Multi-User Virtual Environments

VW   Virtual World

SL   Second Life

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, and definition of the terms.

1.1. Background of the Study

Language has a great importance in human life. Learning another language affects people's careers, lives or world views. Especially, in this globalizing world, helping people to learn other languages effectively has great importance. However, language learning is a difficult process and especially oral communication in the target language is the most challenging task. The ability to speak in a foreign language is at the center of language acquisition. Our personal characteristics, knowledge of world, and our ability to express our ideas affect our performance in speaking a foreign language. Speaking a foreign language is thought to be as a sign of knowing language because when a person claims that s/he knows a language, others think that s/he can speak that language instead of reading or writing (Soozandehfar, 2010). However, according to Nunan (1999) learners who spent their years in learning English with traditional methods are unable to actively use that language and also, unable to develop communication skills. He also indicated that students give answers like a parrot in person to person classrooms in anticipated conditions. However, they face with problems in terms of communication in unpredicted conditions.

Language acquisition is not limited to just grammar rules. Instead, it is the creation of meaning which requires distinguishing between knowing grammatical rules and being able to use those rules effectively while communicating (Nunan, 1989). In other words, language acquisition requires communication in the target language which is a very challenging task because there are many factors affecting the language learning process including anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

1.1.1. Anxiety, Motivation, and Self-confidence in Language Learning

In the literature, the relationship between anxiety and language learning has been investigated by many researchers and it is noted that anxiety has an adverse effect on the performance of people who speak English as a foreign language (Chen & Lee, 2011; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Stroud & Wee, 2006; Woodrow 2006). Anxiety especially has a detrimental effect on oral performance of learners. According to the results of a study conducted by Woodrow (2006), anxiety negatively affects oral communication both within and outside the language learning classroom. His study results also showed that anxiety is a problematic issue for the whole language learning process and it causes unwillingness for language learners. Therefore, teachers should be sensitive to the anxiety problem in classroom interactions and provide help to minimize language anxiety (Chen & Lee, 2011; Woodrow, 2006). Researchers investigated the reason of anxiety towards language learning. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined the sources of anxiety under three categories which are communication apprehension, text anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension relates to shyness which occurs during speaking in another language that results with fear of communication. Text anxiety, however, closely relates to fear of failure. Finally, fear of negative evaluation relates to concerns of others' possible negative evaluations. Therefore, teachers should be sensitive to learners' anxiety and should try to create a low-anxiety atmosphere. In

this respect, it is important to develop new approaches and methods to deal with the anxiety related problems in language learning and teaching.

Another area of research in language learning is the positive role of the motivation in language learning. There is a reciprocal influence between motivation and success; namely high motivation provides successful learning and successful learning provides high motivation (Cook, 2001). Motivation in foreign language learning has been accepted by teachers and researchers as one of the key factors affecting success in language learning (Liuolienė & Metiūnien, 2006; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Wang, 2008; Zhang & Fu, 2008). Results of the study conducted by Zhang and Fu (2008) showed that adult learners especially those with low motivation face some problems while learning English. Thus, all teachers should think of situations that motivate students since 'motivated' students do significantly better than unmotivated ones (Harmer, 1991). It was suggested by Shirbagi (2010) that teachers should be sensitive to learners' motives to recognize their instrumentality, and Wang (2008) suggested that every emerging methodology and technology should be integrated into a language classroom in order to increase students' motivation. In this manner, the focus of the teaching style has changed from teacher-centered to student-centered together with the fast-paced advancements of foreign languages teaching and the individual characteristics have been taken into consideration (Zhang & Fu, 2008).

Self-confidence is another factor that affect students' achievement in language learning. Dörnyei (1994) defines self-confidence as "the belief that one has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently" (p.277). According to Vandergrift (2005) the main reason behind students' low-motivation is may be lack of self-confidence. Also, Dörnyei (1994) indicated that self-confidence has a positive effect on people's motivation in foreign language learning. Additionally, there is a relation between anxiety and self-confidence which is indicated by Gardner,

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Tremblay, and Masgoret (1997). In order to motivate students and decrease their anxiety, it is necessary to provide learners to develop self-confidence. For that purpose, teachers should trust students and project them to achieve their goal (Dörnyei, 1994).

1.1.2. 3D Virtual Worlds

With the developments in computer assisted language learning (CALL), new opportunities have occurred in language learning and teaching. For example, the usage of Internet in CALL provides people all around the world to be in contact with just one click which paved the way for computer mediated communication. With the help of computer mediated communication, language learners have a chance to interact orally with native speakers from all around the world. 3D virtual worlds are new forms of tools that are used in CALL. 3D virtual environments provide users with the sense of presence which is not provided in other online learning environments. This sense of presence provides learners with the feeling of being in the authentic environment and learners immerse themselves in the learning activities. Bulu (2011) pointed out that virtual worlds create effective learning environments since they offer collaborative learning through immersive activities. The term immersive is related to presence which is called as sense of "being there" in the literature (Slater, Usoh & Steed, 1994). They stated that the virtual environments present the reality and how users felt in this reality compared to the real world. According to them, the virtual environment refers to the place that the experiment was conducted. Moreover, the assessment considers how the experience of the subject was in the virtual environment within the scope of the places that the subject walked around rather than the images observed.

The instructional benefits of 3D virtual worlds used to facilitate learning have been noted by many studies (Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Carteaux & Tuzun, 2005; Dede, Clarke, Ketelhut, Nelson & Bowman, 2005; Jarmon,

Traphagan, Mayrath & Trivedi, 2009). First and foremost, since users do not communicate face to face, those environments are effective language learning platforms to enable learners gain motivation, self-confidence, and overcome anxiety related problems.

Another benefit of 3D virtual worlds is that they offer experiential learning activities which are not possible to apply in classroom environment. These environments are effective medium that enable learners to learn by doing and apply those things in real life. For example, students have chance to learn about Egyptian Pyramids by walking around their 3D models, visiting its structures, and interacting with the people in the environment. Likewise, Firat (2010) indicated that 3D virtual worlds are considered as convenient learning platforms since they provide learner-centered features. Additionally, Baker, Wentz, and Woods (2009) stated that since virtual worlds enable students to engage in interactions with anybody in the environment, they might be useful tools in online teaching. Experimentation, exploration, task selection, creation, and dynamic feedback are the useful learning exercises that are supplied by the accessible virtual worlds such as Second Life (Iqbal, Kankaanranta, & Neittaanmäki, 2010). They also indicated that providing such kinds of exercises for learning shows that virtual worlds could probably be a place so as to implement project-based experiential learning. Jarmon, Trapgahan, Mayrath, and Trivedi (2009) found in their study that learning through virtual worlds can be engaging for students and affect their achievement, and also their attitude and motivation.

One of the potential uses of virtual worlds in language teaching is task-based language learning. Task-based language learning (TBLL) has been one of the notions which was generally examined and discussed in foreign language (FL) teaching. TBLL has been an important issue since eighties and has influenced syllabus design, materials development, and language teaching methodology (Nunan, 1991). By giving students responsibility by

assigning tasks, their struggle for discovering the language would increase. In order to reach the outcome of the assigned tasks that hold great opportunities for learners, each learner should gather a different portion of information and exchange and manipulate that information with others (Pica, Kanagy & Falodun, 1993). Bruton (2002) indicated that the purpose of task-based instruction is to maximize the scope of the communication tasks. Also, Bruton (2002) drew attention to pair and group works as they can be used to stimulate spontaneous, and meaningful oral communications.

On the other hand, for better understanding of a language the importance of native speakers cannot be ignored. In that manner 3D virtual worlds have also benefits that they give language learners the chance to interact and contact with native speakers with task-based language learning activities. Chapelle (1998) mentioned about the importance of noticing linguistic features of the target language and added that noticing occurs through learners' own reflection and monitoring or stimulus is provided by others. Native speakers who are stakeholders of the language control the target language's maintenance and shape its direction (Davies, 2003). Moreover, Swain and Lapkin (2010) indicated that the more use made of a foreign language, the higher the resultant proficiency in that language. In terms of language learning, SL can provide a friendly, appealing, and contextually relevant space for native speakers of a target language to interact with language learners (Wang, Song, Xia & Yan, 2009, p.2).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Kaufman (2003) indicated that success in language learning is determined by the attitude of the learner, more than any factor. As summarized above, it is important to help the students develop positive attitudes by increasing their motivation and self-confidence and decreasing their anxiety. However, in traditional language classroom, students generally do not have positive

attitudes in speaking language because of the lack of active communication in the lesson (Nunan, 1999).

Making students develop a positive attitude towards speaking English can be possible with the help of virtual worlds; since they present pretty well designed, attractive environments which provide users to immerse themselves in the environment.

As a result, in recent years, there is a common interest among researchers in using virtual worlds in CALL and those studies revealed important results for the language education field.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

This study is inspired by the need to understand the contribution of task-based language learning in 3D virtual worlds to speak English as a foreign language among university preparatory class students. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of the students and to what extend 3D virtual world Second Life affect students' anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence level towards speaking English.

The research questions investigated in this study are:

1. What are the students' experiences in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?
2. What are the students' perceptions of speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?
    a. What are the students' perceptions of *anxiety* in speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?
    b. What are the students' perceptions of *motivation* in speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?

c. What are the students' perceptions of *self-confidence* in speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?

1.4. Significance of the Study

Studies showed that learners have difficulty in gaining speaking ability with the target language because of many reasons like poor methods, high anxiety, low motivation or low self-confidence. As Harmer (1991) indicated the atmosphere where the language learning takes place is very important. The environment should be appropriate in a way to help the students develop positive attitudes towards speaking language. It should be welcoming for students especially who are shy in speaking.

There has been research in using technologies in language education. Recently, 3D virtual worlds have been used for language education. However, since these technologies are new, design of these environments and experiences of the students in these environments need to be explored. As stated in the literature, experiences of the different cultures in virtual worlds are especially important. Therefore, this study will contribute to the literature by exploring both the potentials and effectiveness of Second Life virtual world in language learning. Investigation of the experiences of learners and factors that affect their anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence for speaking English would provide important insights for understanding how 3D virtual environments can be integrated into language education.

1.5. Definitions of Terms

Virtual World: 3D computer based environment which is "a synchronous, persistent network of people, represented as avatars, facilitated by networked computers" (Bell, 2008, p. 184). Those environments provide users to create objects, interact with each other by the forms of avatars.

Avatar: User embodiment in a collaborative virtual environment (Peterson, 2010). Functions of those avatars are the visual embodiment of the user, the means of interaction with the world and the means of feeling various attributes of the world using the senses (Capin, Pandzic, Noser, Thalmann & Thalmann, 1997).

Persistent: A virtual word continues to exist and function despite closing the program and participants are aware that systems in the space (environment, ecology, economy) exist with or without a participant's presence (Bell, 2008, p.185).

Second Life: A virtual world environment which is developed by Linden Lab Company.

English as Foreign Language: Learning and teaching English in the countries in which the English is not the native language and it just has internal communicative functions and sociopolitical status (Nayar, 1997).

Native Speaker: People who have a special control over a language. Also, they are thought to be the models of target language who know 'what the language is' and 'what the language is not' (Davies, 2003).

Task-Based Language Learning: An approach in modern language education in which the goal is to develop tasks which are based on students' needs and interests for accomplishing learner goals (Carrigan, 2009).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter introduces English as Foreign Language (EFL), task-based language learning, technological developments in language education, virtual worlds, and usage of virtual worlds in language education.

2.1. English as Foreign Language (EFL)

English as foreign language (EFL) is learned by people whose mother tongue is not English and already use at least one other language (Tomlinson, 2005).

It is mostly accepted that language learning is a complex process. Verikaitė (2008) indicated that language learning and teaching includes three steps which are the teaching acts of presenting and explaining new material, providing practice and testing. However, traditional language education involves only presenting the language and it does not require students to do further practice. Ruby (2005) also stated that in traditional language classroom teachers ask questions, present the information, and correct students' mistakes which cause limited interaction. However, in language teaching, the importance of students' participation cannot be ignored. The concept of pushing students to be inactive in language lectures needs to be changed. Learners should have control over what they learn and study. Nunan (1999) argued that students who have language knowledge are not able to actively use that language. In order to provide learners with an

opportunity to communicate in target language and actively use their linguistic competence, new approaches in language learning and teaching should be recognized (Nunan, 1999).

For most of the teachers and learners, the ultimate goal of language instruction is being able to express oneself effectively during oral communication with native speakers and qualified speakers of a target language (Payne & Ross, 2005). Carrigan (2009) indicated that by the end of the 1970s, the need to communicate across language barriers had become critical in this globalizing world. For this reason, the focus of EFL teachers should be developing a communicative atmosphere to learners whereby they can express themselves in target language. Spoken language is different from written language and it includes some features which make it more difficult for the speaker because the speaker does not have enough time to think while speaking (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010). Another difficulty for a speaker is learning new speech sounds and pronunciations consciously since speech habits are gained in childhood period naturally (Jung, 2010). Due to these difficulties in language education, learners may not reach fluency in speaking, despite taking language education many years. Young (2003) stated another difficulty related to speaking is the fear of poor performance in front of people. Generally, teachers choose the subject to be studied and students try to memorize what the teacher says. Due to the problems, Beebe (1983) stated that the problem with traditional English is getting students to respond in the classroom that most EFL teachers face (as cited in Tsou, 2005). This problem may prevent many language learners to speak English as a foreign language fluently.

In recent years the role of the native speaker in EFL teaching has been studied by many researchers (Cook, 1999; Harrison & Toyoda, 2002; Lee, 2004; Strambi & Bouvet, 2003; Zheng, Wagner, Brewer & Young, 2009). Native speaker implies people that have special control over their language

who are thought to be models and true sources of the language (Davies, 2003). Strambi and Bouvet (2003) stated that in language learning process, learners' interaction with native speakers and other language learners has a major role since it enables learners to engage in 'negotiation of meaning', and therefore to receive 'negative evidence'. Negative evidence implies 'information about which strings of words are not grammatical structures' (Marcus, 1993, p. 53). To illustrate; in 2004 Lee conducted a study which provided students' interaction with native speakers of Spanish by using Blackboard program that offers technological solutions for developing networked collaborative interaction. The results of the study showed that the native speakers helped the nonnative speakers in composing meaning and grammar structures, and the experiences of students were positive in terms of interaction with native speakers in a networked collaborative environment. In that case, technology usage in language education gains more importance since it provides a wide array of interaction opportunities. Also, Seferoğlu (2005) pointed out that specifically designed software programs may contribute too much thing to EFL learners for providing interaction.

The world that we live in provides many opportunities for facilitating education with the help of emerging technologies. The advent of new technologies lights a candle for the future of education. The global technological scenario has provided new pedagogical opportunities in teaching-learning procedure (Hussain, Iqbal & Akhtar, 2010). Earle (2002) stated that technologies enable education field to gain a new dimension which is moving from presenting information to problem solving activities by including new instructional experiences. This new dimension also increases students' interaction with the target subject. Using technology in education is called Instructional Technology. During the history of Instructional Technology, its' focus has been on improving efficiency and effectiveness of learning with technology. When we look at the technology

usage in language education, we see that it has a long history. To illustrate, audio technology in language education has been used to deliver digitalized sound and to provide learners with oral repetition practice. Other form of technology usage in language education is videotape. Visual materials are appealing to television-oriented students and teachers generally find video an attractive resource (Garrett, 1991). Moreover, networked media communications are very effective platforms for foreign language education since they are connection between language learners and native speakers who are at distance places. With those tools, language learners have chance to speak with native speakers around the world, since the place does not create a problem.

Language Acquisition (LA) is defined by Krashen (1981) as a meaningful interaction between speakers of the target language who are interested in the messages they are composing and understanding, not with the form of their utterances. LA entails the exploration of both the language learner's behavior and also the antecedents and motives behind the learner's engagement in language learning (Manchón', 2009). Here learner behaviors and beliefs gain more importance in language learning. Within this context, individual differences become an important area in LA research since it focuses on language learners as individuals. Thus, LA is related to many variables, among those variables there are beliefs, anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

2.1.1. Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the variables that affect foreign language acquisition. According to the definition of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) anxiety is "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic of nervous system" (p.125). Researchers have been interested in searching for anxiety in language learning (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 2000; Liu, 2006; MacIntyre &

Gardner, 1991; Stroud & Wee, 2006; Woodrow, 2006). Study results demonstrated that anxiety causes several problems in language learning, since it affects the language acquisition, retention, and active usage of foreign language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Similarly, Woodrow (2006) pointed out that plenty of research in foreign language learning has been conducted and research results showed that anxiety has an adverse effect on EFL. To illustrate; a student who does not trust his/her language abilities get anxious and starts to concentrate on teachers and native speakers' thoughts about the language performance of him/her (Stroud & Wee, 2006). It is understood from the example that lack of confidence is one of the reasons of anxiety. Another reason for anxiety is the competence based environments. To be more specific, a student may feel embarrassed while speaking in front of the class. This is about students' concern about making mistakes. In that point it is important to provide the students with the notion that mistakes are part of the learning process and s/he should welcome mistakes warmly. Also, there is identity-based anxiety (Stroud & Wee, 2006) where an individual is more focused on maintaining his/her relationship with a particular group than with his/her language abilities. To illustrate, a student may feel uncomforted to ask a question to when s/he does not understand the teacher. The underlying reason in that situation may be that s/he is afraid from potential negative thoughts of his/her classmates. This type of anxiety is mainly related with student perception. According to Foss and Reitzel (1988) self perception is a critical issue in language learning anxiety since it requires a new approach in providing students with developing positive attitudes towards language learning.

Young (1991) explained the sources of anxiety as (1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; (2) learner beliefs about language learning; (3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; (4) instructor-learner interactions; (5) classroom procedures; (6) language testing (p. 427). Moreover, numerous studies have suggested that anxiety occurs as a result

of poor learning abilities which show that anxiety is an outcome (Yan & Horwitz, 2008).

Language anxiety has a negative effect on oral performance of English learners. Many studies have been focused on anxiety in oral communication in language classrooms and demonstrated that speaking is one of the most difficult activities for language learners (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner 1994; Woodrow, 2006). Woodrow (2006) stated that if anxiety occurs during oral communication in the target language, students' adaptation to the environment and success in language learning process will be affected negatively. The factors that affect students to express their thoughts or ideas in classroom environments are their inability to control the communication process, observing other students' communication performance, extreme concern over the accuracy of vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (Yildiz & Bichelmeyer, 2003). According to Krashen, Terrel, and Hadley, speaking provokes anxiety mostly (as cited in Young, 1992). Hadley indicated that people whose language competency is low in terms of proficiency, they may have a certain amount of anxiety. Krashen suggests that students should not be forced to speak before they are ready and should not asked to perform beyond their competences.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) indicated that the main concern in language methods and approaches is providing a low-anxiety environment. According to the results of the study conducted by Casado and Dereshiwsky (2001), universities should catch up with contemporary technological developments in order to decrease students' anxiety and, as a result, increase their achievement.

2.1.2. Motivation

Motivation -one of the variables- is seen as a key factor that influences success in language acquisition in an effective way. Soozandehfar (2010) indicated that many of the current theories of language motivation come from Gardner and Lambert's (1959) work.

Oxford and Shearin (1994) stated that motivation is related to students' desire to contribute to language learning process actively and voluntarily. Based on their assumption, an unmotivated student engages in language learning process unsatisfactorily which causes failure in developing language learning skills.

Gardner (1985) defines motivation as "referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p.10). For example; foreign language learners are interested in interaction with native speakers and cultural properties of people who speak that language. Motivation is admitted as an important item in learners' success in language learning since it affects achievement positively or negatively (Liuolienė & Metiūnien, 2006). They also indicated that this situation is related to the ability of motivation to make other factors ineffective like language aptitude. For those reasons, to keep learners motivated to language learning is very important, and there is a need to provide learners with different types of discourses. Dörnyei (1994) indicated that "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of foreign language learning is always dependent on who learns what learns where" (p.275).

Research results showed that motivation is closely related with many items in language learning some of which are 'the frequency of students' usage of language learning strategies', 'the frequency of interaction with native speakers', and 'the frequency of input received in the language learning

process' (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Thus, motivation directly affects students' speaking activities in the target language.

Because of the importance of motivation in EFL, teachers of foreign language have always tried to find new approaches or strategies that introduce active and efficient uses of EFL in the classroom (Wang, 2008). With the proper methodology, it is possible to increase students' motivation. Task-based language learning may be a good methodology for increasing motivation when it is applied in a proper way.

2.1.3. Self-Confidence

Self-confidence, also one of the variables, is closely related to anxiety and motivation. Wu, Yen, and Marek (2011) found in their study that when students' self-confidence increased, their motivation was affected positively. Similarly, self-confidence is related to language anxiety, except that it emphasizes a positive component instead of negative (Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) indicated that "self-confidence leads to a motivation to use the language that, through linguistic and especially nonlinguistic factors, predicts language achievement" (p.100). People's provision and assessment of their own esteem are associated with the self-confidence and if the language learners consider themselves as incapable for learning the target language, self-confidence is influenced negatively (Park & Lee, 2005). Language teachers meet with some students who have linguistic ability but they are reluctant to benefit from foreign language for communication. On the other hand, there are some students who are willing to communicate in the foreign language whenever it is possible even if they have less linguistic ability (Macintyre, Dörnyei, Clement & Noels, 1998). Macintyre, Dörnyei, Clement, and Noels (1998) also stated that in classroom environment students, raising their hands to answer a question, have developed self-confidence with the language in general to understand the question and formulate an answer. In

their study, Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) suggested that self-confidence process becomes the most important determinant of attitude and effort expended toward language learning. They also expressed the relationship between self-confidence and anxiety as self-confidence in using the language, operationally defined in terms of low anxious effect and high self-perceptions of language competence' would, develop. According to the results of a study conducted by Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) "self-confidence influences language proficiency both directly and indirectly through the students' attitude toward and effort expanded on learning English" (p.441).

It would be meaningful to say that anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence in language learning are mainly related to the learning process. To make students gain communication skills, it is important to find an appropriate strategy to exceed the problems related with anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence.

2.1.4. Language Education in Turkey

In Turkey, among all the foreign languages, currently English is the only language taught as a compulsory subject at all levels of education, as foreign language (EFL) (Kirkgoz, 2007). Because reading is the main focus in Turkish language education system, EFL learners do not have the chance to make enough oral practice in English. In a study performed by Bekleyen (2007) it is stated that oral-aural skills are neglected in university entrance exam in Turkey and students -who get high scores in the exam- had difficulties in University with their oral-aural skills. Based on the results of a study conducted in Turkey by Tok (2009) for Turkish EFL learners who have little contact with the target language as they started to learn the language late, English in their daily lives and practice is essential. Moreover, Tok (2009) indicated that Turkish EFL learners need to practice

using/speaking English both in and outside the classroom, with different people, and in a variety of situations.

Since the main goal of language instruction is providing language learners to express themselves and develop oral-aural skills, it is necessary to give importance to those points in Turkish education system.

2.2. Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL)

It is meaningful to say that learners need to develop a positive attitude and new strategies for low-anxiety and high motivation to conduct information and communicate. New approaches are needed at that point to attract learners' attention and to make them to develop positive attitudes towards language learning especially in speaking. According to content based approach, while preparing the content of what will be taught in target language, curriculum should be prepared by researching students' needs in a systematic and accurate way and the requirements necessary for performing tasks both in and out of the classroom (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001).

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are some approaches in modern English language education. In this part, the main focus will be TBLL.

In recent years, task-based language learning has become a prominent topic for researchers and practitioners in foreign language teaching (Adams, 2009). Task-based instruction (TBI) tries to make learners active in learning process and increase the effectiveness of communication (Aliakbari & Jamalvandi, 2010).

One way for developing continuity and relevancy in EFL is to develop tasks which are based on students' needs and interests for accomplishing learner goals (Carrigan, 2009). In this context, Verikaitė (2008) indicated that

teachers have to develop new ways to attract students' attention to the tasks in order to motivate them. Tasks should be developed depending on the goals because appropriately selected tasks increase student motivation. Also, skills should be integrated into tasks directly or indirectly. Then, what is a task? According to the definition of Furuta (2002), a task is "a posed problem or an activity that has a goal or outcome that is not linguistic, but which is reached through a variety of linguistic skills (p. 15). Pedagogical tasks include language usage in oral communication that makes learners to focus on the meaning of sentences instead of the grammar rules (Nunan, 2004).

