

SOCIAL IDENTITY CHANGE AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A
CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL IDENTITY CHANGE AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY

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This case study has been conducted in order to explore social identity change among a group of language learners studying in the English language preparatory program at a private university in Turkey. The relationship between the students' self-system types and their academic performance was also investigated. The data were collected through face-to-face interviews with eleven students and the instructors who taught them during an academic year and the assessment and performance reports each instructor prepared twice a semester. As determined by the proficiency exam administered in the beginning of the first semester, all students were in the same level of proficiency, but as a consequence of the administration's policy of grouping students in classes by their academic performance, six participants started the second semester in the class composed of students with highest grade point average while five of them started in the class composed of students with lowest grade point average. The findings of the study indicated that the all high achievers experienced productive change and the majority of them experienced additive change and an increase in their self-confidence whereas no low achievers experienced productive change and only few experienced additive and self-confidence change. Also, the results also showed that while the transition from high achievers' actual self into their possible self was harmonious, that of low achievers were submissive. The findings suggested that the identities of learners should be taken more seriously and that an investigation of their language learning experience and future goals related to the target language is necessary.

Keywords: Self-identity Change, Language Learning

ÖZ

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN SOSYAL KİMLİK DEĞİŞİMLERİ: BİR VAKA ÇALIŞMASI

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Bu vaka çalışması, Türkiye’de bir vakıf üniversitesinin İngilizce hazırlık programına devam eden öğrencilerin yaşadıkları sosyal kimlik değişimini incelemektedir. Bununla birlikte, öğrencilerin benlik sistem türleri ile akademik performansları arasındaki ilişki de incelenmiştir. Bu araştırmada kullanılan veriler, 11 öğrenciyle ve bu öğrencilerin bir akademik yıl boyunca derslerine giren öğretim elemanlarıyla gerçekleştirilen mülakatlar ve her bir öğretim elemanın bir sömestrde iki kere hazırladığı değerlendirme ve performans raporları kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Öğrencilere dönem başı uygulanan yeterlik sınavının sonuçlarına göre öğrenciler aynı yeterlik seviyesindeydi. Ancak, program yönetiminin, öğrencileri başarıları doğrultusunda sınıflandırma politikasının bir sonucu olarak, ikinci dönemin başında 6 katılımcı en yüksek puan ortalamasına sahip öğrencilerden oluşan sınıfa, 5 katılımcı da en düşük puan ortalamasına sahip öğrencilerden oluşan sınıfta yer almıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçları, yüksek puan ortalamasına sahip öğrencilerin hepsinin verimli değişim, çoğunluğunun da kazançlı değişim geçirdiklerini ve özgüvenlerinde artış sezdiklerini göstermektedir. Bulgular ayrıca yüksek akademik performansa sahip öğrencilerin önemli bir kısmının mevcut benliklerinden muhtemel benliklerine geçişlerinde uyumlu benlik sisteminin, düşük akademik performansa sahip öğrencilerin önemli bir kısmının ise itaatkâr benlik sisteminin etkisi altında olduklarını göstermektedir. Çalışma sonucunda elde edilen bulgular, öğrencilerin kimliklerinin daha ciddi bir anlayış içinde dikkate alınması gerektiğine ve öğrencilerin dil öğrenme tecrübeleri ile hedef dile dair gelecek planlarının incelenmesinin gerekli olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz Kimlik Değişimi, Dil Öğrenimi

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conducting a study on the relations between identity and language learning was first inspired by my observations in Finland, where I spent 8 months working as an assistant teacher of English under a fund granted by the National Agency in Turkey. As an emerging teacher, I often realised that there was a difference between some students although they were studying at the same school, taught by the same teacher, living in the same neighbourhood and under similar socioeconomic conditions. While some of them were very eager to speak and take part in classes, others preferred to remain silent and speak only when they were asked to do so by the teacher. Having observed this difference for some time, I was sure that this could not have been caused by the difference in their external self; the reason was somewhere in their identity and their individual social histories. This was even more obvious when I learnt that a number of these slow learners were members of a religious sect which outlaws some daily routines including watching TV, putting on make-up, wearing jewellery etc. Being aware of the fact that most Finnish children become familiar with English thanks to English movies broadcasted by national TV channels, I understood that the members of that particular religious sect were getting less exposure to English not because they were not motivated or not because they did not put forth the effort. This was simply an indirect consequence of their membership to a certain social group.