Table 1: Dimensions in Task-Based Foreign Language Learning

(Taken from Littlewood, 2004: The task-based approach: some questions and suggestions)

Focus on form ← ← → → Focus on meaning
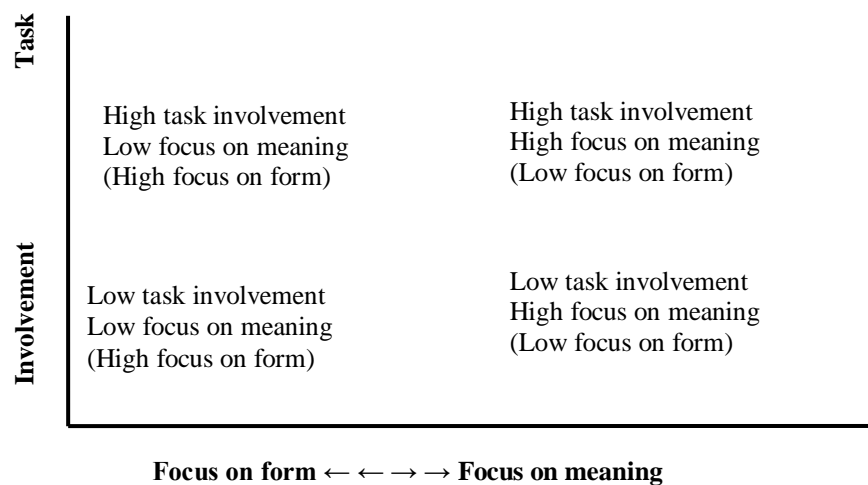
The key point in the graph is that written items are not related to features of the tasks instead they are related to properties of learners who engage in tasks (Littlewood, 2004). Based on the task-based approach, pedagogical tasks are used to provide foreign language learning. Carrigan (2009) stated that with the help of tasks, focus of classes shift toward increasing the oral communication of students who are able to express and share their thoughts, ideas, and opinions about any subject instead of focusing on the structure of

the language. Since tasks are developed based on students' interest and needs, it would be an effective way to help learners to highly get involved in lessons. While developing tasks, it is important to attract students' attention for using visuals, game-like activities, elements of entertainment, role play simulations, personalization of tasks, open-ended cues (Ur, 1996, p. 281).

2.3. Computer Assisted Language Learning

One of the technologies is the computer technology which brings a new aspect in educational life. Traditional school education is not capable of providing students to gain knowledge and skills necessary for meeting the requirements of this globalizing world (Lu, 2010). Computer technology was introduced in language education in 1960s but the importance of computer technology for language learning and teaching has been understood for ten years (Seferoğlu, 2005). With the advancement in computer technologies, new opportunities occurred for enhancing and facilitating language learning.

As a result, a new term emerged: Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). According to Gündüz (2005); CALL includes a group of instructions that need to be loaded on the computer to work on in the language classroom, and this does not mean the teacher uses the computer and writes a worksheet for a class. If CALL is carefully planned, it helps a learner to learn a language. Chapelle (1990) explained the usage goals of CALL in language learning as providing out-of class practice in grammar and reading skills, problem solving, and group work, and in writing as the technical capabilities permit, and indicated that new forms of computer usage in language learning will emerge. Warschauer and Healey (1998) divided the history of CALL into three stages as: Behaviorist CALL; Communicative CALL, and Integrative CALL. The common property of all stages is that they all correspond to a certain level of technology. In the period of Behaviorist CALL -1960s and 1970s- computers were used as drill

and practice tools. Gündüz (2005) indicated that in those years motivation was hindered by computers since they never allowed students to work at an individual speed. A paradigm shift was seen in 1980s and 1990s toward communicative language teaching, which emphasizes student engagement in genuine, significant interaction (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). This situation provided the emergence of communicative CALL. In the era of communicative CALL (1980s) personal computers started to offer possibilities for individual work the examples of which include text reconstruction programs and simulations. The last stage of CALL is integrative CALL. Warschauer (1996) stated that integrative CALL is based on two important technological developments which are - multimedia computers and the Internet. The importance of multimedia is explained by Warschauer (1996) as multimedia resources are all linked together which provides learners with composing their own path by just clicking a mouse. With the arrival of networked multimedia computing and the Internet, language teachers have been warming up to using computers in the language classroom (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). Mathews-Aydinli and Elaziz (2010) provided some examples of the CALL applications as word processors, websites, email, chat, online tutoring, blogs, podcasts, concordances, and interactive whiteboards (IWBs). A specific example for usage of CALL in speaking activities is Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology which assists learners to engage in speech interactions and supports simulated real-life conversation (Chiu, Liou & Yeh, 2007).

Some forms of CALL applications provide communication between individuals, groups, and organizations through networked computers which is named as computer mediated communication (CMC). According to the definition of Kern and Warschauer (2000), CMC allows language learners to communicate with other learners or speakers of the target language with the help of network access in either asynchronous or synchronous mode. synchronous CMC (SCMC) is a kind of simultaneous communication like chat rooms, while asynchronous CMC (ASCMC) is a kind of delayed time

communication that does not necessitate simultaneous participation of students like e-mail. Chatting is a popular issue in these days and people are interested in text or voice chat in their native languages. Because of its increasing popularity, SCMC has been a recent focus of interest in SLA literature on the social interactive factors involved in foreign language learning (Darhower, 2002). Kelm (1992) reported that according to the results of their study, SCMC

- provided increased participation from all members of a work group
- allowed students to speak without interruption
- reduced anxiety which is frequently present in oral conversation
- rendered honest and can did expression of emotion
- provided personalized identification of target language errors
- created substantial communication among foreign language learners
- demonstrated a significant reduction of certain grammatical errors over time (as cited in Darhower, 2002, p.250).

Abrams (2003) indicated that CMC has been recognized with its ability to improve foreign language performance, since most probably it creates a more positive collaborative learning environment. Educators' interest towards using technology for facilitating language learning -especially the ones that realize the importance of computer usage in language education-increased. Developments in information and communication technologies (ICT) provide language educators to develop educational applications in language education. The integration of ICT in language learning, new kinds of activities, such as electronic communication via email or chat rooms, have also been developed to help students (Young 2003).

Finally, in the area of education there is a huge demand to use Internet and web based communication tools. Main advantage of those kinds of tools is the flexibility of time and place. In nowadays, information technology usage have centered on creating 3D constructivist learning environments. This will be mentioned in the following.

2.4. Virtual Worlds

2.4.1. Definition

In recent years one of the emerging technologies is Virtual Worlds. The term virtual worlds generally refers to 'persistent' and 'immersive' computer-generated environments (Sheey & Seamans, 2010). Aldrich (2009) stated that virtual worlds provide opportunities to meet with people from different places at the same time. Also, Aldrich reported that these environments can reflect cultural indicators such as body language, high interactive support, and feeling of physical existence. Moreover, participants can build in those environments or modify the environment.

In addition to the definitions of virtual worlds, Petrakou (2010) explained that virtual worlds provide high level of interactivity because they allow synchronous communication with a spatial dimension.

General term used for those environments is virtual worlds, but there are other terms used instead of virtual worlds which are:

- Online 3-D virtual world
- 3-D Virtual Learning Environments – VLEs
- 3-D Multi-User Virtual Environments - MUVEs
- Immersive 3-D Virtual Worlds
- 3-D Immersive Virtual Worlds
- Virtual Social World (VSW)

The most common three features of virtual worlds are (1) the illusion of 3D space, (2) avatars that serve as visual representations of users, and (3) an interactive chat environment for users to communicate with one another (Dickey, 2003).

On the other hand Robbins-Bell (2008) defined the characteristics of virtual worlds as:

> **1. Persistence:** A virtual world can't be paused; it exists whether or not a user is logged in.

> **2. Multiuser:** A virtual world must be populated or at least have the potential for population. A single player world would be fairly useless.

> **3. Avatars:** Rather than offering an icon to represent a user, a virtual world allows a user to create an agent that takes action, an avatar. This representation of the user can perform actions that the user requests such as fighting, expressing emotion, or simply moving through a space.

> **4. Wide Area Network**: A virtual world is facilitated via a wide area network rather than a local one. Freed from the limited access of a locally hosted space, virtual worlds have the potential to be global and large (p.26).

In order to understand the virtual worlds more detailed, there is a need to focus on those features. The persistence of virtual worlds is related to their connection availability from anywhere and those virtual worlds continue to operate even if users are offline without depending on the computers of users (Ferguson, Sheehy & Clough, 2007).

Aldrich (2009) pointed out that virtual worlds allows to construct 3D model structures and these structures give the sense of presence to the users which has great significance on users' conception of virtual worlds due to its emotional and social effect. Presence is connected with immersion which is defined as participants' sense of being in virtual environment (Slater, Usoh & Steed, 1994). Occurrence of immersive virtual environments was started with application of 2D interface techniques to 3D worlds (Lindeman, Sibert & Hahn, 1999). Immersion is the subjective impression which makes participants to perceive s/he is "inside" a digitally enhanced setting (Dede, 2009).

A radical property of virtual worlds is the opportunity they provide users to transport the way they represent themselves (Peachey, 2010). It is possible to say that in virtual worlds, participants have chance to be who they want to be, discover different kinds of identities, and interact with them (Peachey, 2010). Those properties are related with the avatar which plays a major role in virtual worlds. Avatars emerged in 1980s which are still being developed and incorporated in 3D virtual worlds. A definition of avatars is given by Svensson (2003), "Avatars enable a user to adopt a graphical form and contribute to the establishment of social presence in a virtual environment". Baharum and Tretiakov (2008) stated that in virtual worlds synchronous interaction between users is supported through avatars which create impact on society. Individual avatars can move between virtual worlds by keyboard commands or hypertext links which is known as teleporting (Peterson, 2008). The reasons that make avatars so important are investigated by researchers. One importance of avatars is that they provide users with co-presence - sense of being with the other people- which is also known as social presence (Bailenson, Yee, Merget & Schroeder, 2006). If it is thought in educational context, virtual worlds facilitate teacher-student as well as student-student interaction through avatars. In their study Slater, Sadagic, Usoh, and Schroeder (2000) found a positive relationship between presence of being in a place and co-presence. According to the findings of Gaimster (2008) emotions in the real world are transferred to the virtual world. Similarly, Aldrich (2009) stated that students in a virtual world feel as if they are inside the environment with other people as opposed to traditional virtual classroom infrastructures.

2.4.2. Examples of Virtual Worlds

Virtual worlds differ from each other not only in community but also in cost, technology approach, quality of experiences, and level of security (Aldrich, 2009). Those environments have a visual sense of space and popular among people. Most well known virtual worlds are Active Worlds (AW), Kaneva, and Second Life etc. Second Life (SL) is the most popular one among the virtual worlds.

2.4.2.1. Active Worlds

One of the most popular 3D virtual worlds, Active Worlds has been in usage since July 27th, 1995. AW was originally named as Alphaworld. Alphaworld is one of the original online virtual communities and is now one of many virtual worlds supported by AW. Users can download free browser of AW and try it for 30 days; however to be a citizenship in the environment users have to pay for it. Two types of users exist in AW which are tourist and citizenship. Tourists just visit the environment with a tourist avatar and walk around. For citizenships AW offers much more possibilities which are:

- Unlimited access to hundreds of virtual worlds
- Reserve a unique citizen name for your use
- Create your own custom avatar from the built in avatar maker
- Build and own property in any of the many worlds open for building
- Your property remains under your control and ownership, and cannot be deleted by other users
- Send telegrams to other citizens
- Send files to other citizens
- Locate and join other citizens anywhere in Active Worlds
- Posting rights on our community message boards
- Maintain a contact list to keep in touch with your friends
- Use Voice Over IP to talk to other users in real time

(http://www.activeworlds.com/products/citizenships.asp)

Users in AW have different possibilities for communication with others. One form of communication is public chatting with others around 200 meters away from the users. The other option for communication is telegrams which is sending private messages to nearby users.

Figure 1: A Screenshot from Active Worlds

2.4.2.2. Kaneva

First version of Kaneva was a multi-player online game (MMOG) in 2004 and released Kaneva Game Platform. Kaneva was later decided to use its own technology to develop a virtual world which provides 2D web browsing, social networking, and networked media sharing. Finally, in 2006 Kaneva has become a virtual world which is a powerful way to communicate and gain 3D experiences. One of the most important features of Kaneva is that it requires low system requirements which is a good option for those with older computers. In the environment users are represented with their avatars which enable them to interact with other avatars, dance, play games, design buildings, and watch movie together despite the physical distance between users.

Figure 2: A Screenshot from Kaneva

Every Kaneva member has a personal space in the environment and owns a starter home which is possible to be modified. Users can decorate their 3D home in unique style.

2.4.2.3. Second Life

Second Life (SL) is a 3D internet based virtual environment developed by Linden Lab Company which gives the chance to users namely residents to interact with each other. Aldrich (2009) stated that SL has achieved to spread to a huge number of people unlike other virtual world platforms. He also indicated that this is essential for the development of the platform in the long term. According to him, SL is able to create stability, variety, and variety of communities, therefore, SL gets a big slice of the cake.

Free client programs called Viewers enable SL users to interact with each other through avatars. It is very popular in the way it provides to communicate, interact, and develop 3D environments. Short, Williams, and Christie (1976) defined the social presence property of SL as the combination of media and tools available in SL which offer a high-bandwidth solution for social presence and socialization.

Penfold (2008) defined SL as a virtual environment that allows participants to create individual spaces and activities, transact business, interact, have fun, and communicate synchronously or asynchronously. Another definition given by Campbell (2009) is that SL is a 3D online virtual world with rich graphics that attract users and make them enjoy the environment. Both the number of SL users and researches on SL have been increasing day by day. SL has the characteristics of a virtual world and acts as an MMOG.

SL users are free to:

- customize their avatars extensively
- own and develop virtual land; create and program objects
- own the copyright to their creations and can buy and sell them using the in-world currency of Linden dollars, which can be exchanged for US dollars
- buy 'islands' within SL and design their own educational spaces. In such locations, students can meet and interact with tutors and each other through their avatars (Sheehy, Ferguson & Clough, 2007, p.90).

Figure 3: A Screenshot from SL

When users first enter the SL environment, they see the Welcome Island which is designed to teach the basics of SL. On the interface there are three menus. At first it seems a little bit complex but it is possible to get used to

the environment in a short time. The pretty-well designed environment of SL provides users with unlimited options to use their creativity or design abilities. There are islands in that virtual world and users can own one of those islands. It is possible to build something on those islands.

SL provides users to access different kinds of objects with many options. Users can compose their own library and add different objects to folders. These objects and different folders are saved in inventory of the users. Objects may be added, copied, created or deleted. SL provides users to create a profile for them and add basic information about their personality. It is easy to make the profile unique.

As for communication tools, SL offers public and private text chat, instant messaging, public and private voice chat, gestures and note cards. With gestures users can animate their avatars. There are different options in gesture part and also users can add more gestures. Also, users can compose a contact list for themselves by adding avatars as friends whom they have chosen to stay in contact. Also it is possible to create groups and perform actions related to groups.

Users are represented with avatars in SL environment. They are free in the way they represent themselves and they are allowed with many choices. It is optional that users can chose avatars that reflect their personality or idealized personality. They have chance to try many different clothes or change anything with their appearance as how they want. For a new shape with avatar the options that can be changed are: Body, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, chin, torso, and legs. Every avatar has a name which can be changed anytime and the name of the avatar is seen at the top of the avatar's head. Users can control their avatars by using their keyboard. With avatars it is possible to walk, run, jump or fly in the SL environment. Especially the fly option provides to explore the environment with full of fun. Avatars move between different places and worlds with the teleport process. When users search for a specific place then they can teleport to that place.

There are different camera control options in the environment which are preset views, orbit zoom pans, and camera modes. With those options users can see the environment in third person's eyes or with the avatar's eyes. Also it is possible to see the avatar in front, in side or back.

Users inside SL can develop worlds and they can share text – based, audio-based or video based materials according to their interest. Also they can visit the already developed places, see the developed materials in the environment. Billboards or any other form of screens can present information in the environment and participants can click on them to read the information and watch a video.

2.4.3. Virtual Worlds as Learning Environments

Dede (2005) indicated that the number of new and recent technologies has increased dramatically during the last decade. He added that these technologies both affected the field of education and brought new insights for the concept of learning environment. Peterson (2008) reported that to shape online learning in the 21st century, the emergence of desktop 3D virtual worlds brings forth new opportunities for instructors. In recent years there are increasing number of researches made on the educational use of 3D MUVEs. The results of those researches reported that learners feel motivated as a result of the graphical interface of 3-D MUVEs since they are visually appealing, animated, and interactive (Omale, Hung, Luetkehans & Cooke-Plagwitz, 2009). For example, students who are being bored by science in classrooms become engaged and feel better about their ability to learn science in MUVEs (Dede, Clarke, Ketelhut, Nelson & Bowman, 2005).

Among the others, SL is becoming more popular day by day between all virtual worlds and being elevated as the future of e-learning in education (Gaimster, 2008). Also, Baker, Wentz, and Woods (2009) indicated that with the usage of interactions in SL students' engagement can be enhanced.

According to Wang (2010), SL virtual classroom provides a more effective and enjoyable learning experience. Similarly, Twining (2009) pointed out that one of the opportunities of SL is that people have the chance to have radically different lived experiences of educational systems.

3D virtual worlds have been used in educational settings for different purposes. One of the purposes for using 3D virtual worlds in education is to provide distance education (Andreas, Tsiatsos, Terzidou & Pomportsis, 2010; Baker, Wentz & Woods, 2009; Bronack, Riedl & Tashner, 2006; Childress & Braswell, 2006; Dickey, 2003; Dickey, 2005; Iqbal, Kankaanranta & Neittaanmäki 2010; Kopeinik, 2010; Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2011; Sheehy, Ferguson & Clough, 2007). Distance education is an alternative way for traditional classroom settings and provide many opportunities since it is not restricted with time and place issues. Sheehy, Ferguson, and Clough (2007) indicated the importance of virtual worlds in distance education as the appearance of 3D virtual worlds in education has brought innovative and unique opportunities for both traditional and distance education whereas the other practices have different weaknesses in addition to some strengths for educators. The usage of virtual worlds in distance education has better opportunities when compared to other distance educational settings. In addition, Chittaro and Ranon (2007) reported that in virtual environments (VEs) there is an opportunity for the users to create a world which is based on their perception or replica of the real world structures. They also pointed out that these worlds enable users to understand concepts with the experiences of their own worlds and to learn specific tasks in a safe environment which can be repeated as much as they want.

In virtual worlds, it is possible to provide users to gain experiences in safety conditions, that they could not experience in physical world. For example; The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has developed interesting simulations in SL for providing people to understand

fluid dynamics (Stevens, 2007). Fully interactive educational demonstrations about ocean and weather exist like a sea life submarine and two different tsunami demos (Stevens, 2007). Those environments also have potentials for students to feel immersed in the environment and to gain desire for joining the activities - 'digital fluency'- and promote learning (Dede, 2003). Winn (1993) stated that immersion in a virtual world means to gain experience with knowledge directly which provides learners to form their own knowledge. 3D environments provide users with the sense of presence which is not provided in other online learning environments. Feeling of presence has been the focus of researchers in distance education since the concept of 'social presence' was studied by Short, William, and Christie (as cited in Edirisingha, Nie & Young, 2009). Research results showed that social presence and sense of belonging provide people to gain desire to join virtual platforms which results with achievement in learning tasks (Cliburn & Gross, 2009). This sense of presence may facilitate relationship-building, learners' engagement, and motivation (Edirisingha, Nie, Pluciennik & Young, 2009). Some universities that use virtual worlds in different kinds of disciplines are Harvard, Pepperdine, Ball State, and the University of Tennessee have all held SL classes in Law, Education, English, and Medicine (Cliburn & Gross, 2009). Two specific examples for distance education in virtual worlds are NMC Campus Project and Ohio University SL Campus. NMC is a non-profit consortium of learning-focused organizations founded in 1993; including most of the top colleges and universities in the world, museums, research centers, foundations, and other forward-thinking   organizations (http://wiki.secondlife.com/wiki/Case_Study:_The_New_Media_Consortium_(NMC)). In 2006, a virtual campus of NMC was established in SL to promote 3D educational environment to explore the potential of virtual environments and make learning more engaging and relevant. NMC is the largest educational project between any virtual worlds including 100 member institutions like MIT, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, USC, Rice, and 7500 individual users (http://www.nmc.org/about/history). NMC provides

its' users with prebuilt settings for experiments with social interaction in 3D space. Ohio University has launched functioning campuses on SL and has been a leader in employing SL as an educational tool (http://www.ohio.edu/outlook/06-07/february/299n-067.cfm). The campus has three islands in SL virtually representing the Ohio University and some buildings were developed on those islands including a student center, learning center, and arts and music center. Visitors of these islands have chance to take the courses, explore parks, buildings, and join organizations in student center.

The other purpose of using virtual worlds in education is creating collaborative learning environments (Andreas, Tsiatsos, Terzidou & Pomportsis, 2010; Bronack, Riedl & Tashner, 2006; Cliburn & Gross, 2009; Johnson, Suriya, Yoon, Berrett & Fleur, 2002; Honey, Connor, Veltman, Bodily & Diener, 2011; Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2011). Loureiro and Bettencourt (2011) stated that "collaborative virtual environments give users the opportunity to communicate, collaborate, interact, explore, role-play, and experience many situations in a safe and controlled way" (p.2668). Experience gained by participating and interacting in a group has equivalent importance with construction of one's knowledge (Johnson, Roussos, Vasilakis, Barnes & Moher, 1998). In traditional tools, it is hard to feel other's presence in the environment and work collaboratively (Bronack, Riedl & Tashner, 2006). Different than traditional online courses, virtual worlds have great potentials for creating collaborative learning environments (Cliburn & Gross, 2009). There are many learning approaches in virtual worlds, however Loureiro and Bettencourt (2011) suggested that collaborative learning is the best option among other learning approaches for virtual environments in which students feel more confident, participative, open, creative, and responsive when compared to other environments. One sample usage of virtual worlds as collaborative learning environments is the project conducted by Honey, Connor, Veltman, Bodily, and Diener (2011) in which SL was used as teaching medium and to teach

postpartum hemorrhage management to undergraduate nursing students. Within the scope of the project, a collaborative teaching environment was created between University of Auckland, New Zealand, and the other at Boise State University, Idaho, United States. Study results showed that students were actively engaged in the simulation and that there was a sense of realism and immediacy. Similarly; in order to investigate the potential usages of virtual worlds, Kamimo Project was conducted in 2007-2008 between three universities which are University of Kalmar (Sweden), Molde University College (Norway), and the University of Central Missouri (USA) (Creelman, Petrakou & Richardson, 2008). A stimulating virtual collaborative learning environment in SL was created in the scope of the project by applying a number of courses and projects (Creelman, Petrakou & Richardson, 2008). The results of the study showed that SL offers great opportunities for education since it provides facilities for social networking, collaboration, and it has an immersive nature (Hundsberger, 2009).

One other possibility for using virtual worlds in education is to create experiential learning environments by including student-centered activities (Chittaro & Ranon, 2007; Dickey, 2003; Taveau & Bolotin, 2001; Freitas & Neumann, 2009; Jarmon, Traphagan & Mayrath, 2008; Jarmon, Traphagan, Mayrath & Trivedi, 2009). Gaimster (2008) attracted the attention to the advantage of virtual worlds indicating that virtual worlds offer opportunities for student-centered activities. In experiential learning, experience plays important role in learning process. Action-based worlds like role play or improvisation which foster experiential learning (Bateson, 1993) can be used in virtual worlds. The primary example for that type learning environment is "Accessing the Virtual Hallucinations" project. For that project, a virtual environment is created in SL for providing medical students to understand schizophrenic hallucinations. "The vast majority of individuals who have toured the environment indicated that it improved their understanding of the auditory and visual hallucinations experienced by people   with   schizophrenia"

(http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/welcome/features/20070404_virtual_psych/ index.html). Moreover; the results of the study conducted by Jarmon, Traphagan, Mayrath, and Trivedi (2009) showed that SL as a virtual environment is an effective environment for project-based experiential learning approach since students have chance to learn by doing and apply those learned concepts into the real world. They also indicated that the sense of embodiment in virtual worlds make learners to have real experiences and enhance their feel of concrete experiences. Also, Taveau and Bolotin (2001) stated that project based learning approach provides to increase student motivation and develop higher order thinking skills.