After leaving Finland, I started working as an EFL instructor at a private university in Turkey where students had to get a score of 500 on the TOEFL Institutional Testing Program (ITP) in order to pass the English preparatory school and start taking courses in their faculties. The case was quite similar to what I had observed in Finland. Students who shared the same level of English proficiency in the beginning of a semester significantly differed from each other in terms of academic performance during the semester. Although they were all learning under the same educational philosophy and they had similar opportunities, some of them performed above the standards and finished the school even before the end of the academic year while others had to repeat

classes several times to finish the school. Having realised the same problem existed in two countries with totally different characteristics, I understood that the work of a foreign language teacher was not only teaching how to read, write, and speak in a foreign language to a number of individuals, but also dealing with their complex histories and future aspirations. As a consequence, I considered it to be necessary to question the relation between the internal characteristics of the individuals, their academic performance, and the output of the language teaching process.

1.2 Conceptualisation of the Study

Studies looking at language learning from a sociocultural perspective gained more popularity in the last fifty years (e.g. Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Dörnyei, 2009; Dörnyei, 1994; Gardner, 1968; Gardner & Masgoret, 2003; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002, 2003; Hall, 1993; Weedon, 1987). Among the various sociocultural aspects affecting the language learning process, motivation attracted the greatest interest and gained the same level of popularity. However, while some researchers regarded motivation only as a drop in the bucket (Clément & Kruidenier, 1983), some others argued that a motivated learner would always be successful if s/he is provided with enough exposure to the target language (Corder, 1967).

One of the first researchers to investigate the relation between motivation and language learning was Robert Gardner (e.g. Gardner, 1968; Gardner & Lambert, 1959; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Gardner, 1982). His companion, Wallace Lambert, was one of the first figures to refer to identity in his works (Block, 2009) and the socio-educational model of learning languages, which he developed together with Lambert, was largely influenced by the work of Mowrer (1950), who argued that successful acquisition of first language learning was highly dependent on children's "desire to gain identity within the family unit and then the wider language community" (Norris-Holt, 2001; p. 1). Using this idea as his basis, Gardner started investigating the effects of this desire on second language acquisition and found out that motivation was the most influential factor in determining the success of L2 acquisition. Almost two decades after the outset of his studies on motivation and language learning, Gardner & Lambert (1982) claimed that motivation was related not only to integrative motives, but also to instrumental motives. According to their

definition, integrative motivation reflects the inner desire of the language learner to speak a particular language, to familiarise himself/herself with the cultural values of the target community and to be accepted into the society in which that language is spoken. On the other hand, instrumental motivation includes learner's desire to benefit from the target language by using it as a means to find a better job, earn more money, and acquire a higher social status etc. In other words, it can be argued that while integrative motivation aims to satisfy the individual needs, instrumental motivation aims to satisfy the materialistic needs of the learners. However, due to the new status of English as an international language, more and more researchers started to question the validity of Gardner's integrative motivation. To put it simply, English turned out to be more than being the native language of certain countries, such as the U.S.A., the U. K., and Australia etc. It was a language adopted as the medium of instruction in many countries, and the primary medium of communication for people who had acquired different native languages. As a result, the notion of integrative motivation, which reflected learners' desire to familiarise themselves with the culture and community of the target language, lost its validity since English had gotten beyond the limits of being the native language of particular nations and became the common tongue of most nations. The disappearance of the reference group pushed Gardner (2001; p.5) into reconceptualising integrative motivation as follows:

Integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community. At one level, this implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life. In the extreme, this might involve complete identification with the community (and possibly even withdrawal from one's original group), but more commonly it might well involve integration within both communities.

Although initial theories of motivation are of vital importance in language learning contexts, they fail to reflect the social change learners go through. Realisation of this gap moved some theorists to include the dynamic nature of self into the concept of motivation. In their study, *Possible Selves*, Markus and Nurius (1986; p.954) argue the necessity of including the concept of selves in education as follows:

Possible selves represent individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming,

and thus provide a conceptual link between cognition and motivation. Possible selves are the cognitive components of hopes, fears, goals, and threats, and they give the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics. Possible selves are important, first, because they function as incentives for future behaviour (i.e., they are selves to be approached or avoided) and second, because they provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of self.

In brief, the theory argues that learners' respective opinions about the possibilities and threats that await them in the future should not remain neglected since an analysis of these may provide educators both with a chance to interpret students' current self, and the possible changes on their self in the future by establishing a link between their cognition, behaviour, and emotion. Nevertheless, the theory of possible selves focused too much on individuals' psychology and did not include the external factors that are of great value in the construction of self, such as power relations, learning environment, cultural norms, significant others¹, and the nature of interaction between the learner and his/her significant others etc. In order to strengthen the theory on the link between motivation, identity, and language learning, Dörnyei (2009) introduced the theory of *L2 Motivational Self System*, which consists of *Ideal L2 Self*, *Ought-to L2 Self*, and *L2 Learning Experience*. Within this system, *Ideal L2 self* refers to the position at which the language learner would like to reach by learning the second language, while *Ought-to L2 Self* is defined as the position that the learner believes s/he should reach after acquiring the target language. The third component of the system, *L2 Learning Experience*, is concerned with the effect of the learning environment and prior learning experiences on the acquisition of the second language. Dörnyei included a wider range of factors in his system, compared to abovementioned researchers, and he also integrated the concept of self and the impact of the social change learners experience into his theory. However, as a psycholinguist, Dörnyei focuses too much on the psychological aspects of learning and overlooks the "socially and historically constructed relations between language learners and language learning" (Huang, 2012; p.3).

¹ It should be noted that, within this study, the concept of significant other does not refer to a person's romantic partner. Instead, it refers to any person who has strong influence on the learner including but not limited to parents, friends, classmates, roommates, relatives etc.

All in all, theories mentioned so far focused on creating a link between the internal variables of the learners and the output of the learning process. While they successfully emphasized the role their cognitive abilities and motivation play in learning a target language, they oftentimes neglected the importance of the social context surrounding the learners. Language learners are in constant interaction with other people and they grew up under the influence of the cultural norms of their societies. As a result, they learn to position themselves within their social contexts and the place where they positioned their selves inevitably affects their language learning process. Therefore, a theory which regards learning as a dynamic and social activity, and takes social context, significant others, prior experiences, the needs and expectations of the learners into consideration is needed in order to have a full understanding of the relation between language learners and the learning process. Johnson (2009; p.3) explains the reason why the sociocultural approach is needed when studying the impact of historical, social, and cultural factors on learning as follows:

How an individual learns something, what is learned, and how it is used will depend on the sum of the individual's prior experiences, the sociocultural context in which learning takes place, and what the individual wants, needs, and/ or is expected to do with that knowledge.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

According to the theory of constructivism, learning occurs when new information is merged with prior information, which means, in order to learn, learners should be able to create a link between what they learn and what they already know. Whether or not learners can succeed in creating such a link depends on their experiences and a reflection of these experiences. In this regard, in order for learning to occur, there should be an active interaction between learners and the social context in which they live. This active interaction, as well as the attitudes and perceptions of the learner, is highly influential on success levels. However, this school of psychology was criticised by some of the philosophers because of the "introspective and objective methods" employed during the investigation of higher mental development (Johnson, 2004; p. 106) and Piaget's claim that higher mental functions unfold independent of social contexts and they are not influenced by external processes (p. 109).

One of the philosophers who were not content with the existing methods of analysis was Lev Vygotsky, who “developed a fundamentally different method based on Engel’s dialectic philosophy, which stresses the importance of change as the main factor in human social development” (Johnson, 2004; p. 106). In his Sociocultural Theory (SCT), Vygotsky (1978) argues that learning is not a passive transfer of knowledge between people. Learning is constructed as a result of interaction between humans and their lived experiences. He also asserts that efficient interaction with other people is a must for successful cognitive development in learners, since other people are the only ones who can provide learners with mediatory tools to facilitate their learning. However, interaction with others, on its own, is not enough for learning. Vygotsky (1978; p.57) emphasizes the equal importance of learners’ mental structure and using the learnt information in practice as follows:

Every function in the child’s cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals.

In addition, Vygotsky considers the natural or biological lines of development only as a pre-requisite for higher mental development, which means that he regards them as raw materials which are yet to be processed. Vygotsky believed that higher mental functions do not originate from the biological characteristics of the person. Instead, he argues that higher mental functions originate as a result of an ongoing interaction “in a variety of social, cultural, and institutional settings”, during which the raw material can be processed (Johnson, 2004; p.109).

Vygotsky also asserts that language plays a crucial role in “the transition from the interpersonal [level] to the intrapersonal [level]” (Johnson, 2004; p. 108). When it comes to the learning of languages, Vygotsky (1978; p. 24) also states that the harmony between speech and the practical activities performed by the learner is “the most significant moment in the course of intellectual development”. To illustrate the existence of intellectual development during learning, Vygotsky gives the example of young children who, at early ages, name their drawing after they are done with them, but later on, describe the

picture they will draw and then start actual drawing. When this example is adapted into language learning contexts, it can be argued that in the early stages, learners will perform language activities without creating a mental construct first but, as time passes by, they will be able to design and think about their performances even before the actual performance.