In summary, virtual worlds offer many opportunities for the future of education thanks to the ongoing struggle of researchers. By being open to new ideas, different usages of virtual worlds can be integrated into education. In particular, language education is commonly preferred among researchers and investigated by many of them. In the following session, language education in virtual worlds will be mentioned.

2.5. Language Education in Virtual Worlds

In recent years, researchers have been interested in using virtual worlds in CALL (Danielsen & Panichi, 2010; Deutschmann, Panichi & Danielsen, 2009; Peterson 2006; Peterson, 2008; Svensson, 2003; Swertz, Panichi & Deutschmann, 2010; Toyoda & Harrison, 2002; Wehner, Gumpb & Downey, 2011; Zheng, Wagner, Brewer, & Young, 2009). Early on, researchers of CALL in virtual worlds were mainly focused on chat-based environments and found several advantages of computer-mediated communication when compared to face-to-face environments (Peterson, 2008). CMC provides enhanced motivation (Kelm, 1992), reduced anxiety (Hudson & Bruckman, 2002; Satar & Özdener, 2008), and as a result more equal participation among students (Warschauer, 1996). The emergence of virtual worlds provide a new insight for CALL. Harrison and Toyoda (2002)

conducted a study for studying language education in Active Worlds virtual world which provided important results. In that study, collaborative learning environment was created that brings together Japanese language learners and native speakers. Some communication gaps occurred during the study because of limited computer skills and participants' unfamiliarity with virtual worlds. None the less, these troubles provided to gain some insights for further studies. Another study conducted by Wehner, Gump, and Downey (2011) for understanding the effect of SL environment on students' attitude and motivation in learning Spanish. The participants were divided into two groups: one group participated in the SL experiences while others participated traditional classrooms. Results of the two groups were compared. According to the results of the study, virtual worlds are effective resources for decreasing students' anxiety and increase their motivation to learn a foreign language. Also a study conducted by Zheng, Wagner, Brewer, and Young (2009) in Quest Atlantis, a 3D game-like virtual world, to search about the factors that affect EFL learning. In the study a comparison was conducted between the students participated the Quest Atlantis and the others who did not. The study provided important results in language education field. Study results showed that students who participated in Quest Atlantis were comfortable while using English actively like speaking with native speakers, reading text materials. Those students were confident in using daily English. Quest Atlantis group students developed positive attitude towards learning English and they found the 3D environment fun and interesting when compared to traditional classroom. To summarize, the important results of that study for students were high self-efficacy in use of English, positive attitude toward English, and self-efficacy toward e-communication.

Peterson (2005) conducted a pilot study about non-native speaker interaction in Active Worlds and found that virtual worlds in CALL provide ways to enhance student interaction and as s result to develop competencies in language learning. In 2006, Peterson conducted another study also for

investigating non-native speaker interaction in Active Worlds. Further study analysis showed that avatars are important since they provide higher interaction. Also this study demonstrated that task type is an also determinant factor in learner interaction. Similarly, Ellis (2000) pointed out that determining the appropriate tasks seems to be important since they have a significance in language learning and provides opportunities that arises teaching. Additionally, Foster and Skehan (1996) indicated that pre-task designing is thought to be effective which is attributed to its ability to increase fluency and accuracy.

Kaufman (2003) pointed out that in language learning settings; success is closely related to the learner not the instructor. Each learner must discover the language gradually in his or her own way. Therefore, giving responsibility to students by assigning tasks, their struggle for discovering the language will increase which shows that tasks have greatest opportunities for learners. The important issue while assigning tasks is that each student should be dealing with different portion of the information and sharing the information with others (Pica, Kanagy & Falodun, 1993). Additionally, Bruton (2002) stated that the ultimate goal of task-based instruction is enrich the scope of communication tasks as much as possible.

In EFL settings, the importance of synchronous communication cannot be ignored since it provides learners to make practice in the target language. In that manner, virtual worlds offer many opportunities for encouraging language learners since those environments have motivational aspects. According to Peterson (2006), synchronous communication over networked media has positive effects in language education. Among the virtual worlds, SL is preferred mostly as an educational environment because of its pretty-well designed graphs, many attractive features, user-friendly space, and capabilities for creating a space used for interaction between users and native speakers (Wang, Song, Xia & Yan, 2009).

In the following section, some of the projects developed in virtual worlds will be mentioned.

2.5.1. VIRTLANTIS: Language Learning in SL

Virtlantis is a free resource that uses SL for language teaching. It blends SL with Internet pages, supporting the learning of several issues. Virtlantis Island supports best educational practices in SL with foreign language educators. Virtlantis is open community of practice for language learners and teachers that offers free informal language learning activities and provides free resources and ongoing support (http://www.virtlantis.com/). Free activities with different contexts like restaurant, tea time, travel etc are conducted in Virtlantis. The main advantage in that environment is that participants can join any activity based on their interests.

2.5.2. AVALON (Access to Virtual and Access Learning Live Online)

Avalon is one of the leading international projects which was developed for language teaching and learning in SL. The project mainly concentrates on development of scenarios and learning tasks and examines effective usage of those scenarios in learning and teaching process (Danielsen & Panichi, 2010). According to the study conducted by Swertz, Panichi, and Deutschmann (2010), evaluation results from the AVALON language courses in SL showed that learners that often use computer technology will probably cooperate and participate in the activities and this showed that methods that focus on learner activities are appropriate for language learning in 3D environments. Another study is conducted by Danielsen and Panichi (2010) that supports best practices in language teaching and participants joined synchronous communication on AVALON.

Some of the results of that study are:

- Students are more willing to make mistakes (speak out) behind the avatars.
- People can focus better when they are in a 3D environment, because they can focus on the speaker. In a non-3D environment, they do not see where the voice is coming from.
- Adds a social dimension to language learning that is harder to get in other environments, such as saying "pardon" when bumping into another avatar.
- Many students feel the environment seems more real than using other technologies.
- There is a social dimension. Many people think this is a game. This must be taken into consideration, that we are real people and must be treated with consideration.
- Some teachers realized how their techniques used in a traditional learning environment could be used in a virtual world (p.89).

2.5.3. NIFLAR (Networked Interaction in Foreign Language Acquisition and Research)

NIFLAR is also designed to provide synchronous communication with native speakers of the target language in SL. The purpose of the project is to bring an innovative approach to foreign language teaching by providing social interaction between the participants (Jauregi, Canto, Graaff, Koenraad & Moonen, 2011). Three different pilot studies conducted in SL and participants who had a positive attitude towards the project found it as motivating factor for language learning (Jauregi & Canto, 2010).

Moreover, the results of the study showed that synchronous communication activities conducted with native speakers in a 3D virtual world has positive effects on students' language learning since students participated the study do not feel the pressure which occurs in traditional classroom environment.

In summary, there is a growing body of research on language learning in virtual worlds. However, still little is known about the ways that those 3D emerging technologies effect language learning. Wang, Song, Xia, and Yan

(2009) indicated that there is not enough research that has been conducted with 3D virtual environments on language education in the context of learning English as foreign language (EFL) like learning English in China. This situation is also true for Turkey. There is not enough study conducted on language learning in virtual world environments. For a better understanding of language education in Turkey, there was a need to go into action. This study will help to clarify the potential of virtual worlds in language education.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research questions, design of the study, participants, the case, data collection procedures & methods, instruments, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

3.1. Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of students in task-based language learning activities in SL virtual world. Moreover, it is aimed to examine the perceptions of students in speaking English when they interacted with native speakers during task-based language learning activities in SL virtual world. Research questions investigated in the study are:

1. What are the students' experiences in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?
2. What are the students' perception of speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?
   a. What are the students' perceptions of *anxiety* in speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?
   b. What are the students' perceptions of *motivation* in speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?

c. What are the students' perceptions of *self-confidence* in speaking English in task-based language learning activities in Second Life virtual world?

3.2. Design of the Study

In this study, qualitative research method is used. Compared to the other forms of research methodologies, qualitative research methodology provides a more comprehensive understanding of the fact being investigated. Qualitative methodology provides researchers to do in-depth researches and get a complete picture of the researched phenomenon. Darlington and Scott (2002) explains qualitative methods as follows: (1) In-depth interviewing of individuals and small groups, (2) Systematic observation of behavior, (3) Analysis of documentary data (p.2). Bhattacherjee (2012) defines the characteristics of qualitative research methodology as naturalistic inquiry, researcher as instrument, interpretive analysis, use of expressive language, temporal nature, and hermeneutic circle.

Yıldırım and Şimşek (2011) indicated that to investigate human behaviors, the traditional methods used in science field are inadequate. Human behaviors can be investigated by just flexible and holistic approach and in that approach individuals' opinions and experiences have great importance (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Over a decade, interest to qualitative research has been growing by academics within nursing, education, and social work (Darlington & Scott, 2002). Also Lincoln and Guba (1985) pointed out that:

> Naturalist elects qualitative methods over quantitative because they are more adaptable to dealing with multiple realities; because such methods expose more directly the nature of the transaction between investigator and respondent and hence make easier an assessment of the extent to which the phenomenon is described in terms of the investigator's own posture; and because qualitative methods are more sensitive to and adaptable to the many mutually shaping influences and value patterns that may be encountered (p.40).

For that study, qualitative method was selected since the language learning in METU is a problematic issue and needs to be explored. There was a need for such kind of study since despite the years of study; students in METU are not able to speak actively in lessons. Thus, the nature of this study necessitated an in-depth research and analysis of students speaking experiences in a different platform rather than face to face. The researcher thought that there is a need for more amplification for better understanding of the English speaking problem in METU and thus chose qualitative method.

Creswell (2007) stated that there are five approaches in qualitative researches which are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. For Yin (1984) a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and uses multiple sources of evidence (p.23). Creswell (2007) defined a case study research as:

> A qualitative research in which the investigator explores a bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description, and case based themes (p.73).

Baxter and Jack (2008) indicated that qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to learn complex phenomena within their contexts.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) the common thing for case study researchers is that they name the objects of their research as cases, their focus is such cases during their research. What does the "case" imply in those definitions? Lincoln and Guba (1981), clarifies this as follows:

> Many different forms of writing have been labeled "case studies", as the following link suggests: individuals, agencies or organizations, societies, cultures, movements, events, incidents, methodologies, programs, projects. The range of information that has been included within a case study has varied from a few test scores for an individual to volumes of demographic, social, industrial, and cultural information for an entire society (p.371).

With the purpose of finding an answer to aforementioned research questions, this study was carried out as a qualitative case study. With the help of case study, it was possible to make an intensive analysis of the contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. The main purpose for choosing case study for this inquiry was to provide detailed description and information about the effects of task-based language learning in 3D virtual environment for language education in terms of students' anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence in speaking. The case was identified as the changes in students' motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence in speaking a foreign language through 3D virtual environment – SL-. The case could not be considered without the context, which was SL environment in that specific study. Moreover; the case in the study, bounded by the number of participants and time of the study.

In order to conduct an in-depth analysis, questionnaires and interviews with upper-intermediate group preparatory class students were used in the study.

3.3. Participants

For this study, convenience sampling method was used for sample selection. Upper-intermediate groups participated in the study since they were the most convenient group to involve in the study for an extracurricular activity. Fifteen volunteer students from METU Basic English Department - upper intermediate level attended the study.

Nine of the participants were female and the rest of them were males. The age range of the participants was 18-20. All of the participants had personal computers which provided them to join the study wherever they want. None of the participants previously used SL. Participants' time of Internet usage per week is provided below:
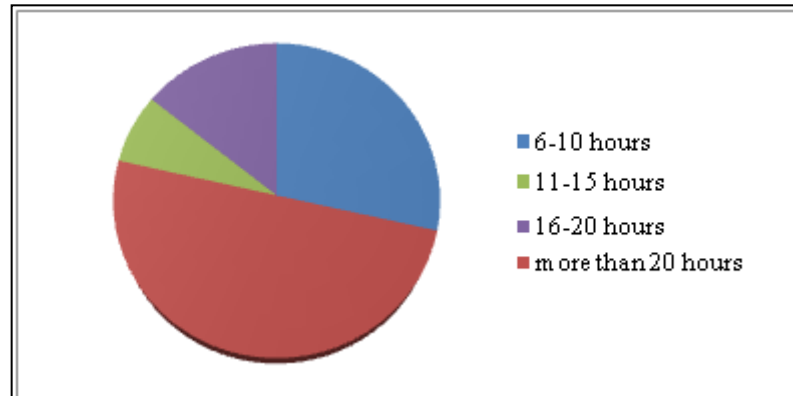
Figure 4: Students Internet Usage Per Week

In addition to the students, four instructors from METU Basic English Department attended the study as facilitators and helped learners in the environment. Demographic information of the instructors is presented in the following table:

Table 2: Information about Instructors

INSTRUCTORS	GENDER	YEAR of EXPERIENCE	AGE
INST1	Female	20	42
INST2	Female	35	56
INST3	Female	26	50
INST4	Male	5	29

Moreover; native speakers participated in the study from different countries: Australia, Ireland, Canada, and United Kingdom. Demographic information of the native speakers is presented in the following table:

Table 3: Information about Native Speakers

NATIVE SPEAKERS	GENDER	COUNTRY	JOB
NS1	Male	Australia	English Teacher
NS2	Male	Ireland	Curricula Advisor & Developer
NS3	Female	Canada	English Teacher
NS4	Female	UK	English Teacher

3. 4. The Case: METU-TBLL in SL

The study was conducted in METU which is one of Turkey's most competitive universities. Each year, among the students taking the National University Entrance Examination, over 1/3 of the 1000 applicants with the highest scores attends METU. The language of instruction at METU is English. Department of Basic English applies an English proficiency exam to the applicants. Based on their English level, they start their university life with preparatory class or they skip preparatory class and start with the first year at their own department. There are six different levels: Beginner's, Pre-Intermediate, Elementary, Intermediate, Upper-Intermediate and Advanced.

This study was conducted through the "Task-Based Foreign Language Learning in SL" project. This project was a collaborative effort between three departments at METU: Computer Education and Instructional Technology, Foreign Language Education, and Department of Basic English. Those three departments acted together to explore the possibilities of teaching and learning English as a foreign language in 3D virtual worlds.

People from those departments took part in the study as designers of the environment and facilitators during the study.

As a learning environment for the study, an area in SL was designed and developed for task-based language learning activities. Firstly, existing materials were examined and analyzed to decide on the main scenario and the topics for the activities. In the main scenario, the participants were given a role in which they go to the USA for work and travel. Based on this scenario, the following eight tasks were chosen, which were believed to have a great importance for daily life situations and participants could have a chance to speak during the activities. In the following table the determined tasks and related buildings necessary for those tasks are given.

Table 4 : Information about Tasks and Buildings

TASKS	BUILDINGS
Task 1: Orientation	Amphitheatre & Discussion Area & Dance Hall
Task 2: Work	Interview Area
Task 3: Travel	Airport & Hotel
Task 4: In the States	Discussion Area (in New York, Texas & California)
Task 5: Health	Hospital (in each state)
Task 6: Leisure and Culture	Restaurant (in each state)
Task 7: Shopping	Shopping Mall (in each state)
Task 8: Farewell Party	Dance Hall (same with the one in Task 1)

For each task, English speaking practice activities were designed. Throughout the scenario, participants were supposed to take part in those role playing activities and practice speaking English with native speakers and other participants. Each task included different individual and group-work activities with different level of speaking practices.

After tasks were decided, the activities to be done under those tasks were determined specifically. Those activities were written according to the roles of the students, instructors, and facilitators. Based on those items, storyboards of the study were drawn for the purpose of pre-visualizing the study environment in SL. Based on the storyboards tasks, activities, and scenarios were written in detail including the information about the purpose of the task, sub-activities of the tasks which were separated as group activities and individual activities. The most important point for those scenarios was that they were useful tools for all the participants of the study which facilitate the operation of the activities. After completing the scenarios, sample dialogues were written for each task and activity. This was done to provide instructors to have information about what they were going to mention in each activity and control the flow of the sessions. It was also done to provide all sessions go further at the same level.

Since the initial states of the documents were prepared by the researcher of this study there was a need to make revision by Foreign Languages department. Therefore, a meeting was conducted with the research assistant from Foreign Languages department. The final states of tasks and activities were reviewed and new ideas were generated. Based on the results of brainstorming, the final versions of storyboards, scenarios, and dialogues were reorganized. Those rewritten materials were shown to METU preparatory school instructors. This was also necessary because they were the one that were going to apply the study in their classes. After controlling all the documents, they gave some feedback and some corrections. Based on

those corrections, all the materials were revised and reached their final states.

For the next step, an architect designed the buildings and the environment based on those determined scenarios. Firstly, architect prepared a Google sketch up to see the general structure of the environment. This sketch up was analyzed by the researcher and the supervisor, and feedback was provided to the architect. Based on that feedback, the general skeleton of the environment was designed in SL. After that, the researcher and the supervisor also took place in the design step and worked with the architect. With cooperation, all the buildings in the environment were completed.

While the development process was being accomplished, the announcement of the study to METU preparatory class upper-intermediate groups was completed. Head of the preparatory school announced the study to classes and participants who are volunteer to join the study were determined, followed by an announcement to participate in workshops. Workshops were arranged twice and participants attended. Before the workshops, Turkish tutorials of SL were prepared, and those were used during workshops. Participants were mainly informed about the details of the study and about SL. After the workshops, consent forms (Appendix A1) were applied. When all participants were determined, an announcement for METU preparatory instructors was made via website and a workshop was done for them. Four instructors attended the workshop and they were provided with detailed information about study, SL and tasks were given. They were assigned the tasks to manage the activities according to their availability.

Finalized documents of the study were distributed both to the instructors, native speakers, and students before each activity to inform them about the content of each session.

After the design part and workshops were completed, the study was implemented. In the following section, the flowchart of the whole procedures are represented step by step.

Table 5: Flowchart of the Whole Procedures of the Study

Step 1: Contact with METU Preparatory Head

- Determining level of sample
- Getting resources
- Determining time schedule

Step 2: Design of Content

- Examining documents
- Finalizing tasks & activities
- Writing storyboards, scenarios, dialogues
- Preparing timetable

An iteration process to finalize documents with approval of METU Foreign Languages Department

Step 3: Contact with METU Foreign Languages Department

- Reviewing materials
- Finalizing tasks , activities, storyboards, scenarios, dialogues
- Writing storyboards, scenarios, dialogues
- Preparing timetable

An iteration process to finalize documents with approval of METU Preparatory school Administration

Step 4: Contact with METU Preparatory Head

- Finalizing all documents related to project

Step 5: Contact with Native Speakers

- Determining available native speakers for activities

Table 5: Cont.

Step 6: Development and Announcement of Project

- Meeting with an architect
- Preparing Google Sketch up

- Announcing the project to METU Preparatory upper-intermediate students
- Determining voluntary students
- Workshops for students and

Step 7: Implementation of the Study

- Applying surveys
- Applying study during May 2011
  - May 2, 2011 - Tuesday : Orientation Task
  - May 4, 2011 - Wednesday: Work Task
  - May 9, 2011 - Monday: Travel Task
  - May 10, 2011 - Tuesday: In the States
  - May 16, 2011 - Monday: Health
  - May 18, 2011 - Wednesday: Leisure & Culture
  - May 23, 2011 - Monday: Shopping
  - May 25, 2011 - Wednesday: Farewell Party

Step 8: Evaluation of the Study

- Conducting interviews - Recording voices of interviewees
- Transcribing data
- Determining codes
- Preparing theme table
- Analyzing results

3.4.1. Buildings

General structure of the Task-Based Language Learning area in SL is provided in Figure 5. The learning environment has four main areas: Amphitheatre, Discussion Area, Dance Hall, and State Area. Layout of the State area is also showed in Figure 6. All of the State area, California, Texas, and New York, was designed based on the same layout.
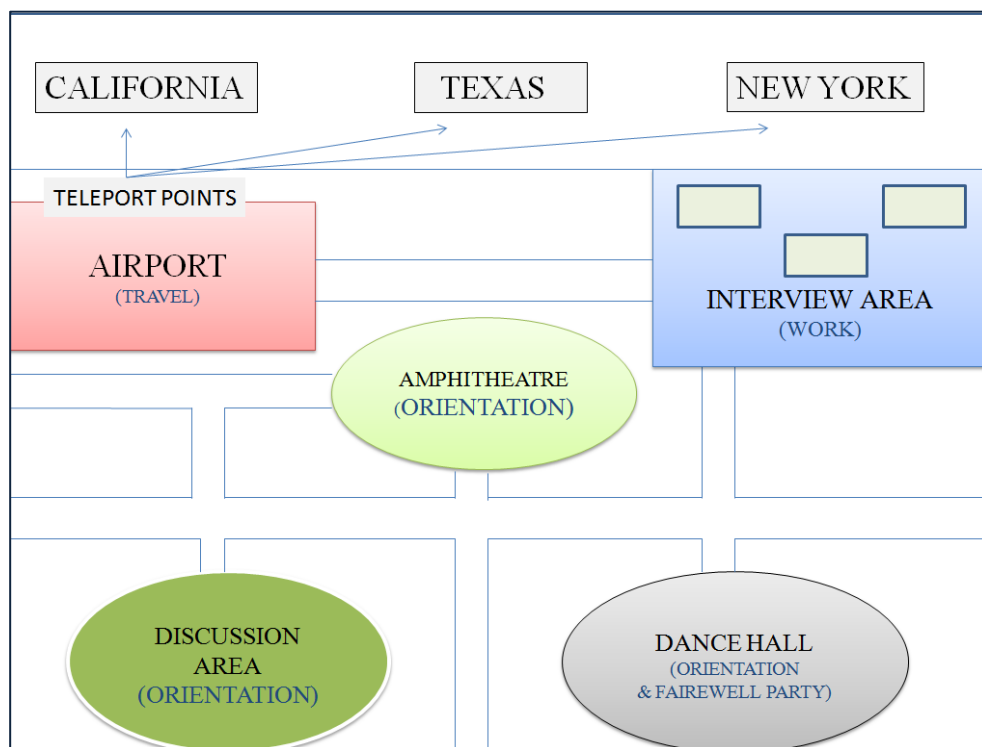
Figure 5: General Structure of METU Campus Language Part
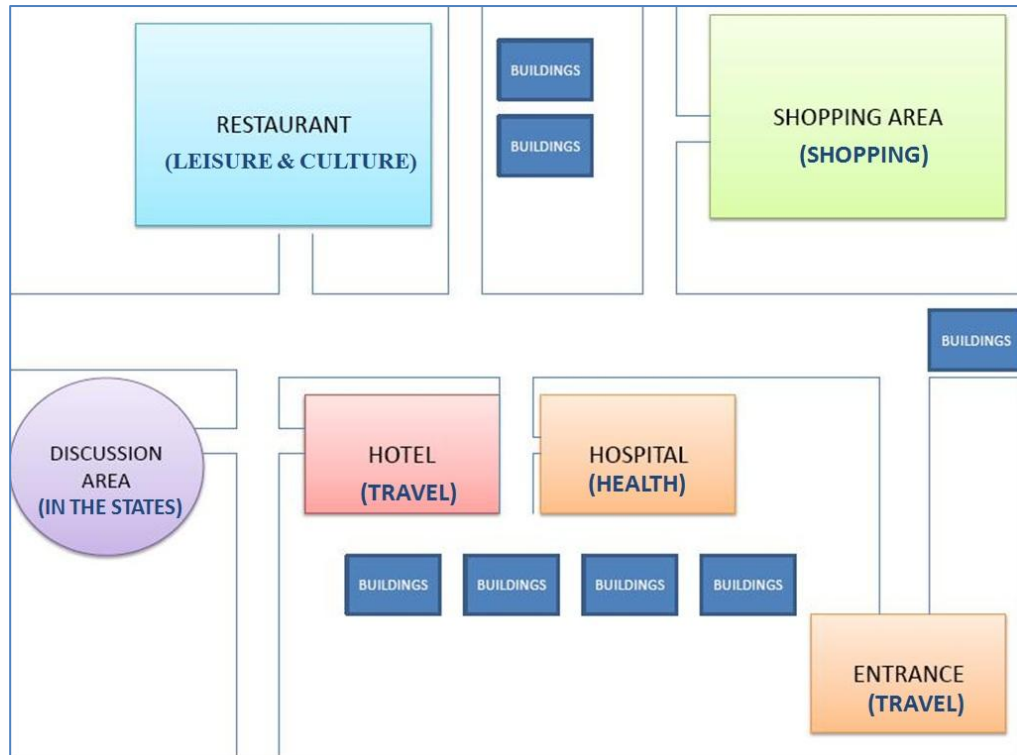
Figure 6: General Structure of the State Area (California, Texas and New York)

3.4.1.1. Amphitheatre & Discussion Area & Dance Hall

At first, an amphitheatre was designed to provide a place for presentation activities. There was a screen in the middle of the amphitheatre for reflecting the Power Point slides and show videos. Places in front of the screen were built on which avatars had a seat. The first task of the study was conducted in that place which was "Orientation". The main purpose of the "Orientation" task was to help the students to become familiar with the virtual environment and to meet the other participants. That task was thought as an introduction session to provide all participants to be able to use SL actively for the next activities. Because of that reason only group activities were done and there was not any individual activity in that task. At the beginning of the task, one of the instructors welcomed the participants and made a presentation to introduce SL. During the presentation, students

had a seat and listened the instructor. At the end they were allowed to ask questions.
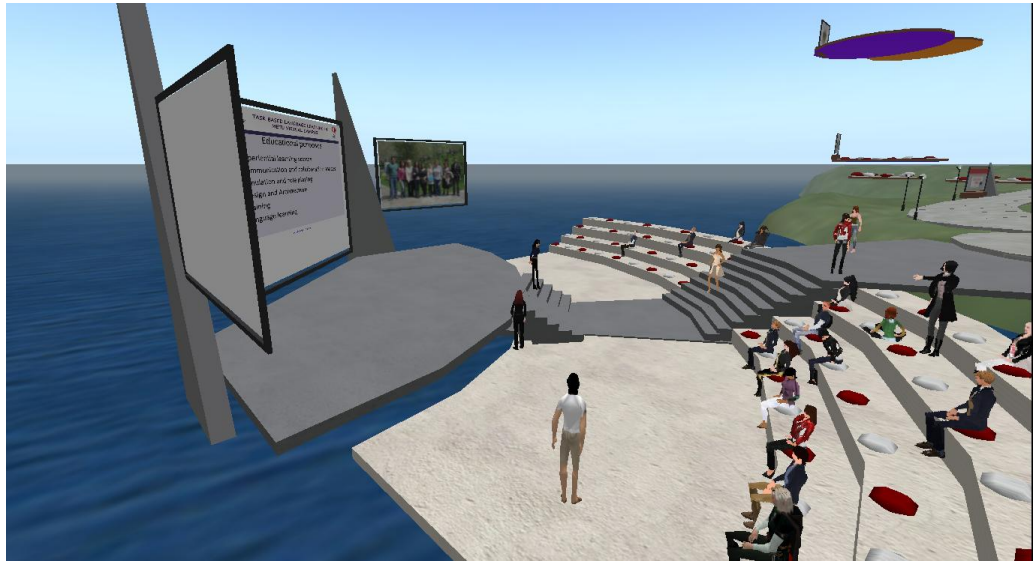
Figure 7: Amphitheatre

After the presentation, students were directed to discussion area part and divided into three groups. For that purpose, three discussion areas were designed next to the amphitheatre, on a round field. Mattresses were added at the edges of the round place. Participants were distributed to one of the discussion areas and they talked about their experiences with speaking English in daily life under the leadership of instructors. After all groups completed this part, they were directed to dance hall for social event.

Since this was the first activity of the study, there was a need to provide students to get used to the environment. For providing students to socialize and get familiar with other participants a social event area was designed. A dance hall was built for that purpose. It was good place for attracting students' attention and to have time with full of fun. Students danced together while listening music.

Figure 8: Dance Hall

3.4.1.2. Interview Area

An interview area including three different buildings was designed for the second task of the study. Those buildings were one storey ones and there were places for sitting for the interviewee and the interviewer. Between the interview buildings, three spaces were distinguished for playing games.

The second task of the study was "Work". The main purpose of the "Work" task was to enable the students to take part in conversations with the companies they will work for, to provide them to be able to make an interview, and to have conversations with the other participants. According to the scenario, there were three companies from three States including New York, Texas, and California. The company in New York was about marketing sector tried to find people to work as cashier, the one in Texas was related to technology sector tried to find people who worked as IT supporters, and the last one, in California, was about amusement sector tried to find people to work as amusement workers. Each participant was assigned to one of the three companies to work.

At the beginning of the task, an explanation was given to the participants at which company they will work. Then, each participant went to the assigned company's place and made an individual interview with the representatives of the companies. Representatives of the companies were native speakers and instructors of METU and they asked participants questions about their personal traits and proficiency. Participants attended that activity individually.

Figure 9: Interview Areas

Figure 10: Interview Room

While individual interviews going on, group of participants who were waiting for their interview played "Find someone who…?" game. The purpose of the activity was to help the students get to know each other and express themselves. One native speaker managed the group activity and directed students to ask questions to each other. Students walked around the game areas and tried to find people who have specific properties based on the questions written on the board. For example, students tried to find someone born in the Aegean region of Turkey. At the end of the activity, a discussion was done and everyone shared what they learned about others.

Figure 11: "Find someone who…?" game

3.4.1.3. Airport & Hotel

An airport was built for the next activity of the study. That airport was designed with three check-in points, selling tickets for three states, and three teleport points. Teleport points were built behind the check-in areas. At teleport points students were directed to the states and a hotel was designed in each state. This hotel was just a simple structure and included the ground floor. Airport and hotel were designed for the third task of the study which was "Travel". The purpose of the "Travel" task was to provide students with speaking experience in airport and with getting used to the environment of those states after being teleported to the assigned states.

Learners went to the airport to ask for a flight to the USA. At the airport, there were three facilitators with whom the participants had a conversation. Airport representatives asked the following questions to the participants:

- METU Airways, good evening. May I help you?
- What is the purpose of your visit?
- Will that be round trip or one way?
- How long are you planning to stay?
- Have you ever been to the USA before?
- Would you like economy, business or first class tickets?
- What type of seat would you like: window or aisle?
- Do you have any luggage to check in?
- Could I have your name, please?
- How would you like to pay, Ms…./Mr….?

Then, they were teleported to the assigned regions - California, Texas, and New York. For that teleport, participants clicked on the teleport boards and were teleported to the states to which they were assigned.
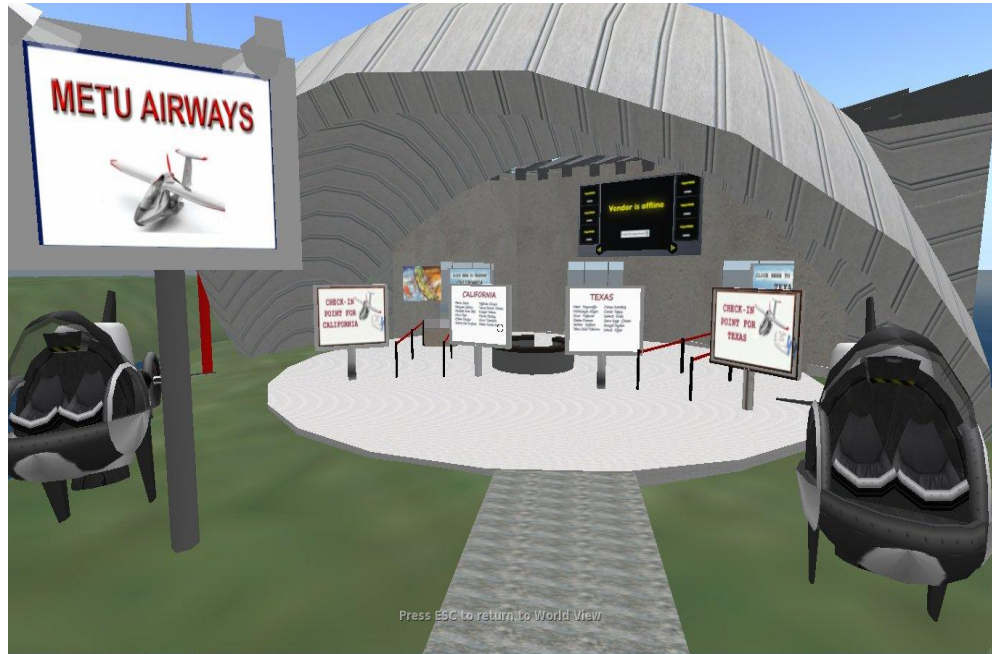
Figure 12: Airport

Figure 13: Check-in Point in Airport

After students being teleported to the states, they were met by native speakers at the entrance and had conversations about the general characteristics and famous properties of the state. Participants were

teleported one by one and joined the conversation. After all participants were teleported, they went in front of the hotels.

Figure 14: Entrance of California

When they found the hotel, participants tried to find their roommates. Each of the rooms was designated for two people. Here, they were required to ask personal questions to other participants, and after that, they found one to share the room with. Instructors and native speakers managed that activity. Some specific questions were provided on the boards but not limited to those:

- Would you describe yourself as ambitious/aggressive?
- Smoker/non-smoker person?
- Hobbies / free time activities?
- Likes /Dislikes?
- What type of person would your ideal roommate be?

Figure 15: Hotel

3.4.1.4. Discussion Area (In The States)

Discussion areas were designed in each state similar to the ones designed for Orientation task. There was a screen to reflect slides or show videos and seating areas in front of the screen. These discussion areas were designed for the fourth task of the study "In The States". The purpose of the "In the States" task was to provide the learners with discussion on a controversial subject with native speakers, instructors, and other participants.

For that task, all of the participants got together at discussion area. The discussion subject was "Cloning". First of all, they watched a video about cloning, and after the video, native speakers managed a discussion about cloning considering the pros and cons. Participants mainly discussed ethical issues about cloning. This activity was a group activity. Also some pros and cons were provided on billboards to help participants have idea about the subject. Sample discussion questions in the activity were:

- Is cloning ethical or is it not ethical?

- What do you feel are the true problems with cloning?

- What is the controversy for you?

- What are positive/negative aspects of cloning?

Figure 16: Discussion Area -1

Figure 17: Discussion Area-2

3.4.1.5. Hospital

One hospital was designed for each state including reception, doctor's office, and sickroom. Those hospitals were designed for the fifth task of the study "Health". The purpose of the health task was to make participants have dialogues in the hospital, and participants were expected to get a health certificate to be able to work in the USA.

For that task, participants went to the hospital and had an appointment with the doctor. Participants went to doctor's office one by one. While individuals were in doctors' office, the others had conversations among themselves and with the native speakers outside of the hospital. Doctors directed questions and got information about participants' health conditions. Sample health background information questions:

- What kind of health problems have you faced with?
- Have you ever had a serious illness in your childhood?
- Do you have any chronic illnesses?
- How about allergies? Do you have any allergies?
- Have you ever used an anxiety drug?
- Do you feel yourself healthy?
- Do you have any genetic disease in your family like diabetes, cardiac disease?

Figure 18: Entrance of Hospital

Figure 19: Doctor's Office

Figure 20: Reception

3.4.1.6. Restaurant

One restaurant for each state was designed with a mini-bar and dining tables in it. Those restaurants were designed for the sixth task "Leisure & Culture". The purpose of the "Leisure & Culture" task was to help learners to socialize with people from different cultures and to make them get some basic information about different accents.

At the beginning of the task, participants went to the restaurant and met people from different cultures. Facilitators managed the activity and everyone asked questions to each other. Some sample questions were but not limited to those:

- Is there any specialty of your country concerning its cuisine?
- What do we need to know about your country's culinary traditions?
- What is the most delicious food in your county?
- What do you suggest to eat if I visit your country?
- What are the traditional meals in your country?
- What do you know about Turkey?

- Have you ever tasted Turkish delight? Do you know baklawa?

- In your culture is it polite to be straightforward and direct when you talk to someone?

Figure 21: Restaurant

Figure 22: Restaurant -2

3.4.1.7. Shopping Mall

A shopping mall was designed for each state including three different spaces which were clothes shop for females, clothes shop for males, and technology products shop. Those shopping malls were developed for the seventh task "shopping". The purpose of the shopping task was to make learners be able to gather information about the products they like. They were required to learn about the prices and buy something.

Participants went to the shopping malls and walked around the shopping areas and collected information from the shop attendants about the products they like. They learned about the prices and bought something. They were required to speak as much as possible with the native speakers. Facilitators had a communication with the learners and asked questions:

- May I help you?
- Are you interested in something special?/ What can I do for you? We have dresses/shoes/etc..
- What do you think about .....(product).....? / How about this one?

Figure 23: Shopping Mall - Clothes Shop Part
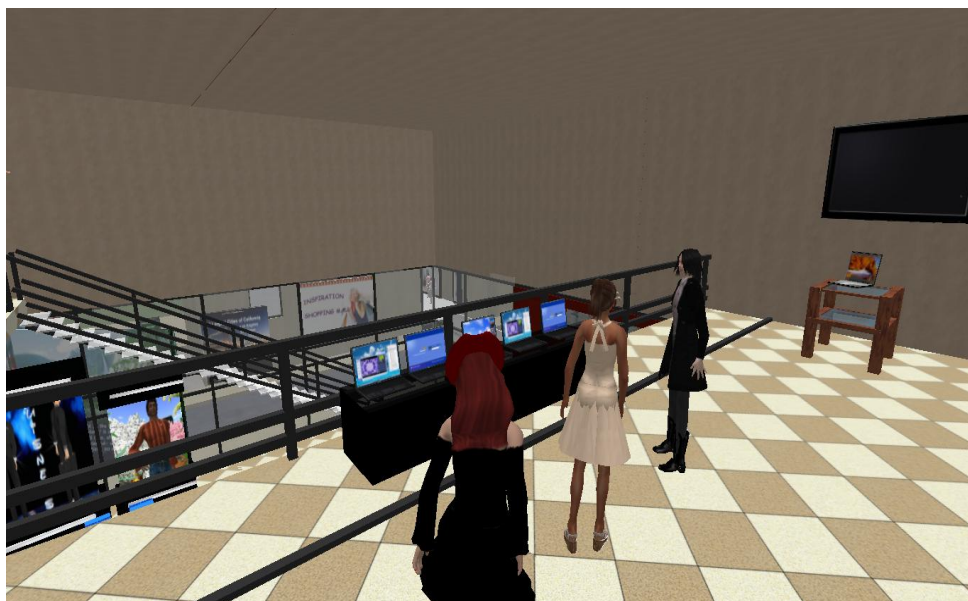
Figure 24: Shopping Mall - Technology Products Part

3.4.1.8. Dance Hall

This dance hall is the same as the one used in the orientation task. However, some modifications were made for the last task. A mini-bar and tables around the dance hall were added. This dance hall was redesigned for the last task, "farewell party". The purpose of the farewell party task was to find out all groups' impressions about all the tasks and activities. Moreover, in order to motivate the students, they got new clothes for their avatars which were appropriate for the party.

All the participants from three states came together at dance hall. They discussed about their experiences and impressions. They talked about how and where they can use their spoken English in their real life.

Figure 25: Farewell Party

3.5. Data Collection Procedures & Methods

The data was collected through qualitative data gathering instruments in order to obtain rich and detailed information about the subject. Semi-structured interviews were used as data sources.

Participants took a demographics questionnaire seven days before the study. Then, they involved in a two hour workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the study and SL to the participants.

After administration of the questionnaires and workshops, the study started in May. Each week of the study, two sessions were conducted. Participants were divided into two groups. Half of the participants attended sessions between 19:30-20:30 and the rest of the participants attended 20:45-21:45 based on the Turkey national time *(GMT time of the sessions was 04:30-05:30 pm and 05:45-06:45).* Days for the study were determined according to the availability of instructors and the vacation days of Turkey.

During the four week period different kinds of tasks were applied in an arranged order. Since the group was divided into two parts, the same tasks were done twice. In the following part, timetable of the study is added including the related tasks belonging to those days.

Table 6: Timetable of the Tasks

DATE	TASK NAME
May 2, 2011 - TUESDAY	ORIENTATION
May 4, 2011 - WEDNESDAY	WORK
May 9, 2011 - MONDAY	TRAVEL
May 10, 2011 - TUESDAY	IN THE STATES
May 16, 2011 - MONDAY	HEALTH
May 18, 2011 - WEDNESDAY	LEISURE & CULTURE
May 23, 2011 - MONDAY	SHOPPING
May 25, 2011 - WEDNESDAY	FAREWELL PARTY

At the end of the study, interviews were conducted with the participants.

3.6. Instruments

In order to collect information about the research topics, a background questionnaire and interviews were conducted.

3.6.1. Background Questionnaire

A 20-item background questionnaire was designed in order to gather background information about participants (Appendix B & C) Participants were asked about their interest over the computer and internet technologies and their experiences in English education. Questions were prepared in Turkish in order to minimize misunderstandings.

3.6.2. Interviews

Kvale (1996) indicated that during interviews, researchers investigate the varieties of human experience and try to understand the view of subjects. The purpose of the interviews in this study was in parallel with Kvale (1996). Interviews (Appendix F & G) were administered in order to get more detailed information about students' experiences in SL environment and about their point of view regarding the study. The main advantage of the interviews in that study was the historical information provided by participants which was not possible to observe directly. The type of the interviews in this study was semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews are "generally organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee ∕ s" (Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p.315).

During the interviews voice of the respondents was recorded with digital sound recorder and interviews were conducted in an assistant office. Interviewees were informed about the process before starting the interview. Interviews were conducted in a mutual interest and during interviews no one was allowed to enter the office. The interviewee asked questions based on the prepared document however depending on the flow of the interviews some impromptu questions were asked when it was seen necessary. The purpose was to provide students to think more on the topic and to share their experiences.

3.7. Data Analysis

There are different types of qualitative data analysis method. In this study, content analysis method was used to analyze the interviews. Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) stated that "Content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications" (p. 472).

For that purpose; after gathering the data, the first thing done was to listen to the recordings several times. The researcher tried to get used to the data and had some impressions about data. Those impressions were written to be used in the analysis part. After listening several times, researcher transcribed the data in written forms. Transcription can be taught as the start of the data analysis. As a next step, some initial questions were determined to decide how to start the analysis. Those questions were written in a general framework to decide how to begin the analysis process. This step can be taught as a preliminary point before coding themes. Data was organized depending on the questions and all of the respondents answers were categorized based on their consistencies and differences. Those questions with general frameworks were:

- What are students' positive/ negative experiences in Second Life virtual world?
- What are students' thoughts/perceptions about 3D environments?
- What are students' thoughts/perceptions about task-based language learning activities in 3D environments?

Based on those questions, a table was developed for each individual respondent. At that point, the text was read by the researcher again and again for being able to identify sensible categories as a next step. A list of themes were emerged while coding the data and then the data were searched for these themes. These themes were chosen based on the research questions and they provided direction for the data. After a while, data were coded according to the themes. All the interviews were coded according to these six general themes: (1) positive experiences, (2) negative experiences, (3) anxiety in speaking, (4) motivation in speaking, (5) self-confidence in speaking, (6) accessibility of the program. With this categorization, new forms of tables were composed. These new form of tables were read again and searched for any existing relationships for understanding whether those

relationships suggest a cause and effect relationship or not. Those connections provided to understand why something occurs.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results relating to the research questions given in the introduction chapter. The purpose of the results section is to explore students' experiences and perceptions in order to analyze how the task-based language learning in SL affect language education in terms of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence in speaking.

4.1. Interview Results

In order to understand students' experiences in 3D virtual world SL environment, they were interviewed. In the highlight of these data sources, students' experiences in SL virtual environment, their perceptions about anxiety in speaking, their perceptions about motivation in speaking, and their perceptions about self-confidence in speaking are mentioned below.

4.1.1. What are the Students' Experiences in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World?

In the interviews, the interviewees were asked to describe their general experiences related to the task-based language learning project in SL virtual environment. The findings of the study revealed that among interviewees there was a significant interest in using SL as a new tool in language education. The responses of interviewees included different items, but all of them agreed that those kinds of studies are needed and should be

widespread. It was found that students were frequently engaged in positive experiences in SL during the study. Most of the responses of the interviewees have centered on their personal gains. The positive experiences of students enabled them to gain desire to learn English and speak it.

First of all, students were happy to be a part of such kind of an innovative study. Ten of the students indicated that this SL environment and the study enabled them to be acquainted with new people especially with native ones and to learn about different cultures. In the excerpts provided below, students commented on their experiences:

> It has been a very good experience for me to have spoken with real native speakers there. I had spoken with foreign people, I mean, I have achieved to speak for the first time, I think, and this made me happy. It made me overcome some obstacles in the matter of speaking English. Now, I feel that I can speak more comfortably even with my friends (Interviewee 1).

> *Orda gerçek native speakerlarla konuşmuş olmak, çok güzel deneyim oldu benim için. Yabancı insanlarla konuşmuş oldum yani ilk kez sanırım konuşabildim ve bu beni mutlu etti. Bazı engelleri aşmamı sağladı İngilizce konuşma konusunda. Artık kendi arkadaşlarımla bile daha rahat konuşabildiğimi hissediyorum (Interviewee 1).*

> It was a good practice that has improved my English, entertaining at the same time. It is nearer to reality. I mean, you sometimes feel like you live the environment. It was a good activity aiming to, how should I know, increase the speed of speech and meet people. I have met people from abroad. I think that it was useful for me since at least I tried to analyze their accent... (Interviewee 3).

> *İngilizcemi geliştiren güzel bir uygulamaydı, hem de eğlenceli. Biraz daha gerçekçiliğe yakın hani insan o ortamı yaşamış gibi hissedebiliyor bazen. İnsanlarla tanışmak ne bileyim konuşma hızını arttırmak amaçlı güzel bir etkinlik yani. Yurt dışından insanlarla tanıştım. En azından aksanlarını çözümlemeye çalıştığım için benim için faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum...(Interviewee 3).*

I think, it was interesting and good. I think it was useful. How happy are we, if we had lighted the way for other people in a subject. ... we had the opportunity to speak with different native people in SL. This is something quite positive. After that, the opportunity itself... (Interviewee 4).

Bence ilginç ve güzeldi diye düşünüyorum. Yararlıydı diye düşünüyorum. Yani o konuda başka insanlara hani ışık tutabiliyorsak ne mutlu bize ... Hani biz orda çeşitli native speakerlarla konuşma imkanı bulduk. Bence bu gayet olumlu bir şeydi. Ondan sonrada böyle bir imkanın kendisi... (Interviewee 4).

One of the students indicated that besides being acquainted with new people especially with native ones in SL virtual world, she had a chance to develop her pronunciation and listening in this environment. Below are her expressions:

SL made it possible in a way to have a chat with a person I have never known. It was quite positive, in terms of both pronunciation and listening, in my opinion. Besides, ıı, learning the foreign people's thoughts in English education or other topics as being someone from outside was pretty good (Interviewee 2).

Hani hiç tanımadığım insanla bir muhabbet edebilmeyi hani olanaklı kıldı bir açıdan... Bu bence bayağı, hem telaffuz açısından hem de dinleme açısından çok olumluydu. Üstelik hani ıı dışardan biri olarak yabancı insanların fikirlerini öğrenmek Ingilizce eğitimi konusunda olsun veya başka konularda olsun bayağı ııı güzeldi yani (Interviewee 2).

Similar to those experiences, it was also found in the study that students learned a lot of useful expressions which native speakers use in daily life. In other words, they had chance to notice important aspects of language with the help of native speakers, which is not possible in traditional classrooms. For example, one of the students stated that:

It was an entertaining, funny, and informative practice. To begin with, we learned different cultures. We asked the things in our minds to people who speak English. Apart from that, we learned some different patterns in

English. You learn by saying 'Aaa it was used like this, do you see?' as we speak (Interviewee 5).

Eğlenceli, komik ve öğretici bir uygulamaydı. Öncelikle farklı kültürleri öğrendik. Hani aklımızdaki şeyleri sorabildik İngilizce konuşan insanlara. Onun dışında bazı değişik şey kalıplar öğrendik İngilizce de. Konuşurken çok böyle "Aaa bunu böyle kullanıyormuş, görüyor musun?" diye öğreniyorsun (Interviewee 5).

Moreover, one of the students indicated that it would have been impossible for her to have a chance to speak with native speakers if she had not participated in this study. Speaking with native speakers through SL virtual world provided many advantages to her. On the other hand, another student indicated that before the study, he thought that he was good at speaking English with native speakers. However, at the beginning of the study he realized that he is not good enough in speaking with natives. Also, he indicated that he developed his speaking in the process of the study, and suggested that SL virtual world was helpful for the ones who want to develop his/her speaking abilities.