Another important concept within SCT is the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which explains the relation between interpersonal and intrapersonal levels. Vygotsky (1978; p. 86) defines ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." To put it simply, ZPD refers to the area of exploration for which learners are cognitively prepared but can be reached only with the help of more knowledgeable others (also referred to as more capable peers). Although the initial implication of ZPD refers to teachers, friends, and parents as the more knowledgeable other, this is not necessarily the case in the modern world. Today, books, the internet, computers, and even smart phones can be regarded as mediums that can help the learner reach at his/her own ZPD (Galloway, 2001). This process of receiving help from a more knowledgeable other, known as scaffolding, is another example of the importance of social interaction for learning.

Vygotsky was more interested in the potential level that the learner can reach at and the process of reaching at his/her full potential compared to the output of the learning process and actual achievement. In a similar fashion, he claimed that two learners who were exactly at the same level of actual development, as determined by their academic performance, may exhibit different levels of progress in accordance with the help and guidance they receive from adults and more capable peers (Johnson, 2004). Also, he asserts that "an essential feature of learning is that it creates the zone of proximal development; that is, learning awakens a variety of internal development processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent development achievement" (Vygotsky, 1978; p. 90). Vygotsky regards learning not as the unfolding of the abilities that were already available when we were born but as "the transformation of these

capacities that is initiated by the child's sociocultural environment" (Johnson, 2004; p. 111).

Although Vygotsky and his sociocultural theory hold a very important part in forming the theoretical relevance between identity and language learning, he was not the only one who helped the understanding of this relevance become easier. Bakhtin (1981, 1984), Bourdieu (1977, 1984), Lave and Wenger (1991), and Weedon (1987) went along with Vygotsky as sociocultural theorists whose work has had a broad impact on the field of identity and language learning (Norton, 2006).

Mikhail Bakhtin is another Russian philosopher who is well known for his work on the philosophy of languages. He asserts that language cannot be investigated as an independent construct since it is dialogic, which means it cannot exist if speakers do not struggle to create a meaning (Norton, 2006). In this regard, Bakhtin regards language "not as a matter of individual activity, but an activity that necessarily comprises communication between two or more individuals" (Marchenkova, 2005, p. 113). Also, similarly to Vygotsky, Bakhtin attached more importance to meaning than he did to words and structures and he opposed the idea that words are neutral and they always convey the same meaning for everybody involved. He took the position that "the word is individual" and "everything that is said, expressed, is located outside the 'soul' of the speaker and does not belong only to him", which means "[t]he word cannot be assigned to a single speaker" (Bakhtin, 1986; p. 121). By doing so, Bakhtin argued that he regards learning a second/foreign language as a process of appropriation and familiarisation in which the speaker tries to adjust himself/herself to the second/foreign language, which means learners go through a process of transformation while learning the language (Widdowson, 2002). Besides, Bakhtin draws a distinction between the proficiency level and the performance of linguistic capabilities arguing the former does not necessarily bring about the latter: "Frequently a person who has an excellent command of speech in some areas of cultural communication, who is able to read a scholarly paper or engage in scholarly discussion, who speaks well on social questions, is silent or very awkward in social conversation" (Bakhtin, 1986; p. 80). When this statement is considered within the context of foreign language classrooms, it might be the case that a student with an exceptionally

high level of academic performance may lack the skills needed for successful interaction.

As mentioned above, Bakhtin regards language learning as a process of familiarisation and appropriation for the language learners. He means that learners should adopt themselves to the different entities that exist in the target language but not in their native language. As Marchenkova (2005) affirms, the same process of familiarisation and appropriation also exists for culture since, "[a]ccording to Bakhtin, when one learns a language one does not merely acquire technical communication skills but immerses oneself in that language's culture and the entire world view that the language gives expression to" (p. 114-5). Bakhtin regards the foreign culture as a target for learners. According to him, language learners go through a cultural transformation while learning a language and after learning the language, the learner carries himself back and forth between the two cultures. This means that the acquisition of another culture does not necessarily destruct the native culture of the speaker; "[o]n the contrary, by learning another culture the learner simultaneously enriches his or her own and at the same time his or her own culture is an indispensable factor in assimilating another culture" (Marchenkova, 2005; p. 118). Moreover, Bakhtin asserts that this transformation is not unilateral; the language learner also contributes to the transformation of the target culture into something new. In line with these, it can be argued that Bakhtin does not regard language learning only as a tool to promote the linguistic skills of learners in the target language. Instead, he believes that educators should focus more on promoting intercultural competence, which will ultimately help a sense of mutual understanding among people from different countries and cultures (Marchenkova, 2005).

As maintained by Bakhtin, both language learning and cultural appropriation are processes of change and transformation. By learning an additional language and becoming familiar with another culture, the learner also undergoes a change and transformation in his/her personal identity, which means "[b]oth culture and language ... participate in the dynamics of identity growth" and sometimes this transformation "results in the emergence of a new person" (Marchenkova, 2005; p. 115). According to Bakhtin, this change and transformation is a positive one and learner's identity is strengthened even more whenever s/he learns a new language and familiarises himself/herself

with another culture. Bakhtin argues that dialogue and interaction within the social world is a must for personal growth and an expansion of learners' horizon since "[a]n independent, responsible and active discourse is the fundamental indicator of an ethical, legal and political human being" (Bakhtin, 1981; p. 350).

In addition to "a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world", states Norton and McKinney (2011; p. 73), "SLA theorists need to address how relations of power in the social world affect learners' access to the target language community." Although Vygotsky and Bakhtin helped the researchers trying to understand the relation between identity and the language learners a lot, they did not focus on the power relations that learners build with others during and after the learning process. On the other hand, a French philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu, was more interested in the unequal power relations between interlocutors and he argued that the owner of an utterance himself/herself may be more important than the utterance itself as follows: "speech always owes a major part of its value to the value of the person who utters it" (Bourdieu, 1977; p. 652). Both Norton (2006; p. 4) and Norton and McKinney (2011; p. 78) mention that according to Bourdieu "the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks, and that the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships." Bourdieu (1977) also asserts that people do not only speak to exchange information with each other, but they also want to be "believed, obeyed, respected, [and] distinguished" (p. 648). However, whether the speaker will be able to receive a positive feedback during the exchange of information depends not only on his/her verbal skills. The symbolic power possessed by speakers and whether they are "legitimate" or "illegitimate" speakers has a lot to do with the speaker's ability to "command a listener" (1977; p.648). In this regard, Bourdieu argues that proficiency should not only be conceived as the satisfactory performance of the four language skills and notions like "right to speech" and "the power to impose reception" should also be included.

One of the most important areas of interest for Bourdieu was the concept of habitus, which consists of "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious

aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them" (Bourdieu, 1990; p. 53). In other words, according to Bourdieu, the practices and actions of the human being are influenced by the social structure and every action and practice is a reflection of the social structure in which the person lives. As he argues, after a time, this structure is accepted and internalised by the person through the habitus (Lau, 2004). In this respect, habitus is an important concept in educational contexts since learners are in constant contact with an institution (the department/school), an authority (department/school administration and teachers), and members of a society (friends, family members). In accordance with the definition of habitus, learners' actions and practices are highly influenced by their department, the school administration and teachers, and their friends and the influence, as a result, will be reflective of the social structure in which s/he learns. As Crozler, Clayton, and Colliander (2008) and Reay, Crozler, and Clayton (2009) found in their studies, "institutional habitus" has an influence on the experiences of learners and it is a concept that must be considered when it comes to identity construction during the learning process.

Other concepts introduced by Bourdieu are social space and symbolic power. According to Bourdieu, people are grouped in line with a combination of three capitals they possess: economic (symbolic) capital, cultural capital, and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). In this sense, economic capital refers to the power people have in accordance with the value of their materialistic possessions while cultural capital refers to assets that cannot be gained through the economic capital, such as education, style of speech, and skills that provide the person with a higher status. Lastly, social capital refers to the power one can get through his/her membership in certain networks and institutions. Bourdieu (1986) argues that social capital is always in direct proportion to the power of these networks and institutions which the person is a member of. The symbolic power of a person, as asserted by Bourdieu, is determined through a combination of the three capitals. However, the importance of these capitals within themselves changes from one group to another. For example, while the economic capital of a person provides him/her with a great power in one group, it may not be of crucial importance in another group. Therefore, people are in a continuous struggle with each other to ensure that what they have as capitals is regarded as being appropriate and significant by others. This being said,

Bourdieu (1989) affirms that this struggle takes place in the social space rather than the geographical space. When the concepts of habitus and symbolic power taken into consideration together, it can be argued that what people do and why they do what they do are in direct relation to the capitals they possess and the influence of their social structure on them. In the language learning context, this means that how learners approach to the foreign language has a lot to do with their expected financial and non-financial possessions, their membership to certain networks and their relationship with certain groups and the social structure in which they have been living.