Three of the students especially emphasized the benefits and characteristics of the SL environment in language education and expressed their experience in the study. For example, one of the students emphasized the importance of virtual environment:

Since SL is a virtual environment, ııı, I spoke more comfortably from a place such as home or dormitory. You know, it was just enough to press a button and speak for this. Well, apart from that, the content of the speaking activities was beneficial. I saw how other people were speaking with native people. Moreover, I had the opportunity to speak with native people and this had too many benefits to me... (Interviewee 6).

SL sanal olduğu için, ııı ev gibi bir ortamdan ya da yurt gibi daha rahat ııı olarak hani konuştum. Yani sadece bir tuşa basıp konuşmam yetti bunun için. Ee onun dışında hani konuştugumuz konu içeriklerince çok faydalı oldu. Diğer insanların nasıl konuştuklarını gördüm nativelerle..

Ayrıca native speakerlarla konuşma imkanı buldum ve hani pekçok faydası oldu bunun bana... (Interviewee 6).

In addition to this information, one of the students emphasized the importance of private call option in the SL environment which is one of the unique characteristics of SL. This option is used for speaking with a person or specific groups privately and the others in the environment cannot hear the voice of those speaking people which prevents the confusion. This student indicated that:

Firstly, I met with too many people that I did not know beforehand and it was a good activity for me. The thing called private call is better in SL. In fact, it is better to speak in private in my opinion instead of everyone talking in a revelry. I have spent very useful and good time for me in SL environment (Interviewee 7).

İlk önce bir sürü insanla tanıştım daha önce hiç tanışmadığım ve benim için güzel bir etkinlikti. Bu private call denilen şey orda daha güzel oluyor yani. Aslında herkesin bir cümbüş şeklinde konuşması yerine özel olarak konuşuyoruz o daha iyi oluyor bence. SL ortamında gayet güzel ve yararlı, benim için faydalı olan zaman geçirdim (Interviewee 7).

Nowadays, using virtual worlds as learning environments is widespread around the world and is gaining more importance day by day. There are different usages of 3D virtual worlds as learning environments and one of them is the distance education. This study can be considered as an example of distance education. One of the students mentioned her thoughts about this situation and reported that SL is an alternative platform for face to face classrooms. She stated that:

It is very useful in favor of English and it is very beautiful visually... I think, it would be more useful, ıı, if it becomes more popular since, ııı, for example, if I could not go to school, do something else or attend somewhere, you have a place to compensate all of these... I am very happy to play a part in this study since it has been a different vision and a different experience (Interviewee 8).

Oldukça yararlı İngilizce adına. görsel açıdan çok gerçekten güzel ... daha yaygın olursa ııı daha yararlı olacağını düşünüyorum. Çünkü ııı yani mesela okula gidemedin bir şey yapamadın, bir yere katılamadın telafi edebileceğin bir yer var. ... Yani bu projede yer aldığım için gerçekten mutluyum çünkü farklı bir bakış yani farklı bir deneyim oldu (Interviewee 8).

Speaking is considered as the most difficult thing in learning a language which is also true for the students of this study. In traditional classroom environments, it is a problem for the instructors when students are not voluntary to speak and do not participate in speaking activities. For communication, it is a need to provide a flexible and attractive environment for students in which they feel as they have to speak. During the interviews, three of the students pointed out that this study forced them to practice their English, especially the existence of native speakers in such a 3D virtual platform made them feel that it is obligatory to speak.

Actually, English is something that we all have in our lives... You can speak if you really endeavor. I saw SL very useful, I also liked it, especially the property of having sound. Because speaking with native people is more different. I mean, if it is someone who knows Turkish, you, willingly or unwillingly, think that you make the other person understood you. However, when it is someone having English as the native language, you have to speak (Interviewee 8).

Aslında İngilizce hepimizin hayatında olan bir şey... Hani emek harcarsan gerçekten konuşursan ben çok yararlı gördüm hoşuma da gitti yani sesli olması özellikle. Çünkü nativelerle konuşmak daha farklı, yani Türkçe bilen birisi olunca ister istemez insan diyor ki bir şekilde derdimi anlatırım yani. Ama İngilizce anadili olan birisi olunca ister istemez konuşmak zorunda kalıyorsun (Interviewee 8).

...We did not have an opportunity to speak, at least it was my first experience, because I have not been abroad and I did not speak face to face. I even got excited in SL... Well, making an introduction like this was better in my opinion instead of starting to speak directly face to face. SL was the best environment to do this for me, too (Interviewee 9).

> *...Bizim speaking yapabileceğimiz -benim en azından ilk tecrübemdi, daha önce yurt dışına çıkmadım yüzyüze konuşmadım-. Hani bunda bile heyecanlandım... Hani direk yüzyüze konuşmaya başlamaktansa bu şekilde bir giriş yapmak daha iyiydi bence. Hani SL bence de bunun yapılabileceği en güzel ortamdı (Interviewee 9).*

> Well, I think SL has improved my speaking a little. Because I am not someone who speaks a lot normally but in SL you answer when a question is directed and your speaking is improving in a way (Interviewee 11).

> *Ya işte bu biraz speakingi mi falan geliştirdiğimi düşünüyorum. Çünkü ben öyle çok fazla konuşan birisi değilim normalde ama orda hani böyle soru yöneltildiğinde falan sen de cevap veriyorsun bir şekilde geliştiriyorsun... (Interviewee 11).*

Avatar usage in those kinds of 3D platforms is thought to be an advantage for the users. It is believed that avatars enable people to feel themselves in the environment, which creates a great difference between 3D platforms and 2D environments. While talking about their experiences related to avatars, four students also emphasized the importance of avatar for them. Some of the excerpts are provided below:

> It was nice, good I mean. It has been a nice experience. We both had the chance to speak with foreigners, and I think SL has increased my ability to speak with a considerable extent... Since when you have something visual in front of you or when you have an avatar that you manage, it possibly becomes more attractive. Much more attractive (Interviewee 10).

> *Güzeldi yani iyiydi, iyi bir tecrübe oldu. Yabancılarla konuşma fırsatı bulduk hem de speaking kabiliyetini önemli ölçüde arttırdığını düşünüyorum... hani çünkü önünüzde görsel bir şey olduğu zaman veya işte yönettiğiniz bir avatar olduğu zaman belki daha ilgi çekici oluyor (Interviewee 10).*

You really get the impression of speaking with real people, it's already like this, more with the usage of avatar. Otherwise, if we had just seen the environment visually, it would not be nice, I think. I mean, it would not be so real, SL is nearer to real (Interviewee 7).

Gerçekten de normal insanlarla -zaten öyle de- gerçek insanlarla konuşma izlenimini daha çok alıyorsunuz avatar kullanımıyla. Öbür türlü sadece görsel olarak ortamı görsek hoş olmazdı bence yani bence o kadar gerçekçi olmazdı, bu daha çok gerçeğe yakın (Interviewee 7).

Avatar make you feel the environment seriously. If we compare SL with MSN or different programs, avatars pull you into the environment, I think (Interviewee 2).

Yani o ortamı cidden yaşatıyor avatar.... msn olsun veya daha farklı programlar olsun onlarla kıyaslarsak bence daha böyle ortamın içine alıyor avatarlar (Interviewee 2).

In addition to those opinions, one of the students reported a different perspective about avatars. He said that avatar enables people to do things which lie within them and which they do not have chance to do in real life. This is also important for someone for having different experiences in virtual environments. That student stated that:

Having an avatar is good. You can use some things which lie within you and you directly behave however you want to be. Therefore, it is very good. We would not able to do the activities, since they are based on the roles, if we did not have avatars. We would not do anything if it was a 2D environment but we would just speak and speaking is restricted at some point (Interviewee 12).

Avatar olması güzel, içinde kalmış bazı şeyleri kullanabiliyorsun, nasıl olmak istiyorsan sen direk öyle yapıyorsun onun için çok güzel. Avatar olmasa şu andakiler rol üzerinde gidiyor ya onları yapamayacaktık. 2B ortam olsa mesela hiçbir şey yapamıycaktık sadece konuşacaktık yani ve konuşmada bir yerde kısıtlı kalıyor... (Interviewee 12).

In addition to their positive thoughts about avatars, two of the students added their criticisms also. Those criticisms were about the technical characteristics of the program. Those students indicated that avatars should be much more advanced. Below are the explanations of those students:

> It could be better if the avatar reflects my real characteristics. However, it is a difficult job with the technology of our today's world (Interviewee 3).

> *Avatar, gerçek özelliklerimi yansıtabilse belki daha iyi olur. Ama günümüzün teknolojisiyle bu biraz zor bir iş (Interviewee 3).*

> I had the intention of using the program by means of the avatar. ııı, I mean, it is like this: I flied to everywhere with the first desire. It is very easy. You speak, see, go wherever you want. There are not too many types of avatars. You can change the eyes and mimics afterwards but there are three to five types for man and three to five for woman. This number may be increased (Interviewee 8).

> *Avatar sayesinde programı kullanma isteğim oluştu. ıı yani şu şekilde ilk başta böyle bir o ilk hevesle her yere uçtum ... Çok kolay işte konuşuyorsun, görüyorsun, istediğin yere gidebiliyorsun. Çok fazla tip yok yani. Sonradan göz mimik falan değiştirebiliyosun ama yani 3-5 tane erkek tipi 3-5 tane kadın var. O belki biraz artırabilir (Interviewee 8).*

As mentioned before, this study included task-based activities which were related to daily life subjects. Students were asked about what they think in terms of the tasks and activities. Ten of students reported that the concept of the study and daily subject activities attracted their attention. During the interviews, they explained the activities which attracted their attention most. Some of the students' excerpts are provided below:

> I liked the activities. Actually, especially the events like check in, hospital and airplane were good because most of the students will go abroad. At least, they had an idea about how these things would be for sure. Except these, the concept was good for me, I liked it a lot (Interviewee 13).

Aktiviteleri beğendim ben. Aslında özellikle işte "check in" olayları falan "hastane" ve "uçak", çünkü çoğu öğrenci yurt dışına gidecek. Tabi burdan nasıl olacağıyla ilgili bir fikir sahibi oldular. Onun dışında konseptte güzeldi, bence yani beğendim bayağı ben (Interviewee 13).

The activities were very good. Both the participation and the subjects were good. You know, we went and watched a video. After this, we spoke and they were really good. Because it would not be good if we had come together and say "let's talk about this"... Willingly or unwillingly, it would stop somewhere Interviewee 8).

Aktiviteler çok güzeldi, katılımda aslında güzeldi konularda güzeldi. Hani gittik işte video izledik onun ardından konuştuk filan hani bunlar gerçekten güzel. Çünkü şu güzel olmuyor, hadi toplanalım şundan bahsedelim.. İster istemez tıkanır kalır.. (Interviewee 8).

Moreover, to understand students' experiences in detail, students were also asked whether they faced with any problems or not. Four of them stated that they encountered some problems because of their deficiency in English, however they reported that those things did not cause too much trouble and also they expressed how they dealt with those problems. In the following, excerpts of those students are provided.

I faced with problems once or twice and somehow they were solved. When I could not remember a word during a chat, you usually helped me a little. How should I know, the alternative things that I could not think of were used or something happened, someone else took the floor. The native speakers were pretty insightful and they helped me (Interviewee 8).

Sorun bir kere iki kere yaşamışımdır. O da bir şekilde halledildi. Kelimenin aklıma gelmediği durumlarda genellikle chatte işte siz falan hani yardım ettiniz ufak tefek. İşte ne bileyim aklıma gelmeyen alternatif şeyler, onlar kullanıldı veya başka biri söz aldı bir şey oldu. Bir şekilde zaten konuşan nativeler bayağı anlayışlıydı yani onlar yardımcı oldular (Interviewee 8).

I had problem a little while speaking at the beginning. Things like hesitation but I think this is natural because we do not have the chance to practice English while living in our country, especially when there is no study like SL. My English has improved in time and my speech got well, I mean there was no excitement (Interviewee 3).

İlk başta, ilk başlarda böyle biraz aslında hani sorun oluyordu konuşurken. Kekeleme işte o tarz şeyler ki doğaldır yani kendi ülkemizde yaşarken yani hani İngilizceyi pratik etme gibi bir şansımız yok. Böyle şeyler [projeler] olmadığı zaman. Yani böyle hani ilerleyen zamanda gelişti, konuşmamda düzeldi yani heyecan kalmadı öyle (Interviewee 3).

I had a problem during speech process. For example, I stopped up and said something wrong while speaking with NS1and he replied to me. Iıı after that, I could not say anything there. Then, we moved to another topic and the other topic was ended... (Interviewee 4).

Konuşma sürecinde problemim oldu. Mesela NS1'le ben konuşurken şey bir yerde tıkandım böyle bir şey yanlış bir şeyler söyledim ve o da bana geri döndü işte .... ııı ondan sonra ben orda tıkandım hiçbir şey diyemedim falan. Sonra ordan başka konuya geçtik, o konu kapandı.... (Interviewee 4).

I only had a problem that I tried to build sentences and failed a few times... You know, I think, I need to improve a little more. I do not think that I do not get along with. I get confused because of thinking in Turkish just while expressing myself and I feel the need to go to the beginning again and again... (Interviewee 14).

Birkaç kere çok böyle cümle kurmaya çalışıp batırdım sadece o var hani... Yani işte geliştirmem gerektiğini düşünüyorum biraz daha. Anlaşamadığımı düşünmüyorum... Sadece işte kendimi ifade ederken bir anda hala Türkçe düşünmenin getirdiği, o yüzden karışıyor tekrar tekrar başa dönme ihtiyacı hissediyorum ya ... (Interviewee 14).

Apart from those problems, when students were asked whether they faced any technical problems, three of the students indicated that they faced some technical problems. Some of those problems were related to SL program, some of them were about internet connection, and the others were related to students' personal computers. Below are the excerpts of those students:

> There could be some technical faults which I can define as negative. Some problems occurred including my own computer's microphone for sound scheme. Apart from that, I had some problems related with directing my avatar inside SL... (Interviewee 7).

> *Ya sadece olumsuz diyebileceğim bazı teknik aksilikler olabilir. Ses düzeninde bazı kendi bilgisayarımın mikrofonu da dahil sorunlar oldu. Onun dışında SL ın kendi içerisinde ki bazı kendi avatarımı yönlendirmemde sorunlar oldu... (Interviewee 7).*

> I had a technical problem with my laptop. I think, it could not unload SL. It was getting hot and then shutting down (Interviewee 12).

> *Kendi laptopumla ilgili teknik anlamda sıkıntı yaşadım. Laptop kaldırmıyordu galiba SL'ı. Biraz ısınıyordu ve kapanıyordu (Interviewee 12).*

> I had some technical problems while logging in at the beginning. I logged in from my roommate's computer, both of us faced this problem. Later, I logged in from my other roommate's computer and after this I have never logged in because a technical problem occurred (Interviewee 11).

> *İlk başta işte ... birisine girerken teknik anlamda sorun yaşadım yani. Şey olmadı arkadaşımınkinden girdim , ikimiz de böyle sorun yaşadık. Sonra diğer oda arkadaşımınkinden girdim, daha sonra hiç giremedim falan teknik bi arıza oldu yani ondan dolayı (Interviewee 11).*

In summary, within the scope of the related research question, it is seen that students were grateful for being a part of such kind of a study. Their general experiences related to the 3D SL virtual environment are commonly positive

and they were lucky to have a chance to speak with native speakers and other new people in such a platform.

4.1.2. What are Students' Perceptions in TBLL?

4.1.2.1. What are the Students' Perceptions of *Anxiety* in Speaking English in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World?

Anxiety is a very important parameter for learning English as a foreign language. It has an adverse effect in language learning and causes several problems in language learning process. In face to face classroom environments, it is difficult to get response from students and to make them speak. There are many reasons for that situation but anxiety has a central role in students' speaking. For that reason, in this study it is aimed to create a low-anxiety environment and to help students to overcome their problems with anxiety. The students' anxiety towards speaking English and the effect of task-based language learning in SL virtual world was investigated in the study.

The findings from this session address important elements related to anxiety. Study results showed that 3D virtual environments and task-based language learning activities have an important effect on anxiety and provides learners to overcome their anxiety related problems. During the interviews, students presented the advantageous elements of the study that has an important impact on their anxiety level. In the following table, those elements and advantages are presented.

Table 7: Advantageous elements of the study that have an important impact on anxiety level

ELEMENTS	ADVANTAGES
• Lack of mimic & gesture in SL virtual world	• Decrease in excitement
• Existence of native speakers in SL virtual world	• Decrease in fear of making mistakes
• Opportunity to practice speaking in SL virtual world	• Decrease in the number of mistakes
• Time to think in SL virtual world	• Decrease in excitement

It is possible to conclude that SL virtual world was helpful for decreasing students' anxiety level and it enabled them to make practice in speaking. Fourteen of the interviewees indicated that speaking in that environment is much easier when compared to face to face instruction. In the excerpts provided below, students commented on their feelings and experiences in terms of anxiety in speaking:

> I had anxiety last year since I was a beginner class student. Well, speaking was not developed much, you cannot actively use the straight words and sentences. Of course, SL had a great impact in that manner. In normal life, I was trying to speak but you cannot speak fast, during this one month period, at least it helped me to improve myself (Interviewee 3).

> *Geçen sene endişelerim oluyordu, çünkü daha beginner dım. İşte konuşma daha gelişmemiş, daha doğru düzgün kelimeleri cümleleri kuramıyorsun.. Tabi SL' ın bu anlamda çok etkisi oldu. Ben normalde konuşmaya çalışıyordum ama hızlı konuşamıyorsun, en azından az bir şeyde olsa bir aylık süreç te bayağı bir şey geliştirdi benim açımdan (Interviewee 3).*

I do not think that all of my anxiety disappeared. I mean I still know that I have lots of things to learn and it is not enough. However, it was helpful to overcome the most of my anxiety (Interviewee 9).

Endişelerimin tamamen kalktığını zannetmiyorum. Hani sonuçta hala öğreneceğim çok şey olduğunu biliyorum, yeterli olmadığını biliyorum. Ama ya büyük bir miktarının gitmesine yardımcı olduğunu düşünüyorum (Interviewee 9).

Actually, I think that faults are being corrected by making mistakes. SL provided some contribution in that manner, it encourages the person. Well because, as you speak you are improving yourself. You start to think that you have potential to speak. Because of that since we are speaking in SL continuously... it has positive effects on you (Interviewee 11).

Aslında yanlış yapa yapa düzeltilir sonuçta diye düşünüyorum SL'ın bu anlamda katkısı oldu, cesaretlendiriyor falan insanı. Ya çünkü konuşunca daha böyle bir açılıyorsun falan. Hani ben de konuşabiliyormuşum falan diyorsun. O yüzden hani burda da konuştuğumuz için sürekli ... olumlu bir etkisi oluyor yani senin için (Interviewee 11).

Face to face for instance at school ııı well since you think that someone knows much more than you, you tighten yourself. But, in SL it is different, you may be more comfortable, a little bit more (Interviewee 15).

Yüzyüze yani mesela okulda falan ıı hani birileri senden daha iyi biliyor diye düşündüğün için ne bileyim böyle, kendini kasıyor insan. Ama orda daha farklı oluyor tabi, daha hani rahat olabiliyor, biraz daha rahat (Interviewee 15).

As distinct from those opinions, one of the students stated that she was excited while speaking despite the fact that this is not face to face environment. However, towards the end of the study, there was a decrease in her excitement.

We do not speak much in classes. Despite of being behind the computer, it was still exciting since you were talking in front of a community. At the beginning, I sometimes felt inadequacies in my own speech. At least, we are not face to face in SL. SL is better for me. It is less exciting but still exciting (Interviewee 7).

Sınıflarda pek konuşmuyoruz. Topluluk önünde konuşmak da aynı zamanda heyecan vericiydi yani bilgisayarın arkasında olmanıza rağmen... Bazen kendi konuşmamda da yetersizlikler hissettim. İlk başlarken. SL ta yine yüzyüze değiliz. Daha güzel yani SL ta olmak. Daha az heyecan veriyor yine de heyecanlı (Interviewee 7).

As mentioned before, this study showed that there are different elements in that study that facilitate speaking English and dealing with anxiety related problems. One important reason for that easiness is that this environment is not face to face and other participants neither have the chance to see the person speaking nor his/her facial expressions. Eleven of the students stated that to know that others will not see his/her face while speaking is a relaxing factor for them. In the following part, excerpts of students related with this situation are given.

In SL, it is possible to be more comfortable since you do not see the mimics of the other person. For instance, when you say a wrong word in class, you turn red... But it is not like that in SL. Even if you make a mistake, you are more comfortable since people do not see you... So, now I am more comfortable and I do not think that I am excited anymore (Interviewee 2).

SL' ta hani insanın mimikleri görülmediği için biraz daha rahat olabiliyor insan. Mesela sınıfta hani yanlış bir kelime söylediğinizde işte ne bileyim kızarıyorsunuz... Ama SL ta öyle değil. Hani hata yapsanız bile insanlar sizi görmediği için ıı biraz daha rahat oluyorsunuz ... Yani şimdi heyecan falan pek kaldığını düşünmüyorum biraz daha rahatım (Interviewee 2).

It was much more comfortable than the class environment. The reason of the comfortableness may be not seeing the mimics of the person in front of you. It is more relaxing that the other person does not stand in front on you and tries to find mistakes of you (Interviewee 14).

Sınıf ortamına göre çok daha rahattı. Rahatlığın sebebi belki yanlış yaptığında karşı tarafın o suratındaki mimiği görmemek. İnsana her an böyle karşında şey dinliyormuş gibi yanlış bulcakmış gibi durmaması daha rahatlatıcı oluyor (Interviewee 14).

Eventually, you do not see each other in internet environment which facilitated speaking in SL despite of hearing the voice of each other. The other positive impact of SL is that when you are making mistakes in an interactive environment, you may feel less shy since you are not face to face. Since you are talking via a medium and you are not face to face, SL is much more relaxing (Interviewee 10).

Sonuçta internet ortamında birbirinizi görmüyorsunuz hani ne kadar ses olsa da o yüzden bir kolaylık sağladı diyebilirim SL konuşma açısından. Hani yüz yüze olmadığımız için daha interaktif bir ortamda yanlışları yaparken hani daha az çekinirsiniz o açıdan da etkisi var SL ın. Sonuçta yüz yüze olmadığımız için arada bir aracı olduğu için o açıdan daha rahatlatıcıdır yani (Interviewee 10).

First and foremost, it is much more comfortable. Because when you are face to face, you see the mimics of the person in front of you and when you make a mistake you feel that person gives reaction to your mistake. But in SL, it is not like that. You do not see the person, you just speak with him/her (Interviewee 5).

Bir kere daha rahat çünkü hani böyle yüz yüze olunca hani onun karşındakinin mimiklerini görüyorsun hata yaptığında sanki sana tepki vermiş gibi hissediyorsun. Ama SL ta olunca öyle olmuyor, hani görmüyorsun sadece konuşuyorsunuz (Interviewee 5).

In addition to those opinions, two of the students also pointed out that speaking with the people they did not know in such kind of a 3D virtual environment -without any face to face context- was a relaxing factor for them. Below are the excerpts of those students:

> I think it is easier, speaking in SL. I mean, the person in front of you cannot see your reactions. At least, the other person cannot see even if I am surprised or I say "ah!". Therefore, it was more comfortable. From now on, I gained the courage of speaking even with the people that I know (Interviewee 1).

> *Bence daha kolay SL' la konuşmak. Yani karşıdaki insan o anda verdiğim tepkileri göremiyor. En azından hani şaşırsamda, işte ahh falan yapsam da o göremiyor onu. O yüzden daha rahattı. Artık tanıdığım insanlarla bile konuşmaya cesaret kazandım (Interviewee 1).*

> The positive side of the study is that they do not know whether you really exist or not in the real world, therefore, you do not feel disgraced and bla bla... You are clicking the exist button and get rid of... (Interviewee 8).

> *Artısı şu yani senin gerçekten dünyada var olan birisi olup olmadığını bile bilmedikleri için, ay rezil oldum şöyle oldu böyle oldu demiyorsun. Tuşuna basıyorsun ve kurtuluyorsun ... (Interviewee 8).*

One of the main advantages of 3D virtual worlds is their flexibility in time and place. Similar to aforementioned expressions, two of the students indicated that since the SL environment is not face to face they had the chance to check their dictionary when needed. This helped them to relax during the study.

> Actually, I still need to develop myself for certain. However, I tried to speak at least because this is something that we do not do every day. When I did not remember a word, I looked up the dictionary. This is an advantage of SL over the face-to-face environment. We can just look up the word and we can respond immediately via internet (Interviewee 7).