In addition to Bakhtin and Bourdieu, who offered us ways to understand that language does not only consist of vocabulary items and grammatical structures, Weedon (1987) and Lave and Wenger (1991) helped us understand that language learning is an inherently social process. For example, Weedon (1987; p. 21) always regarded language as a bridge between the individual and the society around him/her:

Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed.

Weedon (1987) notes that language, which she regards as the bridge that stands between us and the larger social networks, is the place where our subjectivities and identities are constructed. Her depiction of language brings together the idea that each language learnt will provide the learner with an access to different social networks and this will offer him/her different points of view. As Norton (2000) argues, involvement in new social networks and transformation of people's life styles and points of view will have an influence on people's identity. Similar to Weedon, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that "learning is an integral and inseparable part of social practice" (p. 31). They assert that, since language is the essential means of communication between people, the learning of another language cannot be neutral from the socioeconomic and political ideologies of the time on which the language was learnt (Pennycook, 1994). Within this context they focused on the concept of imagined communities, which was originally coined by Benedict Anderson (1991), and argued that as learning is influenced by the past and existing communities in which people lived and live, it will also be influenced by the

communities in which they imagine to live. Moreover, Kanno and Norton (2003; p. 241) introduce the concept of imagined communities as follows:

Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination. In our daily lives we interact with many communities whose existence can be felt concretely and directly. These include our neighborhood communities, our workplaces, our educational institutions, and our religious groups. However, these are not the only communities with which we are affiliated. As Etienne Wenger (1998) suggests, direct involvement with community practices and investment in tangible and concrete relationships—what he calls *engagement*—is not the only way in which we belong to a community. For Wenger, *imagination* —“a process of expanding oneself by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (p. 176) — is another important source of community.

In this regard, it can be argued that while learning a language, the type of community in which the learner imagines to live in the future may be indicative of his/her approach to the target language.

Finally, as Huang (2012, p.4) puts it, “from the sociocultural perspective, a person’s identities are socially and discursively constructed, so a person’s identities are closely related to language”. In other words, by participating in social interaction and making use of our mental constructs, we are also constructing our identities as human beings. Just like learning, interaction with others is also crucial for identity construction considering the fact that identities are socially constructed (Norton, 2000). On the grounds that people learn languages in order to communicate with others, language learning is also a social activity and since it includes a certain level of interaction with others, the process of language learning is also effective in learners’ identity construction.

In accordance with the suggestions of abovementioned theorists, the present study focuses on “the importance of change as the main factor in human social development” (Johnson, 2004; p. 106). Language learners are likely to experience a change in their social identity because they will be able to increase their symbolic capital by having the opportunity to use that language to achieve

financial gains, their cultural capital by being more knowledgeable about the cultural and societal value systems of the target community, and their social capital by having a greater chance to widen their social circle after meeting people with whom they do not share a common mother tongue. In this regard, this thesis primarily aims to explore the self-identity changes learners undergo during their time at a language preparatory school. Investigating the relationship between learners' language learning experiences and their future dreams is another focus of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining Identity

The result of a web search within the Encyclopaedia Britannica website² shows that the concept of identity exists in many branches of modern science such as mathematics (identity matrix), philosophy (identity theory), theology (Christian identity), psychology (dissociative identity disorder), logic (identity proposition), botany (genetic identity) etc. Similarly, Block (2009; p. 43) argues that the concept of identity cannot belong to one single field and lists down some different types of identity as follows:

Table 1: Types of individual and collective identities

Ascription/affiliation	Based on
Ethnic identity	shared history, descent, belief systems, practices, language and religion, all associated with a cultural group
Racial identity	biological/genetic make-up, i.e. racial phenotype.
National identity	shared history, descent, belief systems, practices, language and religion associated with a nation state

² <http://www.britannica.com/bps/search?query=identity>

Table 1: Types of individual and collective identities (continued)

migrant identity	ways of living in a new country, on a scale ranging from classic immigrant to transmigrant
Gender identity	nature of conformity to socially constructed notions of femininities and masculinities, as well as orientations to sexuality and sexual activity
Social class identity	income level, occupation, education and symbolic behaviour
Language identity	relationship between one's sense of self and different means of communication, understood in terms of language, a dialect or sociolect, as well as multimodality.

In the last two decades, the focus on motivation shifted towards concepts like learner identity, investment, and subjectivity (Huang, 2012). Learner identity gained recognition among scholars in 1970s and 80s (Norton, 2006) and the mutual relations between learners' identities, their motives and objectives for learning languages, and their success levels in the language learning process have now become a topic studied by many researchers (Block, 2009). In the literature, there are various definitions for identity within the SLA context.

In *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; p. 492) social identity is defined as follows:

[T]he way a person categorizes themselves in relation to an identifiable social group, such as the nation state, or one's gender, ethnicity, class, or profession. Social identities are multiple, changing, and often in conflict with one another. They are constructed to a large extent through the way people use language in discourse.

In her seminal book, Norton (2000) defines identity as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). Gee (2000) emphasizes the multiplicity of identities and defines identity as "being recognised as a "kind of person" in a given context" (p. 99). In addition, Johnson (2003; p. 788) argues that identity is a construct which is "relational, constructed and altered by how I see others and how they see me in our shared experiences and negotiated interactions." Others define identity as being dynamic and subject to change at all times (Lobatón, 2012), a natural result of living together with others (Wenger, 1998) a sense of who a person is (Swann, Deumert, Lillis, & Mesthrie, 2004). In addition, it should be noted that in educational sciences and SLA, the concept of identity is used interchangeably with terms like self and subjectivity (Huang, 2012; Luk & Lin, 2006; Bonny Norton, 2010).

2.2 Identity Change

As mentioned before, in the poststructuralist approach, identity is defined as being dynamic, complex, and subject to change across time and space. As Dolby and Cornbleth (2001) state, people, especially the young, do not live within fixed social borders and pre-defined categories. Instead, people change and also, they change the ones around them. Change, in this regard, is the essential force that pushes people to experience a journey of identity. To illustrate, if this change is political, people may change geographical boundaries or if it is a financial change, people may change professions or review their income and expenditure. In the case of learning a new language, on the other hand, the change is usually social and it affects a change on people's social identity. As Demirezen (2007) states, both a Czech proverb "*[I]earn a new language and get a new soul*" and a Turkish proverb "*[i]f you speak one language you are one person, but if you speak two languages, you are two people*" reflect the social change learners experience after learning a new language. This idea is also supported by scholars such as Kellman (2003) Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000), and Taylor (2010), who believe that learning a new language equals to gaining a new identity.

People connect with others through a form of language and learning another language will lead them to be able to communicate with a wider group of

speakers. Their relation to this new group of speakers will be shaped accordingly and considering what Norton (2000) asserted, this change of relations make the change on identity unavoidable. For example, in Norton (2000) study on five immigrant women, most of the participants experienced a change on their identity since learning English in a country where English is one of the official languages provided them with opportunities that wouldn't be possible without enough proficiency in English. On the other hand, some of the participants who had experienced a change on their identity expressed this change as being negative. They stated that they were not able to reach an adequate level of proficiency in English due to various reasons and they did not possess the same level of social status and value as they had had back in their native countries. Furthermore, identity change is possible in not only ESL contexts but also in EFL contexts. In Norton and Kamal's (2003) study on Pakistani children learning English, the result was the same and learners experienced a change on their identities. However, in this case, the change was caused by different reasons. Participants of the study stated that they "imagined a future society in which Pakistan was peaceful, true to the principles of Islam, and a contributing member of the international community" (p. 301). Most of the participants of the study expressed that by learning English they had come closer to their dream. In addition, they hoped that their knowledge of English would help them better introduce their country to foreigners and they could change negative attitudes towards their country.

2.3 Identity, Adolescence, and Transition to Higher Education

Adolescence is frequently referred to as being a period when the individual undergoes intense physical, biological, cognitive, and emotional changes (Kroger, 2004, 2007; Morsunbul, 2013) and a course in human life that covers many aspects of our lives including "home, family, work, school, resources, and role" (Teipel, 2012). Moreover, the change itself faced a considerable change over the years and today's adolescents experience this change quite differently compared to what their parents had gone through. Today, the change is a lot more gradual and it takes today's adolescents longer to gain their financial and social independence and the experiences adolescents go through vary considerably between members of different genders, races, and social classes (Teipel, 2012).

Late adolescence is the bridge between childhood and adulthood and the final step of youth, making it the time when identity construction reaches its peak (Kroger, 2004). During late adolescence, the human being is forced to answer many questions that will shape his/her adult identity. According to Kroger, (2007; p. 87-88) the questions that are the most troubling for late adolescent university students are as follows:

Who am I *really*, and what will happen to me? What do *I*, not my parents, but *I* really believe in? So much responsibility lies out there for me – can I really do it? What if I don't make it through school? Do I really want a long-term relationship? Do I really want *this* relationship? Could I really handle being a parent? Will I be able to earn enough to take care of a family? How can I really make a contribution to life and to other people? What will make me happy? How can I feel a sense of completeness in my life? Why is there so much evil in the world?