Aslında kendimi geliştirmeye ihtiyacım var daha o kesin. Ama şey en azından konuşmaya çabaladım bu her gün yapmadığımız bir şey. Kelime aklımaa gelmediğinde, hemen ordan bir sözlük açtım baktım. İşte aslında evet SL la yüz yüze konuşmanın arasındaki bir avantajda bu orda hemen bakıp kelimeye, internetten hemen karşılık verebiliyoruz (Interviewee 7).

I had some problems at the beginning. Well, how should I say, I could not speak fluently. It got better in time. Since it is not face-to-face conversation, you get excited less. We are more excited in the face-to-face conversation. I was sometimes keeping the dictionary with me in SL (Interviewee 13).

Ya ilk başlarda biraz sorun yaşadım. İşte ne bileyim o kadar akıcı falan konuşamıyordum. Zamanla daha iyi oldu yani. Daha az heyecanlanıyorsunuz yüzyüze olmadığı için. Yüzyüze ortamda daha fazla heyecanlı oluyoruz, ben SL ta mesela bazen sözlüğü falan yanımda taşıyordum (Interviewee 13).

One of the students indicated an opposite opinion about not seeing others' facial expressions. That student finds this situation as a negative factor. However, being in that environment is also a facilitative factor to speak for that student. That student stated the following words:

Since there is no chance to use mimic and gestures, it restricts the user. There is no such a restriction in real life but you get more excited, I think. As a beginning, it was nice to talk with foreigners because you can get excited if you talk face-to-face as I said or if you lose control, you cannot continue to speak English. Therefore, there could be such problems (Interviewee 6).

Şimdi hani mimik kullanımı ve jestler olmadığı için onlar birazcık kısıtlıyor. Gerçek hayatta o olmuyor ama daha heyecanlı olunuyor gerçek hayatta diye düşünüyorum ben. Başlangıç olarak yabancılarla sanal ortamda konuşmak güzeldi çünkü dediğim gibi yüz yüze heyecanlanabilirsin ya da bir yerde ucu kaçınca İngilizce konuşmanın gerisi gelmiyor o yüzden öyle sorunlar olabilir (Interviewee 6).

Another reason that facilitates speaking in SL environment is the existence of native speakers who actively participated in the activities and had conversations with students. Three of the students thought that it was good to experience speaking with native speakers since the existence of native speakers helped them to understand that they have the ability to communicate.

> I was afraid that native speakers could think I do not know English precisely but I realized that there was nothing like this. Understanding that they are not like this is relaxing. I observed that they react in a different way for some kinds of things... You explain your problem somehow. Discovering all of these was good... (Interviewee 8).

> *Native speakerlar, bu işte tam işte İngilizce bilmiyor falan filan yaparlar diye korkuyordum, ama öyle bir şey olmadığını fark ettim. Hani bu rahatlatıcı, bunu sagladı.. Bir kere bakış açıları farklı yabancıların. Bazı şeylere farklı tepki verebiliyorlar hani onu ölçtüm bir... Bir şekilde anlatıyorsun derdini. Yani onlar falan güzel oldu...(Interviewee 8).*

> I would feel shy and stay back if a foreigner asks me something before SL. But now, I feel like I can speak with a foreigner... In other words, I am more comfortable while speaking, at least if I do not remember the word, I try to describe it with other words (Interviewee 1).

> *SL tan önce kesinlikle hani yabancı biri bana bir şey sorsa ben geri çekerdim kendimi. Ama artık konuşabilirim gibi geliyor yabancı biriyle.... Yani daha rahatım konuşurken en azından kelime aklıma gelmese bile başka kelimelerle onu tarif etmeye çalışıyorum artık (Interviewee 1).*

> I was more comfortable while speaking with the foreign participators. I feel more relax psychologically while speaking with native speakers; I could not understand the reason. I feel like they would not try to correct anything. When you make mistake, they would not find it odd just like when we see a foreigner making a Turkish mistake and we can understand him/her (Interviewee 14).

Yabancı katılan, yabancı kişiler tarafından en azından daha rahattım onlarla konuşurken. Ya çözemediğim bir şekilde piskolojik olarak daha rahat hissediyorum onlarla konuşurken. Sanki bir şeyi böyle düzeltmeye çalışmayacaklarmış gibi. Hani yanlış yaptığınızda -biz nasıl yabancı bir insana yanlış yaparken bakıyorsak hani anlayabiliyorsak ve hani onu yadırgamıyorsak- onlar da daha az yadırgayacaklarmış gibi geliyor bu yüzden (Interviewee 14).

Different than those expressions, one of the students found it difficult to speak with native speakers. That student indicated positive expressions about native speakers, but reported that she got anxious while speaking with them.

It was very good with native speakers. I had spoken with NS1 and he had told too many things. I had spoken with a woman at the beginning. I was very excited while talking with her... The native speakers were very good but I felt very nervous while speaking with them (Interviewee 9).

Native speakerla çok iyiydi gerçekten. NS1'le konuşmuştum ben, çok şey anlatmıştı zaten o. Ama en başta bir bayanla konuştum. Onda çok heyecanlandım... Native speakerlar çok iyiydi ama ben çok gerildim konuşurken (Interviewee 9).

Unfortunately, there is a common misunderstanding in learning processes that mistakes are not normal, and because of this misunderstanding, students become anxious in the learning process. However, mistakes are part of teaching-learning processes and students should be moderate in making mistakes. In particular, when it is considered in terms of language education, possible anxiety prevents language learners from actively using the target language and reaching out active oral communication. From the point of this study, it was significant to provide students to welcome the mistakes warmly. Three of the students indicated during the interviews that they understood making mistakes do not cause any problematic situations and it is possible to reach out healthy communication with native speakers

and other participants. In the following part, students' expressions about making mistakes are provided.

> Now, when you listen to the others, you feel like as if they speak better than me. You are afraid and you have such a concern. But, it is not cared that you had made a mistake. When I understood this, I became very relax (Interviewee 5).

> *İşte şimdi başkalarını dinleyince aslında şey yapıyorsun. Sanki onlar benden daha iyi konuşuyor, öyle de bir endişe oluyor hani ondan korkabilirsin. Ama işte hata yaptığın çok önemsenmiyor, hani onu anlayınca rahatladım zaten (Interviewee 5).*

> I understood that it is not so much important to use tenses and grammar we learned in class during the study. Actually, the person you are speaking with understands you without using them carefully. I still have some concern. I could not say that it has finished completely but it has lessened, I think. In other words, it seems to me that I can speak more comfortably now (Interviewee 1).

> *Projede, şey şu zamanları falan kullanmanın, derste öğrendiğimiz grameri kullanmanın o kadar da önemli bir şey olmadığını anladım. Aslında onlar ıı çok dikkat edilmeden de karşıdaki sizi anlayabiliyor. Hala endişelerim var tabi tamamen gitti diyemem ama yine o da azalmıştır diye düşünüyorum yani her türlü daha rahat konuşabilirim artık gibi geliyor (Interviewee 1).*

> There was fear to make mistake at the beginning but there is not now because I saw that I could tell the same sentence in different forms when I make a mistake. The person I am speaking with understood this, too. Since I observed that I could tell it, it was useful and very good for me. Moreover, we become more relax for the excitement issue (Interviewee 7).

> *Başlarda yanlış yapma korkusu vardı fakat artık yok. Çünkü aslında yanlış yaptığım zaman farklı bir şekilde söyleyip yine aynı cümleyi farklı şekillerde anlatabildiğimi gördüm. Karşımdakide anladı yani. Anlatabildiğimi de gördüm o yüzden faydalıydı bence daha çok iyi oldu*

benim için. Heyecan konusunda da biraz daha yatışmış oluyoruz (Interviewee 7).

In the literature, one of the sources of anxiety in language learning is lack of knowledge in the target language. If students think that they do not know enough words to express themselves, they prevent themselves from speaking. Because of that feeling, they cannot do enough practice and, as a result, cannot develop themselves. However, students should be forced to speak and make enough practice. One of the students mentioned that especially in the activities she had an idea about she was more comfortable while speaking.

> Actually, there was an activity called "in the states". I spoke more comfortably in that one. I think, I spoke like this. I was more comfortable with that activity, maybe because I knew more in that topic and I did not know the words of the other topics... (Interviewee 7).

> *Aslında şeydi bir tane "in the states" öyle bir aktivitemiz vardı. Onda daha rahat konuştum. Konuştuğumu düşünüyorum. Çünkü belki daha çok şey biliyordum o konuda, diğer konularda daha fazla kelimeleri tam bilemiyordum, onda daha rahattım... (Interviewee 7).*

Based on the interviews, it is possible to conclude that task-based language environment forced students to speak and made them understand they can deal with their anxiety despite their lack of lexical knowledge. This study seems to be helpful for students in dealing with their anxiety related problems. Two of the students indicated their thoughts about that situation.

> I had concern before the study. For instance, we had met with a few tourists before coming to METU. Speaking with them was very difficult, you sometimes stammer... Actually, I think that these SL activities were effective. How could I say, I think it was good and useful. I can speak with the tourists more comfortably now... (Interviewee 2).

Proje öncesinde endişe vardı. Hani mesela bu okula gelmeden önce... birkaç turiste denk gelmiştik. İşte onlarla konuşmak bayağı zordu kekeliyo insan bir yerde... Hani ben bunun etkili olduğuna inanıyorum açıkçası, bu etkinliğin... nasıl desem güzel ve faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum. Şimdi turistlerle daha rahat konuşabilirim... (Interviewee 2).

My concern was my grammar mistakes. Besides, not being able to speak fluently and speaking brokenly. SL helped me a lot and I probably solved these problems. For instance, I was making some grammar mistakes occasionally. We already knew the topics and we studied them beforehand in order to solve this problem. SL helps for speaking (Interviewee 12).

İşte endişe durumu şeylerde gramer hatalarımdı. Sonra daha böyle akıcı konuşamama, çok böyle kesik kesik.. SL' ta bayağı yardımcı oldu onları biraz çözdüm galiba. Mesela, kendi açımdan evet bazen gramer hataları falan yapıyordum. Bunları da çözmek için, konuları zaten daha önceden biliyorduk, biraz çalışıyorduk konulara önceden... (Interviewee 12).

Since there was not a face to face context within the study and students were hiding behind their avatars, they had time to think before speaking. Two of the students found it very advantageous since being able to develop themselves in speaking, they had to undergo such a process.

First of all, I begin to speak by planning beforehand in SL. Unfortunately, it is not like this during the face-to-face communication. Consequently, we will speak with hesitation and mistakes for development. After a while, we will speak without thinking these and this is something positive (Interviewee 4).

Şimdi SL ta…Her şeyden önce söz almadan önce şey bile olsa bir şeyleri planlayarak söz alıyorum ben... Yüz yüze ortamda öyle olmuyor maalesef. Sonuç olarak gelişmesi için önce hani bunları duraksarayarak konuşacağız, edeceğiz yanlış yapa yapa. Ondan sonra hani düşünmeden artık belli şeyler kafaya yerleştiği zaman bence bu artı (Interviewee 4).

I was really comfortable when we have one-on-one conversation and SL. When a question comes, I was able to, well, explain after thinking two minutes. Anxiety decreases while speaking in SL but it occurs in class. After the study, I am still shy about the topics that I am unprepared. (Interviewee 14).

Gerçekten teketek olduğunda ve SL olduğunda rahattım yani. Bir soru geldiğinde 2 dakika düşünüp şey yapabiliyordum, ifade edebiliyordum. Konuşurken endişe biraz daha azalıyor... Proje sonrasında hazırlıksız olduğum konularda hala çekingenim (Interviewee 14).

In summary, within the scope of the related research question, it is understood that students who were anxious in speaking English before the study had chance to learn how to deal with their anxiety. In this respect, the characteristics of SL environment contributed too much thing to students. At the end of the study, they were satisfied with their anxiety level since it decreased when compared to the beginning.

4.1.2.2 What are the Students' Perceptions of *Motivation* in Speaking English in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World?

Motivation is another important parameter for learning English as a foreign language and, as well as anxiety, it plays a central role in students' speaking. Because of this situation, it is aimed to create an environment that targets to motivate students and attract their attention. Motivation of the students towards speaking English and the effect of task-based language learning in SL virtual world in that manner were investigated in the study.

There are different kinds of sources that affect motivation. In this study, the researcher tried to examine the factors that are helpful to increase students' motivation. During the interviews, students presented the factors that motivate them. In the following table, those factors that have impact on students' motivation are presented.

Table 8: Advantageous elements of the study that have an important impact on motivation

ELEMENTS	ADVANTAGES
• 3D environment	• Increase in fun, curiosity
• Existence of native speakers in SL virtual world	• Increase in willingness to speak
• The role based activities in SL virtual world and concept of the environment	• Increase in desire to speak
• Realistic 3D virtual environment	• Increase in the feeling of immersive

This study was an opportunity for students to practice English with native speakers in an enjoyable and attractive environment. Fortunately, at the end of the study, 13 students who had positive thoughts about their motivation towards speaking stated that they found the environment entertaining, they participated the activities with pleasure, and they were enthusiastic about communicating with people. In their answers, four students mainly focused on its entertaining functionality by making a comparison between 3D environments with 2D environments indicating that they preferred the 3D environment. Some of the expressions of students are:

> It was entertaining, I think, and, well, how could I say, it was exciting... Before SL, I was just speaking when needed. However, after SL, how could I say, I started to be more eager. Since it is more technological, I think that it could attract people and its contribution is positive. In other words, it is a contribution that could increase people's motivation (Interviewee 2).

> *Bence eğlenceliydi ve bir yandan da hani nasıl desem heyecan vericiydi...Yani öncesinde sadece gerekli olduğunda konuşuyordum, ama SL'den sonra nasıl desem daha istekli olmaya başladım yani. Biraz daha*

böyle teknolojik falan olduğu için daha hani insanları oraya çekebilir diye düşünüyorum ve daha olumlu oluyor açıkçası bu katkı. İnsanların motivasyonunu arttırabilecek bir katkı olduğunu düşünüyorum (Interviewee 2).

It becomes more entertaining like this. I always love English but it became more entertaining. As I said, since everything was more entertaining, then, you want to log in and speak more. If we had talked with Skype, it would be boring a little and the conversation would not continue. Besides, you have a look in 3D environment. I mean, you take a walk to see what there are around. It was good, I liked it (Interviewee 5).

Asıl işi daha eğlenceli yapıyor biraz böyle. Ya ben hep zaten İngilizce'yi seviyorum. Ama hani daha eğlenceli oldu tabi. Her şey eğlenceli olduğu için daha çok böyle giresiniz, konuşasınız geliyor. Skype ta konuşsak biraz sıkıcı olurdu konuşma gitmeyebilirdi. Hem öyle çevreye de bakıyorsun. Hani neler varmış burada diye geziyorsun. O güzeldi yani onu beğendim (Interviewee 5).

I can say that I would not enjoy it this much if it was a 2D game or something like Skype. For instance, airport was really good, I mean travelling. In addition, it was really good to find a roommate since it would happen when we go abroad in the future. I mean, things like that were good and useful (Interviewee 3).

Genelde 2 boyutlu oyunlar ya da ne bileyim skype tarzı şeyler olsaydı bu kadar zevk almazdım diyebilirim. Airport çok iyiydi mesela hani travel. Bir de oda arkadaşı filan bulurken mesela eninde sonunda böyle şeyler bir yurt dışına çıktığınızda olacağı için bayağı iyiydi yani güzeldi böyle şeylerin olması faydalı (Interviewee 3).

3D environment is both entertaining and realistic. 2D environment would be simpler and more boring for people after a point. I am more motivated now compared to the beginning point. Apart from that, I liked the game very much, I will probably continue to play. (Interviewee 13).

3 boyutlu ortam daha hem eğlenceli hemde daha bir gerçekçi. 2B ortam çok daha basit gelirdi yani ve sıkardı sanırım yani bi yerden sonra

insanları. Başladığımdan daha motiveyim yani. Onun dışında oynamaya devam ederim herhalde oyunu çok beğendim (Interviewee 13).

Six students imparted in a positive manner about motivation in terms of communicationg orally with native speakers in SL environment. When they understood that they can express themselves to native speakers, they were motivated to speak much more. Below are how some of the students expressed their positive thoughts about SL in terms of motivation:

Actually, I mean, I already want to speak and express myself precisely in a better manner. When this study emerged, I liked it and because of this it motivated me. Well, speaking some kind of things with the native speakers interactively had motivated me. I would love to attend more to the study because if there had been a little more time... (Interviewee 14).

Ben hani yani zaten istiyorum tam olarak işte konuşabilmeyi tam olarak kendimi daha iyi ifade edebilmeyi. Hani bu proje çıktığında da hoşuma gitmişti yani o açıdan motive etmişti. Hani bir şeyleri native speakerlarla tam olarak karşılıklı konuşabilmek, o konuda motive etmişti. Böyle bir çekincem falan yok hani şu an. Daha çok katılmak katılabilmek isterdim... (Interviewee 14).

... It is a motivating thing that the ones that you talk to are native speakers. Sooner or later, you would go abroad and speak English there. In fact, there is an accent difference. Since the Turkish teacher could understand what you say, there is no pressure for an accent difference but you need to pay attention to the pronunciation while talking with native speakers (Interviewee 3).

...Sizin konuştuğunuz insaların native speaker olması daha motive edici. Eninde sonunda yurt dışına çıkıp öyle konuşacaksınız. Aslında aksan farkı oluyor. Türk hoca senin ne söyleyediğini anlayabileceiği için hani aksanda bir zorlamaya falan gerek kalmıyo hani ama native ile konuşurken cidden o pronunciation ları filan doğru düzgün yapmanız gerekiyor (Interviewee 3).

Foreign participators were very good, for me. It was understood easily that they were foreigners. Especially, it was really nice to hear their

accent. Since we do not meet too many Turkish teachers with this kind of accent, the foreign participators were really good in my opinion. It was really nice for me because I heard their voice and talking style (Interviewee 7).

Yabancı katılımcılar bence çok güzeldi. Direk anlaşılıyordu yabancı oldukları. Özellikle onların zaten o aksan denililen şeyi duymak çok güzeldi. Çünkü Türkiye de fazla kendi Türk hocalarımızda rastlamıyoruz pek bunu onlar çok iyiydi bence. Belki onların sesini de konuşma tarzlarını duyduğum için daha güzel oldu benim için daha iyi oldu (Interviewee 7).

If there are native speakers in the environment, you have chance to learn their culture, living styles and view points to events. For that reason, it is much more positive to speak with nativa speakers. (Interviewee 6).

Ortamda native olunca tamamen onların kültürünü öğreniyorsun, onların yaşayış tarzını öğreniyorsun, olaylara bakış açılarını. Bu yüzden onlarla konuşmak daha olumlu (Interviewee 6).

One student argued that she did not gain motivation throughout the study since she was already a motivated person. However, communicating with native speakers was a lot beneficial for her, and she stated her reasons for this situation:

I am not a person who is silent in English classes. Therefore, I speak English too much in class, too, that's why nothing happened in terms of motivation. However, I did not know what to do with the native speakers as I said. From this point of view, there have been too many advantages because I saw what kind of reaction I would give to (Interviewee 8).

Zaten çok konuşurken sessiz kalan bir insan değilim. Onun için İngilizceyi sınıfta da konuşurum çok onun için motivasyon açısından bir şey olmadı. Ama dediğim gibi hani nativelere karşı ne yapacağımı bilmiyordum. O açıdan çok getirisi oldu çünkü nasıl bir tepki vereceğimi gördüm yani (Interviewee 8).

One of the most important positive aspects of 3D virtual worlds is their richness in visualized elements which makes users immerse in the environment, and this property of the environment makes it much more realistic. Two of the students gave positive feedback concerning this item they stated that it made them much more willing to speak. Here is the explanations of the students:

> It became more realistic by being 3D. We carried out a story since the beginning. We are going to Work and Travel or so. Executing all of the stages, even we took medical treatment, it was good. I think that motivation has increased as a thing that self confidence has provided (Interviewee 9).

> *Üç boyutlu olunca daha gerçekçi oldu. Baştan beri bir hikayeyi yürüttük. İşte Work and Travela gidiyoruz filan. O aşamaların hepsinin yapılması, doktor tedavisine bile girdik, o güzeldi. Özgüvenin getirdiği bir şey olarak motivasyonunda arttığını düşünüyorum (Interviewee 9).*

> 3D environment was really good. I mean, the best occasion, which is possible, is 3D occasions. In other words, more wish to learn occurred, for sure. I mean, in order to communicate better and healthier with foreigners. Iıı, apart from that, I can say that it was a good experience for me. Because speaking with other is something that broadens a person's horizon and hearing the tone of voice of the other person is also something nice (Interviewee 6).

> *Üç boyutlu ortam gerçekten güzeldi. Yani olayın en güzel olabilecek şekli üç boyutlu olaydır. Yani hani daha çok öğrenme isteği oluştu tabiki. Hani daha iyi daha sağlıklı iletişim kurabilmek için yabancılarla. Iıı onun dışında güzel bir deneyimdi bu benim için diyebilirim yani. Çünkü insanın ufkunu genişleten bir şey başkalarıyla konuşmak ve hani onun ses tonunu da duymakta güzel bir şey (Interviewee 6).*

In addition to those positive thoughts about the characteristics of SL, one of the students reported that the visually appealing environment of SL virtual world attracted her attention and she kept joining SL after the study. Her expressions are provided below:

> Well, actually, the thing for SL that motivates and attracts the attention of a person, ııı, is its being rich. I mean, how should I know, it is very good visually. To begin with, having the camera feature is very good. It turns right and left, you stop somewhere and you can look everywhere, you zoom or so. Iıı, if these were 2D, it would not attract attention. I sometimes, in the evenings, login to the SL except for that study you had designed... (Interviewee 8).

> *Ya aslında SL ın biraz da insanın hani dikkatini hicap eden şey, motive eden şey ııı onun hani zengin olması. Yani işte ne bileyim görsel açıdan bayağı iyi... Bir kere o kamera olayı çok güzel sağa sola dönüyor, bir yerde kalıyorsun her yere bakabiliyorsun, zoom yapıyorsun falan ııı onlar eğer 2 boyutlu olsaydı dikkat çekmezdi. SL'ın sizin yaptığınız proje dışında kendim de giriyorum arasıra akşamları... (Interviewee 8).*

Two of the students reported that SL virtual environment forced them to speak and provided them with a chance to practice speaking. They stated that as a result of this situation, they were motivated.

> Since I had spoken less beforehand, I can say that I had less motivation. I mean, I do not speak a lot in everyday life. Sometimes in class when my term to speak comes. Since I had more opportunity to speak in SL, I felt myself better. Moreover, since I am forced to concentrate more, actually, I had more motivation (Interviewee 7).

> *Daha önceden daha az konuştuğum için biraz daha az motivasyonum vardı diyebilirim. Yani şey günlük hayatta fazla konuşmuyorum. Sınıfta arasıra söz gelince. SL ta daha çok konuşma fırsatı bulduğum için kendimi daha iyi hissettim. Daha çok bir de orda daha çok konsantre olmaya itildiğim için aslında birazda daha fazla motivasyonum oldu (Interviewee 7).*

I think that I observed development, I mean, ııı, it was like we had gone to a foreign country. Even if it was virtual, we went to a foreign country and as I said we spoke with foreign people. Now, I feel myself more ready. I mean, if I go abroad one day, I hope, I think I can speak more comfortably compared to my condition before SL (Interviewee 1).

Gelişme gözlediğimi düşünüyorum yani ıı orda yabancı bir ülkeye gitmiş gibiydik. Sanal da olsa yabancı bir ülkeye gittik yine dediğim gibi yabancı insanlarla konuştuk. Şimdi daha kendimi hazır hissediyorum yabancı bir yere gidersem eğer bir gün inşallah yani daha rahat konuşabileceğimi düşünüyorum SL'tan önceki halime göre (Interviewee 1).

One of the students stated that the activity in which she was more interested made her more willing to participate in the study.

I like the activity that we made shopping the most because I was able to speak at most in that activity. Before that, I was not able to speak a lot when our own idea had been asked. However, eventually, shopping is something that everyone is interested in somehow. I participated in that one the most. Actually, I had enthusiasm and desire after this activity for SL. I would want to participate in such a study if it continued. Because, I saw that it had positive impact (Interviewee 1).

Benim en çok şu alışveriş yaptığımız şey hoşuma gitti çünkü en çok orda konuşabildim. Ondan öncesinde kendi fikrimiz sorulduğunda ben pek konuşamıyordum. Ama alışveriş sonuçta herkesin bir şekilde ilgili olduğu bir şeydir. En fazla ona katıldım aslında ondan sonra daha bir şevk daha bir istek gelmişti bana SL için. Devam etse böyle bir çalışmaya katılmak isterdim. Çünkü olumlu etkisi olduğunu gördüm (Interviewee 1).

Another student reported that to see his ability in speaking English motivated him. Also, he added that the activities were meaningful and especially the ones which were related to daily subjects were the most necessary things needed to make a practice.

In terms of motivation, it was like that before, well, I was getting bored but you can say that I did it. I did it a few times and I can do it again, therefore; you are not afraid and you do not feel shy a lot. The activities were common, I mean, they were the things that we need in common like hospital, check in... It was good, pretty good... (Interviewee 12).

Motivasyon açısından, işte eskiden daha şeydi artık böyle sıkılıyordum da şu an artık ben yaptım diyebiliyorsun. Birkaç kere yaptım yine yapabilirim zaten onun için çok da korkmuyorsun, çekinmiyorsun. Aktiviteler geneldi, yani genel ihtiyacımız olan şeylerdi hastane falan olsun, check in olsun... Güzeldi bayağı güzeldi ... (Interviewee 12).

In summary, within the scope of the related research question, it is seen that students had positive perceptions related to their motivation. In this respect, the characteristics of SL environment contributed too much thing to students At the end of the study, their motivation was higher than from the beginning.

4.1.2.3. What are the Students' Perceptions of *Self-Confidence* in Speaking English in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World?

Self-confidence is another parameter for learning English as a foreign language and has a major role in learners' attitudes towards speaking. If someone thinks that s/he does not have enough capability to actively use the target language, it negatively affects his/her tendency to orally communicate with others. In addition, if someone has self-confidence in target language, it provides to be willingness to communicate even if s/he does not have enough linguistic competence.

There are different elements that affect students' gaining self-confidence. During the interviews, students presented the factors that affect their self-confidence in the study. Those factors are presented in the following table:

Table 9: Advantageous elements of the study that have an important impact on self-confidence

ELEMENTS	ADVANTAGES
• Easiness of the 3D virtual environment	• Speaking easily
• Existence of native speakers in SL virtual world	• Seeing personal capabilities
• Making practice in SL virtual world	• Feel confident

It is possible to state that self-confidence is closely related to both anxiety and motivation. Students developed self-confidence towards speaking at the end of the study which actually occurred as a result of decrease in anxiety and increase in motivation. The study contributed too much thing for them, in terms of self-confidence. Four of those students especially emphasized that after the study they realized that they can speak more easily when compared to the beginning of the study. Also, when they were asked if their self-confidence was increased or not, they reported that their self-confidence was increased. The excerpts of some of the students is given below:

> It developed, so I speak comfortably now. I mean, I understood that mistake is not important... You get angry a lot when you make mistake while speaking in study. I tried to correct when I made a mistake by saying 'aaa sorry, I mean that'. I tried to correct my mistake in that way. But, the other person understands what you say, even if you make mistake s/he understands (Interviewee 5).

> *Arttı, yani şimdi daha rahat konuşuyorum. Hani hatanın önemli olmadığını biraz anladım....Pojede konuşurken hata yapınca çok sinirleniyorsun. Hata yaptığımda düzeltmeye çalıştım "aaa sorry, I mean that" falan şeklinde onu düzeltmeye çalıştım yaptığım hatayı. Ama yani anlıyor söylediğini, hata da yapsan anlıyor (Interviewee 5).*

Hesitations, how should I know, the time that I spend while thinking a word was more initially. I developed this as time goes on and I started to compose sentence in a better and quicker way. I mean, you learn more or less how the words and sentences are composed in SL (Interviewee 3).

İlk başta hani kekelemeler ne bileyim hani bir kelimeyi düşünürken harcadığım zaman daha fazlaydı. Zaman geçtikten sonra onu geliştirdim, daha iyi çabuk cümle kurmaya başladım o tarz... Hani ordaki kelimelerin, cümlelerin nasıl kurulduğunu; nelerin kullanılabileceğini az çok öğreniyorsun (Interviewee 3).

It has contributed most probably. You say that I speak more comfortably after the study. I feel more relax. Because I am not a person who participates in class too much... When I spoke in SL like this, I felt more relax, I felt like I know English and I can speak English and such like that (Interviewee 11).

Katmıştır ya büyük ihtimalle. Yani çıktıktan sonra daha böyle bi rahat oh konuştum falan diyorsun. Böyle hani daha rahatlamış oluyordum. Çünkü ben öyle hani derse çok katılan birisi falan değilimdir... Bunda böyle konuşunca daha böyle rahatlamış falan hissettim hani biliyormuşum gibi falan İngilizce konuşabiliyormuşum falan diye (Interviewee 11).

Also another student indicated that before the study he found himself confident in speaking. However, when the study started he understood he was not good enough and at the end he gained self-confidence again.

It was positive for me. How should I say, I have spoken with foreigners before but I have not been speaking for long. I thought that I could speak again. I learnt that you can forget a lot if you do not speak. Since SL provided me practice, it helped me a lot in a sense... I speak English more comfortably now. Apart from that, I will probably continue playing the game because I liked it too much (Interviewee 13).

Olumluydu benim için. Yani nasıl desem daha önce de konuşmuştum yabancılarla ama bayağıdır konuşmuyordum. Yine konuşurum sanıyordum. İşte onu öğrendim unutuluyormuş bayağı. İşte SL pratik yapmamı falan sağladığından bayağı yardımcı oldu yani... Şimdi biraz

daha rahat konuşuyorum İngilizce. Onun dışında oynamaya devam ederim herhalde oyunu çok beğendim çünkü (Interviewee 13).

Five of the students -who also gained self-confidence with the help of SL virtual environment- indicated that seeing their capabilities to speak with native speakers made them to be confident. Below are how some of students expressed their positive thoughts about self-confidence.

> Obviously, since I had spoken with the native speakers, my self confidence recovered. Because I have the impression that, while speaking with our Turkish teachers or Turkish friends here, I do not think the native speakers speak like this in reality and I make a mistake at that point. Maybe, since I have heard their both voice and the speaking style, it has been better and nice for me (Interviewee 7).

> *Açıkcası zaten o native speakerlar la da konuştuğum için daha özgüvenim yerine geldi. Çünkü şöyle bir izlenime kapılıyorum, burada Türk öğretmenlerle ya da işte Türk arkadaşlarımla konuşurken sanki aslında gerçek native speakerların böyle konuşmadığını düşünüyorum ve orda bir yanılgıya düşüyorum. Belki onların sesini de konuşma tarzlarını duyduğum için daha güzel oldu benim için daha iyi oldu (Interviewee 7).*

> I think that SL has increased my self confidence, as I said. To have spoken with the real native speakers while feeling shy to speak even in lessons has been a very good experience for me. To tell the truth, I believed that SL gained me self confidence (Interviewee 1).

> *Dediğim gibi özgüvenimi arttırdığını düşünüyorum ben. Hani derslerde bile konuşmaya çekinirken orda gerçek native speakerlarla konuşmuş olmak yani çok güzel deneyim oldu benim için açıkçası yani özgüven kazandırdığına inanıyorum (Interviewee 1).*

> This happened: I have never spoken with a native person a lot. In that study, I said that I met with a foreigner in SL and I made him/her understood me. Well, if I go abroad and get lost somewhere there, I would not just go silent. Because just think about this, I was there and I have spoken quiet serious issues with the man for two hours. In that

respect, it made me understood that there is no such an issue to be exaggerated (Interviewee 8).

Şu oldu: Hiç nativele öyle çok fazla konuşmamıştım... Ama bunda hani dedimki bir yabancı karşıma geldi derdimi anlattım. Hani şimdi gitsem orda yani yurt dışında bir yerde kaybolsam falan veya öyle tutulup kalmam dedim. Çünkü düşünsene yani oturdum adamla gayet ciddi konuları konuştum iki saat yani. O açıdan çokta büyütülcek bir şey olmadığını anlamamı sagladı SL (Interviewee 8).

I had the experience of speaking for the first time. It was the first, ııı, it helped me a lot, it generated self confidence, I think. I was very board in the past while speaking with someone, especially with foreigners. Since they are better at speaking, I was getting down and always thinking that they would find my mistakes but it was just the opposite. Foreigners never try to find mistakes, they directly understand you. Therefore, it has been nice and I gained self confidence (Interviewee 12).

Ya ilk defa speaking yapma tecrübesi yaşadım. İlkti ,ııı, yardımcı oldu bayağı, bence özgüven yarattı. Eskiden daha çok sıkılıyordum biriyle konuşurken, özellikle yabancılarla. Onlar daha iyi ya işte kendimi sıkıyordum falan hep hatalarımı falan bulacak diye ama tam tersiymiş. Yabancılar hiç hata falan aramıyorlar, direk anlıyorlar zaten. Onun için güzel oldu biraz özgüven kazandım (Interviewee 12).

An important issue for that study was providing students with the conditions in which they actively use English and get the chance of speaking English about daily life situations. Three of the students indicated that practicing their speaking in SL environment provided them to gain self-confidence. Below is the explanations of some students.

It contributed me a lot in the meaning of self confidence. I still have some deficiencies, I could not speak too much, I know that. I know that I make very simple mistakes, too. However, we just learn grammar and do something, seeing that we have the chance to practice these in real life gives you self confidence. You realize that you do not learn for nothing. Therefore, it contributed me a lot in terms of self confidence (Interviewee 9).

Özgüven anlamında çok şey kattı. Ya yine eksiklerim var, çok konuşamıyorum, onu biliyorum. Çok basit hatalar yaptığımı da biliyorum. Ama hani sadece gramer öğreniyoruz bir şey yapıyoruz, bunları gerçek hayatta uygulama şansının olduğunu görmek o bir özgüven veriyor. Boşuna öğrenmediğini görüyorsun. O yüzden çok şey kattı özgüven açısından (Interviewee 9).

It makes you gain self confidence. In other words, since we had always spoken in English there and did things, it contributes to you as much as you speak. I mean I can feel that. Yes, I had felt that it would be useful like this while taking the classes in SL environment. For instance, it actually affects my writing in addition to the speaking. Since we speak more frequently, SL has accelerated the process in this context (Interviewee 14).

Özgüven katıyor. Yani çünkü orda da sürekli İngilizce konuştuk şey yaptık, ne kadar konuşursan da katıyor. Bunu hissedebiliyorum yani. Evet SL ortamında derse girerken böyle yararlı olacağını hissetmiştim... Mesela şimdi konuşmanında yanı sıra aslında benim writingimi de etkiliyor yazarken... SL hani o çerçeve de biraz daha yoğun konuştuğumuz için hani daha o süreci hızlandırdı (Interviewee 14).

One of the students, on the other hand, indicated that he did not gain self-confidence since he had already been a confident person. His explanations are given below:

I did not have a self confidence problem in speaking a lot but there have been benefits, for sure. In other words, at least, we had the chance to practice, it was very beneficial in that respect (Interviewee 10).

Çok hani özgüven sıkıntım yoktu konuşma konusunda ama tabi faydaları da oldu yani en azından bir pratik yapma şansımız oldu o açıdan aslında çok (Interviewee 10).

In addition to those excerpts, one of the students added that understanding other people's sayings provided him to gain self-confidence. Also he reported that he learned too much thing about pronunciation.

Listening to them and understanding the words, make you gain self confidence. It was very good in that respect. Primarily, I think that I have developed a lot for pronunciation. We may not have the chance of speaking too much in class, I mean even if you speak you cannot use all the words. But it could be needed to use more different words frequently in SL. From this point of view, I can say that it was positive for me in terms of pronunciation and my English (Interviewee 2).

Dinlemek ve onları hani anlamak kelimeleri, o size özgüven de veriyor bu açıdan da çok güzeldi... Öncelikle telafuzla ilgili bayağı hani ilerleme kaydettiğimi düşünüyorum. Bazen sınıfta hani o kadar çok konuşma şansımız olmuyor yani konuşsanız bile hani her kelimeyi kullanamıyorsunuz. Ama burda daha farklı kelimeler hani sık sık kullanmamız gerekebiliyor. Bu açıdan telafuzla ilgili benim için İngilizce açısından olumlu olduğunu söyleyebilirim (Interviewee 2).

Understanding making faults are parts of learning processes is really important which provides learners to be active in learning process. One of students in the study mentioned about this point.

I had thought that other people, my Turkish friends, were speaking very fluently with native speakers. However, I can say this, seeing that they make mistakes like me has provided more self confidence to me (Interviewee 6).

Ben diğer insanların nativelerle çok akıcı konuştugunu zannederdim, diğer Türk arkadaşlarımın. Ama hani onlarında benim gibi hatalar yaptığını görmek bana birazcık daha özgüven sağladı diyebilirim. (Interviewee 6).

In summary, within the scope of the related research question, it is seen that students had positive perceptions related to their self-confidence. At the end of the study, their self-confidence was higher than the beginning. In this respect, the characteristics of SL environment contributed too much thing to students.

Finally, based on the qualitative results of the study, it can be concluded that the study revealed important results for the language education field. The interviews, conducted after the study, gave important results and showed that negative beliefs of students can be changed in a positive way with the help of 3D virtual environments. This study was an important opportunity for students since it would not have been possible for them practice speaking if they had not participated in this study. Students realized that they really have the ability to speak English after they practice it in a relaxing 3D environment. Even the ones that do not believe they can speak English well, changed their mind after the study because they were able to see their potential. Also, it is possible to say that since study decreased students' anxiety and increased their motivation and self-confidence, they understood that they were capable of speaking English.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings which are supported with existing literature. Then, major points obtained from the study are given in order to draw recommendations. Finally, further implications are listed for future studies by considering the findings of the study.

5.1. Major Findings and Discussions

The general purpose of the study was to understand the effect of task-based language learning in SL virtual worlds on language education in terms of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence in speaking. Firstly, students' opinions about the study related to their experiences are discussed and then their perceptions related to anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence are presented.

5.1.1. Students' Experiences in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World

The results of this study first and foremost demonstrated the effectiveness of task-based language learning in SL environment which had positive impact on students and enabled them to gain positive attitudes towards speaking English. According to the results, students were pleased about the chance of having such kind of an experience in such an attractive 3D virtual environment. In particular, they were more enthusiastic about experiencing speaking with new people especially with native ones in SL which is necessary for active usage of the target language. This experience was also helpful for learning about other cultures.

In EFL settings, the main goal of the language instruction for both teachers and students is being able to express oneself to native speakers of the target language (Payne & Ross, 2005). It is generally accepted that native speakers are the best teachers of English both as second language and foreign language (Kachru, 2005). This study suggests that SL was an effective way of forming a bridge between students and natives for enabling learners to speak with native speakers. The main reason for this is that 3D virtual worlds offer many opportunities for applying different contexts in language education and one of those opportunities is task-based language learning environments. With those tasks, learners have a chance to have different roles and communicate with native speakers. In that manner, this study enabled students to practice speaking English with role play activities in lifelike contexts. These characteristics of the SL environment and task-based activities seem to have positive effects on students' speaking English. The results showed that speaking, especially with native speakers in a 3D task-based learning environment, provided many opportunities for students. It was seen in the study that when students understood that they could speak with natives, they developed a positive attitude towards speaking and, as a result, they overcame the barriers that prevent them from speaking. All of these positive elements helped them to improve their English and speaking with native speakers paved the way for speaking with other people in real life. The findings of the study are in line with the studies in the literature. In the study of Jauregi, Canto, Graaff, Koenraad, and Moonen (2011), students were similarly observed to have positive attitude towards interaction with native speakers in the SL environment. Chen (2010) also conducted a similar study in SL environment in which Chinese students communicated with English native speakers. Likewise, the results of this study demonstrated that students were able to communicate and exchange their ideas and opinions with natives. In this study, students found speaking with natives interesting and thought that such an experience would not be easily achieved in real life. Similarly, Danielsen and Panichi (2010) indicated that

in virtual worlds students learn through social interactions by speaking with native speakers, teachers, and peers. Blasing (2010) also conducted a study in SL about online interactions between learners and native speakers of the target language. He suggested that conversation and collaboration with native speakers of the target language in SL enable learners to practice and perform in the language that is not possible in the traditional classroom settings. Moreover, the existence of native speakers in virtual worlds makes learning more meaningful and removes the artificiality of virtual worlds (Rakowski, 2011).

Furthermore, the results of the study proved that the existence of native speakers enabled students to improve their English, especially, their pronunciation and listening in addition to their speaking. Also, results of the study showed that students learned useful expressions in SL environment which native speakers use in daily life. Harrison and Toyoda (2002) conducted a study in which they brought together Japanese language learners and native speakers in Active Worlds. They found that students had the chance to notice important aspects of language which are neglected in traditional education with the help of native speakers. In light of the study conducted by Blasing (2010), it was found that the interaction with native speakers demonstrated positive results in terms of language learning on a lexical level, and suggested that further research could yield positive results in terms of the acquisition of syntax. Furthermore, Peterson (2001) also indicated that learners can view others and improve their linguistic output in 3D platforms.

According to the results of the study, the characteristics of the SL environment seemed to have advantages for students. One of the advantageous sides of SL is that students had the chance to connect from their home or dormitory with just one click. This easiness was a chance for them because they practiced their English and met with native speakers without any extra struggle. This study was an example for the usage of

virtual worlds as distance education tools. According to the results of the study conducted by Dickey (2005), the characteristics of virtual worlds are also advantageous since students do not have to go to class and the environment made them feel like they were really at school. Sheehy, Ferguson, and Clough (2007) also stated that virtual worlds have great importance in distance education since they bring new opportunities for both traditional and distance education.

According to the results of the study, the other advantageous side of SL is having an avatar representing users in the environment. This is consistent with previous studies (Aldrich, 2009; Baharum & Tretiakov, 2008; Bailenson, Yee, Merget & Schroeder, 2006; Dickey, 2003; Iqbal, Kankaanranta & Neittaanmäki, 2010). The results of the study showed that avatars enabled students to actually feel like a part of the environment which creates a difference between 3D and 2D platforms. Moreover, avatars enabled learners to have realistic experiences in such a virtual platform. In distance education tools, it should be taken into consideration that students should feel like part of the virtual environment and should focus on the lessons. This is possible with 3D virtual world environments since they offer avatar usage in a more realistic and immersive environment. According to the study conducted by Iqbal, Kankaanranta, and Neittaanmäki (2010), SL created an enhanced sense of tangible and personal experiences. Also, they indicated that avatars made students' experiences real and enabled them to have concrete experiences in the virtual worlds. The results of the study conducted by Danielsen and Panichi (2010) showed that students felt that the 3D virtual environment was more real when compared to other technologies. Moreover, Jee (2010) found in his study that avatars gave the students the chance to feel themselves in the environment which allowed students with different experiences compared to face to face classrooms.

This study is also an example of creating experiential learning environments in 3D platforms. In recent years, experiential learning in virtual worlds has been investigated by many researchers (Chittaro & Ranon, 2007). Task-based language learning is a way of creating experiential learning environments in 3D platforms. According to Ellis (2000), tasks are significant in language learning since they are helpful for supporting teaching. The study conducted by Swertz, Panichi, and Deutschmann (2010) showed that tasks enable learners to cooperate and actively participate in the learning process. They suggested that focusing on learning tasks are appropriate for language learning in 3D environments. With the help of avatars, it was possible to create a task-based language learning environment and assign different roles to students. It was helpful in terms of increasing the interaction among students, instructors, and native speakers. Results of the study demonstrated that students were satisfied in the task-based environment since the tasks attracted their attention. Students found it advantageous to speak based on a specific content which is related do daily life subjects since they learned the necessary vocabulary for real life conditions. Koenraad (2008) conducted a study in which he created a real life simulation with scenes related to daily life subjects. The results showed that students found the study as an interesting experience and thought that it was a nice change from their regular lessons. Also, they said that they learned more vocabulary and, as a result, they were better in speaking about everyday communicative situations after the study. Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Jarmon, Traphagan, Mayrath, and Trivedi (2009) demonstrated positive results in terms of experiential learning since it enabled learners to learn by doing and thus to apply this information in real life. Moreover, based on the study he conducted, Kaufman (2003) stated that assigning tasks to students will enable them to make an effort to discover the language and thus tasks provide great opportunities to learners.

During the study, some of the students faced problems related to their deficiency in the target language. However, this situation was not extremely

problematic and students were able to deal with it easily with the help of 3D environment. Likewise, in the study conducted by Hislope (2008), some problems occurred related with students since many of them lacked the vocabulary to participate fully in some conversations.

One important limitation of SL environment was the technical problems, in line with the literature. Results of this study showed that technical problems may prevent the flow of the lessons and prevent some students to reach the program. Those technical problems arise from different reasons which are related to SL program, computers or internet connection. Harrison and Toyoda (2002) faced some technical failures related to limited computer skills. Moreover, Hislope conducted a study in 2008 and investigated SL as a classroom supplement to enable students to communicate with native Spanish speakers. In the study, technical problems occurred related to computer hardware which composed the negative sides of SL. According to the results of the study conducted by Jee (2010), the students who had experience in using SL did not face technical problems too much while others who did not practice SL enough had problems. Also, it is found in this study that students faced with technical problems related with their voice chat function. Other than those problems, it is found in the literature that technical problems also related to personal skills to use the programs occur (Harrison & Toyoda 2002; Petrakou, 2010). In the study conducted by Petrakou (2010), it was observed that students had technical challenges while using the virtual world because they lacked the required skills to use virtual world efficiently. This situation did not occur in this study since workshops were conducted about SL before the study.

5.1.2. Students' Perceptions in TBLL

5.1.2.1. Students' Perceptions of *Anxiety* in Speaking English in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World.

Researchers are mainly interested in investigating anxiety in EFL. According to the results of the research, anxiety has a negative effect on language learners and it causes several problems. Speaking is the most affected skill by anxiety. Therefore, the main concern in EFL settings should be creating a low-anxiety environment. In recent years, virtual worlds have been used to investigate their affect on anxiety in language learning. Research results demonstrated positive results in that manner.

The results of this study first and foremost demonstrated the effectiveness of task-based language learning in SL environment in terms of students' anxiety towards speaking English. Students had chance to practice their English by hiding behind their avatars which helped them to overcome their anxiety related problems. They found speaking easier in that environment when compared to other environments which is consistent with previous researches. Jee (2010) indicated that SL creates a non-threatening environment which helps students to interact easily with people. This easiness is helpful for making practice in speaking English. The results of the study conducted by Wehner, Gump, and Downey (2011) demonstrated that virtual worlds can be used in language education for decreasing students' anxiety. Also, the results of the study conducted by Zheng, Wagner, Brewer, and Young (2009) is in parallel with the Wehner, Gump and Downey 's study. They found similar results and reported that students who participated activities in 3D virtual platform were able to overcome their anxiety related problems in speaking. Based on the results of her study, Hislope (2008) suggested that instructors should use SL for language learners to create conversational activities since this environment may be helpful for decreasing anxiety.

In this study, the factors effective in alleviating anxiety are determined. According to the results, one of the reasons that facilitates speaking and makes students relax is the chance to hide behind their avatars and thus hide their facial expressions. Knowing that others do not have chance to see their mimic and gesture was a relaxing factor and thus they could speak easily in the environment. This finding is in line with the previous researches. Jee (2010) indicated that based on the results of his study -which was conducted to investigate language learners' interactions in SL- the students who have not any technical problem in the environment can experience conversation in an anxiety-free environment in SL. Also, it is indicated that language learners may be very natural and authentic in such an anxiety-free environment. According to the results of the study conducted in AVALON, -one of the leading international studies which was developed for language teaching and learning in SL- many students indicated that they feel less shy when 'hiding behind their avatars' which helps them to reduce anxiety (http://avalon.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/WP2_Deliverable_1_Language_Learning_Models -.pdf). Likewise, Wang (2010) stated views about Virtlantis which is a community for language learners and teachers in SL. He reported that for the students who have anxiety related problems in language learning processes, SL gives them opportunity to hide behind their avatar and to be open when practicing foreign language. Moreover, during the Arcadia Fellowship Programme, -which was conducted to investigate foreign language learning in SL- students' anxiety was reduced. Those students were the ones who cannot speak in real life and suffer from anxiety; however, in the study, those students were much more open and inhibited when practicing foreign language in SL (Hundsberger, 2009).

Some of the students in the study found speaking with native speakers as a relaxing factor which alleviated their anxiety. Because the existence of native speakers helped them to understand that they have the ability to communicate. Consistently, Jauregi, Canto, Graaff, Koenraad, and Moonen

(2011) found in their study that communication activities conducted in 3D virtual worlds enable learners not to feel the pressure which occurs in face to face environment and as a result enables them not to get anxious. However, one of the students found it difficult to speak with native speakers and got more anxious while speaking with them which is consistent with the results of the study conducted by Ferguson (2005). According to the results of Ferguson's study, students were more comfortable while interacting with nonnative speakers since they thought that nonnative speakers can relate to the feelings of students like frustration, embarrassment, or anxiety. Students indicated that nonnative speakers are able to empathize with their students. Similarly, in the study conducted by Blasing (2010) some students experienced a strong degree of social anxiety during their interactions with native speakers in SL.

5.1.2.2. Students' Perceptions of *Motivation* in Speaking English in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World.

Results of this study revealed that virtual worlds are thought to have instructional benefits since they increase motivation and as a result increase engagement of the students, which are consistent with the literature (Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Carteaux & Tuzun, 2005; Dalgarno & Lee, 2010; Iqbal, Kankaanranta & Neittaanmäki, 2010; Lamb, 2006; McGee, 2007; Wehner, Gumpb & Downey, 2011). Results of the study conducted by Iqbal, Kankaanranta, and Neittaanmäki (2010) demonstrated that learning through virtual worlds can be engaging for learners and can affect motivation. Similarly; Jauregi, Canto, Graaff, Koenraad, and Moonen (2011) conducted a study and students in the study found SL as a motivating factor. Moreover, Wehner, Gumpb, and Downey (2011) carried out a study and indicated that virtual worlds increase students' motivation to learn a foreign language when compared to traditional classrooms.

Especially; in EFL settings, motivation plays a crucial role in learning process. For this reason stimulating students' motivation is a necessity in language education. Wehner, Gumpb, and Downey (2011) performed a study to investigate the effects of SL in learning language and their study results showed that virtual worlds are convenient platforms for increasing students' motivation to learn a foreign language.

It was found in the study that there are different elements that foster motivation in language learning. According to the results, 3D virtual environments are entertaining and joyful which motivated students to engage in the activities. They enjoyed attending activities and had fun during the lessons. 2D and face to face environments found to be as less attractive when compared to 3D environments. Hislope (2008) indicated that people tend to learn better when they enjoy what they are doing. Similarly; Wu, Yen, and Marek (2011) found in their study that entertainment taken from the learning experience is the best predictor for the long-term changes in ability. Kaplan and Haenlein (2009) indicated that a key motivation for spending time in SL is to have fun. In the study conducted by Zheng, Wagner, Brewer, and Young (2009) two groups were compared, one of the groups used 3D environment for speaking practice and the other group did not. The study results demonstrated that the group who used 3D environment found it more entertaining and as a result developed positive attitude towards English. Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Hislope (2008) showed that some of the students joined the study since SL makes learning fun. Moreover, the study results of Masters and Gregory (2010) revealed that students found their SL experience engaging and effective since they enjoyed using SL and thus SL enabled the motivation of students.

Results of the study showed that other motivating key factor for speaking English is the existence of native speakers. Students were pleased about understanding they were able to speak with native speakers. In that manner,

task-based learning environment in SL contributed too much thing for students especially for increasing their motivation. This result is also parallel with the findings in the literature. Nguyen (2008) found in his study that with the help of computer mediated communication, students had chance to communicate with new people and native speakers which is a motivating factor for them. In their study Oxford and Shearin (1994) found that motivation of students is closely related to the frequency of interaction with native speakers. Moreover; Wu, Yen, and Marek (2011) conducted a study in which EFL learners communicated with native speakers with the help of computer mediated communication. Results demonstrated that students experienced a real communication with native speakers which enabled learners to develop higher level of motivation.

The characteristics of virtual worlds are also found to be as a motivating factor in this study. Those 3D virtual environments are rich in visualized elements which make the learning process more realistic. Visually appealing 3D environments make students more motivated and they became more willing to speak, which is consistent with the literature. Omale, Hung, Luetkehans, and Plagwitz (2009) indicated that the research conducted about the motivational aspects of 3D virtual worlds showed that those environments, especially their graphical interface, motivate learners since they are visually appealing, animated, and interactive. They also indicated that 3D virtual worlds can motivate learners by enabling them to participate in goal-oriented educational activities without losing their interest. Lim, Nonis, and Hedberg (2006) found in their study that the interactive features of AW program were a motivating factor for the students and especially "they showed their fascination of the teleport machines that brought them from one world to the next with sound effects" (p.223). Moreover; according to the results of the study conducted by Peterson (2005), virtual worlds in CALL offer many opportunities that enable learners to engage in interaction which facilitate the linguistic competence.

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The richness of SL virtual world is a source of different learning experiences for students. It is possible to create a different range of activities in the environment especially the ones that motivate students. Also, SL enables students to participate in more authentic tasks when compared to face to face classrooms. Results of this study showed that interesting and meaningful activities are also helpful for motivating students which is in line with the literature. Salt, Atkins, and Blackall (2008) indicated that SL environment is flexible in creating different learning activities which address different learning styles and thus gives the learner a great deal of autonomy and increases the motivation to participate. In the study of Barab, Thomas, Dodge, Carteaux, and Tuzun (2005), learners engaged in interactive activities which are thought as a motivating factor that stimulate participation and learning.

5.1.2.3. Students' Perceptions of *Self-Confidence* in Speaking English in TBLL Activities in SL Virtual World.

In EFL classrooms, it is common to meet with students who are unwilling to use English actively even if they have enough capability in language. It is important to deal with those kinds of problems since self-confidence is closely related to both anxiety and motivation. The results of this study showed that virtual worlds enable students to gain self-confidence towards English which is in line with the literature (Henderson, Huang, Grant & Henderson, 2009; Hislope, 2008; Loureiro & Bettencourt, 2011; Wu, Yen & Marek, 2011). According to the results of the study conducted by Hislope (2008), SL is a beneficial resource for conversational opportunities and cultural experiences which enabled learners to gain self-confidence during the study. Similarly, Henderson, Huang, Grant, and Henderson (2009) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of an immersive virtual world in self-efficacy beliefs about using language in different real-life context. They found positive results in terms of self-efficacy and

additionally, they found a positive result related to self-confidence. Self-confidence of students was increased at the end of their study.

It is found in this study that there are different sources of self-confidence towards speaking English. First of all; according to the results of the study, when students realized their capabilities in using English, their self-confidence increased. They started to speak much more easily when compared to the beginning of the study, which is consistent with previous results. The results of the study conducted by Zheng, Wagner, Brewer, and Young (2009) showed that 3D virtual words enable learners to develop self-confidence and to be confident while using English actively. In their study Wu, Yen, and Marek (2011) found that when the contacts of students were positive, there was an increase in their interaction time both outside and inside the classroom. Therefore, there was an increase in students' self-confidence and, as a result, increase in their motivation. Additionally, the results of the study conducted by Jauregi and Canto (2010) demonstrated that participants learned to talk more fluently and thus, they became more confident in the target language. In addition to those findings, Jee (2010) found in his study that shy and timid students were able to express themselves in SL environment and as a result they developed self-confidence.

Results of this study also showed that another source of self-confidence is the native speakers. When students understand that they have the ability to communicate with native speakers, they gained self-confidence in English which also affected their daily-life. They were shy students who could not even speak in classes, however in the study they could communicate with natives which had positive impact on their self-confidence. According to the results of the study conducted by Wu, Yen, and Marek (2011), students found speaking with native speakers in SL environment enjoyable which enabled them to gain both self-confidence and motivation. Therefore, they reported that successful interaction with native speakers helps students to be

willing to express themselves and as a result to gain confidence in using the language.

5.2. Limitations to the Study

Although this study provides valuable information in the field of using virtual worlds in language education, sometimes the participation of students to the tasks and activities was problematic. To illustrate, while the activities were about to start, required students were not there and others waited hoping them to come. Because of this problem, two sessions overlapped in some activities. Since the study was an extra-curricular activity, participants did not take it serious and acted depending on their mood.

The other limitation of the study was the technical problems occurred during the activity times, because of the program, speed of internet or the computers of participants. Those kinds of technical problems prevented the flow of the activities. Because of the low-speed in internet connection, some students could not hear any sound.

The positive results of the study might be because of the novelty effect since the SL is a new technology. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study again with different participants within a different platform.

It can be concluded that despite all the struggle of the instructors and researchers, the real determinant of the efficiency of the program depends on the struggle of learners. If participants do not have intrinsic motivation to join such an extra-curricular activity, possible malfunctions seem to occur that interferes the integrity of the study.

5.3. Implications for Practice

Considering the results and the related literature on language learning in SL virtual world, the following implications were drawn for using virtual worlds as a supportive tool for EFL learners in terms of decreasing their anxiety, and increasing their motivation, and self-confidence.

- The language learners' attitude is significant in the learning process since those items will guide their future actions. In traditional classrooms, language educators do not try to change the negative attitudes of students; instead they are just presenting the information. This situation causes limited interaction and as a result prevents students from changing their mind. It is almost impossible to expect from this kind of an approach to spur positive thoughts. However, students' feelings need to be examined and teachers should try to use new methodologies and approaches in language learning processes by taking the negative beliefs of students into consideration. Task-based language learning in SL virtual world provides an environment which enables learners to have positive attitude. Each participant in those environments can have a responsibility and hold a different portion of the task and thus have enough interaction.

- SL provides its users with the avatars and pretty well designed environment which offer users a real-world experience. Learners may feel like they are in a face to face environment and thus may have a sense of being there. This sense of presence in such kind of a flexible and comfortable virtual environment facilitates learning and may be resulted in better participation of students when compared to face to face classrooms.

- SL is a convenient platform for assigning tasks and roles to the students and gives them responsibility in their learning processes. In terms of language education, task-based language learning in SL is very effective and has positive impact on learners as learners apply

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those tasks in a virtual but realistic and comfortable environment. Especially, tasks related to real life contexts attract learners attention mostly, since they have chance to experience in a flexible environment and gain encourage to speak before experiencing these kinds of things in real life

- SL "as a distance education" tool enables learners to get acquainted with new people especially with native speakers within a realistic and enjoyable environment. With the help of 3D virtual platforms, people from different countries around the world have chance to meet in an attractive, visually appealing, and immersive environment at the same time despite being far away from each other. Practicing speaking with native speakers in such a flexible and realistic virtual environment, paves the way for communicating orally in real life and overcoming the barriers that prevent students from speaking.

- Getting interacted with native speakers of English through SL may be a facilitating activity for students to improve their English. While communicating with native speakers, in addition to speaking, other skills may also be developed like listening and pronunciation. Moreover, it is possible to learn useful expressions that native speakers use mostly.

- EFL learners can be encouraged to communicate and express their thoughts when they are provided with a flexible, collaborative, entertaining, anxiety free, non-threatening but partially compelling atmosphere. The results of this study imply that providing EFL learners with task-based language learning activities in SL environment in which they can interact with people from all around the world enables them to overcome their problems related to speaking English.

- As part of innovations related to language education, 3D virtual worlds have considerable importance. Characteristics of SL virtual world are beneficial and advantageous for foreign language

education. First of all, SL can create an anxiety-free environment in which language learners can act naturally. This environment facilitates the interactions between the language learners and instructors, especially for the learners who are unwilling to communicate in face to face environments.

- SL helps learner to alleviate their anxiety since they have chance to hide behind their avatars by hiding their facial expressions, mimic, and gestures. This option facilitates the communication of learners and enable them to gain courage.

- In SL it is possible to create the replica of the real structures and apply structured types of tasks which enable learners to engage in more authentic tasks than face to face classrooms. Learners have chance to discover the environment and communicate with the people visiting the same place at the same time. This might be an evocatory activity for learners. Thus, learners may be motivated to learn and become more willing to communicate.

- SL provides motivational factors to spend time in this 3D environment of which is the entertaining function. As Wu, Yen, and Marek (2011) stated, entertainment taken in the learning process is the best predictor for long-term changes. This entertaining and joyful environment of SL which is more attractive than other learning platforms may motivate learners to engage in activities.

- SL may provide too much contribution for shy and timid learners that cannot speak in face to face classrooms. In that environment, learners can express themselves freely with self-confidence. It may be easier to speak in such kind of an environment since it is not face to face but realistic.

- In terms of technical problems, students faced problems related to their computer hardware, network connection, or voice chat function. It is important to inform students about the problems that they may face and how to solve those problems. Therefore, EFL

educators who wish to implement virtual worlds in their course should take the possible technical problems into consideration.

5.4. Suggestions for Further Research

The present study was a case study which attempted to understand the effect of task-based language learning in SL on language education in terms of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence in speaking. Such a period of time may give an idea about its effectiveness in terms of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. However, this time period is not sufficient to assert that SL experience might enable learners to speak English fluently. Therefore, a follow-up study should be conducted in order to explore whether SL enables learners to develop themselves in speaking fluently or not.

In Turkey, there has been only a small number of studies using SL in EFL contexts. There is a need for more studies on using SL in language education especially about the way how the characteristics of SL promotes English learning. Furthermore, the tasks in this study were mainly related to lifelike contexts. By changing the design and concept of the tasks, a future study can be carried out. For example, instead of daily-life subjects, argumentative topics or academic subjects can be the general concept of the study.

Technology is changing very fast in today's world and this also affects the developments in 3D virtual environments. With these developments, the technical capabilities of those programs will be better and also the Internet will be much faster than now. As a result, technical problems may occur less than past and do not cause too much problems in the lessons conducted in SL. Therefore, there is a need to conduct this study again in the future when the program has better technical capabilities.

In this study, participants were university students who were at least 18 years old. With a totally different target group, this study can be conducted

with same tasks. The findings of this study could be compared with a study designed with younger groups who learn English.

This study was conducted just in SL environment, there is a need to understand how the students transfer their knowledge in face to face environment. Therefore, after implementing a study in SL, a follow-up study should be conducted to understand if students are able to transfer their knowledge or not.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM (In Turkish)

Gönüllü Katılım Formu

ODTÜ Bilgisayar ve Öğretim Teknolojileri Eğitimi bölümü öğretim üyesi Yrd. Doç. Dr. S. Tuğba Bulu'nun danışman olduğu ve yüksek lisans öğrencisi Tuğba Kamalı tarafından yürütülen bu proje ile üç boyutlu görev temelli yabancı dil öğrenme ortamının katılımcıların İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik motivasyon, tutum, kaygı ve öz-yeterliklerine etkisi araştırılacaktır. Çalışma üç boyutlu sanal dünyalardan olan Second Life ortamında gerçekleştirilecektir. Öğrenciler, Second Life ortamında tasarlanmış olan ODTÜ kampüsünde mayıs ayı boyunca haftada iki, toplamda sekiz farklı aktiviteye katılacak ve belirlenen roller üzerinden İngilizce konuşma pratiği yapacaklardır.

Çalışmada uygulanacak anketler, genel olarak kişiyi rahatsız edici herhangi bir soru içermemekte, öğrencilerin İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik motivasyon, tutum, endişe ve öz-yeterlikleri hakkında sorular içermektedir. Doğru veya yanlış herhangi bir cevap yoktur, tüm cevaplar değerlendirmeye alınacaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Katılmamaktan ötürü ya da katılımdan vazgeçme sonunda olumsuz hiçbir sonuç bulunmamaktadır. Anketteki kişisel bilgileriniz ve cevaplarınız kesinlikle gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından bilimsel amaçlarla değerlendirilmek üzere kullanılacaktır.

Çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için araştırmacılara ulaşabilirsiniz:

Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. S. Tuğba Bulu, E-mail: stugba@metu.edu.tr, Telefon: +90 312 210 7520

Araştırmacı: Tuğba Kamalı, E-mail: smeetugba85@gmail.com, Telefon: +90 535 400 8429

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Katılımcının:

ADI SOYADI:……………………………………………….

TARİH:----/----/-----

İmza

BACKGROUND QUESTINNAIRE (In Turkish)

Ankette yer alan maddelere vereceğiniz samimi cevaplar güvenilir sonuçlara ulaşma açısından önemlidir. Kişisel bilgileriniz ve cevaplarınız kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır. Katılımınız için teşekkür ediyoruz.

Demografik Bilgi Formu

1. Öğrenci No: ....

2. Yaş: ....

3. Cinsiyet: □ Erkek □ Bayan

4. İnternete genellikle nereden erişiyorsunuz? (Birden çok seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz)
   - ☐ Ev
   - ☐ Okul
   - ☐ İnternet kafe
   - ☐ Arkadaşlarımın evi
   - ☐ Diğer (belirtiniz) ....

5. Haftada ortalama kaç saat İnternet kullanıyorsunuz?
   - ☐ 1 saatten az
   - ☐ 1-5 saat
   - ☐ 6-10 saat
   - ☐ 11-15 saat
   - ☐ 16-20 saat
   - ☐ 20 saatten fazla

6. İnterneti genellikle hangi amaçla kullanıyorsunuz?
   - ☐ Araştırma
   - ☐ Alış-veriş
   - ☐ Haber edinme
   - ☐ Müzik
   - ☐ Oyun
   - ☐ Haberleşme (e-mail)
   - ☐ Diğer (belirtiniz)............

7. Kaldığınız yerde (ev, yurt, vs.) aşağıdakilerden hangileri bulunmaktadır? Birden çok seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz.
   - ☐ Masaüstü bilgisayar
   - ☐ Dizüstü bilgisayar
   - ☐ Gameboy
   - ☐ Xbox
   - ☐ Playstation
   - ☐ Wii
   - ☐ Diğer ....

8. Bilgisayar veya video oyunu oynuyor musunuz? ☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

9. En çok oynadığınız üç oyunun adları nelerdir?
   ....

10. Ne kadar süredir bilgisayar ve video oyunları oynuyorsunuz? .
   - ☐ 6 aydan az
   - ☐ 1 yıl
   - ☐ 1-3 yıl
   - ☐ 3-5 yıl
   - ☐ 5 yıldan fazla

11. Haftada ortalama kaç saat oyun oynuyorsunuz?
   - ☐ 1 saatten az
   - ☐ 1-5 saat
   - ☐ 6-10 saat
   - ☐ 11-15 saat
   - ☐ 16-20 saat
   - ☐ 20 saatten fazla

12. Aşağıdaki sosyal iletişim ağlarından hangilerini kullanıyorsunuz? Birden çok seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz.
   - ☐ Facebook
   - ☐ Myspace
   - ☐ Youtube
   - ☐ Twitter

13. Second Life ve benzeri sanal dünya ortamlarını eğitim amaçlı kullandınız mı?

□ Evet □ Hayır

14. Sizce Second Life ve benzeri sanal dünya ortamları eğitim amaçlı kullanılabilir mi?

□ Evet □ Hayır

İngilizce Dil Eğitimi Tecrübesi

1. İngilizce dil eğitimine kaç yaşında başladınız? ....

2. İngilizce haricinde başka bir dil eğitimi aldınız mı?
   Evet ise belirtiniz: ....

3. İngilizce dilinin konuşulduğu herhangi bir ülkede yaşadınız mı veya ziyaret ettiniz mi?
   Ülke Adı: ....

   Kaldığınız Süre:..................

4. Ne kadar süredir İngilizce dil eğitimi görmektesiniz? ....

5. İngilizce film, dizi veya televizyon programları izliyor musunuz?
   a. hayır izlemiyorum
   b. ayda bir defadan az izliyorum
   c. ayda birkaç kez izliyorum
   d. haftada bir defa izliyorum
   e. haftada bir defadan fazla izliyorum

6. İngilizce:
   a. çok zor bir dildir
   b. zor bir dildir
   c. orta zorlukta bir dildir
   d. kolay bir dildir
   e. çok kolay bir dildir

APPENDIX C

BACKGROUND QUESTINNAIRE (In English)

Please complete this survey please as honestly as possible. All the information provided during survey will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. Thank you for your participation.

Demographic Information

1. Student ID: ....

2. Age: ....

3. Sex: □ Male □ Female

4. Where do you usually access to the Internet? (You may choose more than 1 option)
   - ☐ At home
   - ☐ On Campus
   - ☐ At Internet Cafes
   - ☐ At Friends' Houses
   - ☐ Other (please specify) ....

5. How many hours do you use the Internet in a week?
   - ☐ Less than 1 hour
   - ☐ 1-5 hours
   - ☐ 6-10 hours
   - ☐ 11-15 hours
   - ☐ 16-20 hours
   - ☐ More than 20 hours

6. For which purposes do you usually use the Internet?
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ News
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Games
- ☐ Communication (e-mail, MSN, Skype)
- ☐ Other (please specify)............

7. Which of the following are available where you ae staying (home, dormitory, etc.)?
- ☐ Desktop Computer
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Gameboy
- ☐ Xbox
- ☐ Playstation
- ☐ Wii
- ☐ Other ....

8. Do you play computer or video games? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. What are the names of 3 games that you play mostly?
....

10. How long have you been playing compuer or video games?
- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 1-3 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

11. How often do you play games in a week?
- ☐ Less than 1 hour
- ☐ 1-5 hours
- ☐ 6-10 hours
- ☐ 11-15 hours
- ☐ 16-20 hours
- ☐ More than 20 hours

12. Which of the following social networks do you use? You may choose more than 1 option.
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Myspace
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Twitter

13. Have you ever used Second Life or other forms of virtual worlds for educational purposes?

  □ Yes   □ No

14. Do you think that Second Life or other forms of social networks can be used for educational purposes?

  □ Yes □ No

Experience with English

1. At what age did you start to study English? ....

2. Have you studied another language other than English and Turkish?
  If yes, which language/languages?: ....

3. Have you ever traveled to or lived in an English-speaking country?
  If yes, which country?: ....
  How long were you there?:...................

4. How many years have you studied English? ....

5. How often do you watch TV or movies in English?
  a. Never
  b. Less than once a month
  c. 1 or 3 times in a month
  d. once a week
  e. more than once a week

6. English is:
  a. a very difficult language
  b. a difficult language
  c. a language of medium difficulty
  d. an easy language
  e. a very easy language

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (In Turkish)

1. Üç boyutlu ortamda katıldığınız sekiz farklı görev temelli İngilizce konuşma aktivitelerinde neler yaşadınız?

2. Çalışma boyunca herhangi bir sorunla karşılaştınız mı?

   a. Eğer cevabınız evetse, bu sorunları nasıl çözdünüz?

3. Aktivitelerden en çok hangisinin/hangilerinin uygulamasını başarılı buluyorsunuz?

4. İngilizce konuşma aktivitelerini yüz yüze yapmayı tercih eder miydiniz?

5. Second Life' ta yaşadığınız olumlu olarak nitelendirebileceğiniz deneyiminizi anlatınız.

6. Second Life 'ta yaşadığınız olumsuz olarak nitelendirebileceğiniz deneyiminizi anlatınız.

7. Second Life' tan önce İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik endişe durumunuz nasıldı?

8. Çalışma sonunda İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik endişe açısından herhangi bir değişiklik gözlemlediniz mi? Kendinizi bu anlamda nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

9. Second Life' tan önce İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik motivasyon durumunuz nasıldı?

10. Çalışma sonunda İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik motivasyonunuz açısından herhangi bir değişiklik gözlemlediniz mi? Kendinizi bu anlamda nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

11. Second Life' tan önce İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik özgüven durumunuz nasıldı?

12. Çalışma sonunda İngilizce konuşmaya yönelik özgüveniniz açısından herhangi bir değişiklik gözlemlediniz mi? Kendinizi bu anlamda nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (In English)

1. What are your experiences in 3D environment with eight different task-based English speaking activities?
2. Did you face with any problems during the project?
   a. If yes, how did you deal with those problems?
3. Which activity or which of the activities did you find the most successful?
4. Would you prefer to do the task-based activities in face to face environment?
5. What are your positive experiences in Second Life environment?
6. What are your negative experiences in Second Life environment?
7. How do you evaluate your anxiety towards speaking English before the project?
8. Did you observe any changes in your anxiety towards speaking English after the project? How do you evaluate yourself in that manner?
9. How do you evaluate your motivation towards speaking English before the project?
10. Did you observe any changes in your motivation towards speaking English after the project? How do you evaluate yourself in that manner?
11. How do you evaluate your self-confidence towards speaking English before the project?

12. Did you observe any changes in your self-confidence towards speaking English after the project? How do you evaluate yourself in that manner?