The questions Kroger (2007) noted down after conducting numerous interviews in studies of identity show that during late adolescence, adolescents are inclined to question their academic, professional, and personal capabilities, they try to find out their individual preferences, and they want to understand how they can get to become a worthwhile individual who leads a meaningful life. Unlike previous periods of adolescence, late adolescence is the time when biological changes lose their prominence (Archibald, Graber, & Brooks-Gunn, 2005) and psychological and societal domains assert dominance (Kroger, 2007).

The psychological issue that matter most for late adolescents is autonomy (Kroger, 2007). As stated by Zimer-Gembeck and Collins (2003; p. 175), "[d]uring adolescence the development of autonomy typically accelerates because of rapid physical and cognitive changes expanding social relationships, and additional rights and responsibilities." As a result of the changes late adolescents go through, they want to renegotiate their relationship with their parents and start to realise that they are also people who have pearls and pitfalls. In addition, they start to form emotional connections with people other than those in their immediate families including their friends and romantic partners (Russell & Bakken, 2002). Moreover, as a result of the behavioural changes they experience, they want to show people that they are able to make decisions independently and they don't need to go to their parents every time they seek advice. If the adolescent feels that his/her parents are not appreciative of his abilities does not value him/her as an individual, s/he usually

makes approaches to a peer group which is more than happy to accept him provided that s/he will act in accordance with their existing code of conduct (F. Taylor, 2013). In an effort to prove that they possess this capability, they may do whatever their peers ask them to do without considering the potential risks and dangers involved. However, Taylor (2013; p. 1) states that their being convenient for interference may not always be risky or dangerous “[d]epending on the adopting group...Superficially displayed attitudes can end up reshaping one’s identity, but it is a totally different matter if the change is triggered by, for example, a questionable street gang or by a well-intended teacher.” In addition, as a result of the development in their cognitive skills, late adolescents want everyone to realize that they have their own attitudes and beliefs regarding issues like religion, politics, moral principles etc. (Russell & Bakken, 2002) and they want others to respect their opinions. They also understand that there are many viewpoints other than their own and some of these might be more practical or appropriate than theirs. Furthermore, by realising that there can be more than one right answer to a problem, they learn to value what others think and believe (Teipel, 2012). These arguments are in exact accordance with what Fleming (2005) found in a study of 994 Portuguese adolescents. Out of the 11 items in the questionnaire asking the participants whether they desire them or not, they selected the following five items respectively:

1. To choose my hairstyle and dress as I please. (≈95%)
2. To have own ideas on politics, religion and education. (≈85%)
3. To have my own money to spend without supervision. (≈80%)
4. To decorate my room as I wish. (≈80%)
5. To solve own problems without the help of parents. (≈75%)

The findings indicate that at this period of their lives, adolescents tend to prioritize concepts such as ability, capacity, and independence, all of which are also included in various definitions of autonomy in contexts of learning (e.g. Benson, 2001; p. 47; Holec, 1981; p. 3; Littlewood, 1996; p. 427).

Another domain that dominates late adolescence is societal influences since it is the time when new and comparatively larger social groups and institutions will decide whether or not to accept the adolescent “as a fledging member of a collective order” (Kroger, 2007; p. 92). This is particularly important

considering the fact that the acceptance and appreciation of the adolescent by others will give the impression that s/he is recognized by others as an emerging adult. The story of a 21 one-year-old female may help illustrate the link between the adolescent and the society (Kroger, 2007; p. 92):

I realized I had an identity when I started to feel like I actually belonged in society. This happened after four years of living and working in [names a city], when I returned to [names another city] where I was born and grew up. This return gave me a feeling of having found a place in society, a place where I felt comfortable. I now know the career path I want to pursue and how to achieve it. I know myself, and I like who I am. I do have questions, though, about the meaning of life and why I exist.

In this regard, social identity can be regarded as being partially constructed through the "adaptation [of an individual] to a social context" (Baumesiter & Muraven, 1996; p. 405). In other words, one feels it is necessary to act in accordance with the norms and values of the society in order to be a functioning member. However, sometimes it is not the individual that is forced to act in tandem with the larger group. The individual might also obligate the members of the group to play along with himself/herself, provided that s/he has "identity capital" resources that are appealing to the others (Côté & Levine, 2002). Kroger (2007; p. 94) define identity capital resources and describe how they function within the society as follows:

Identity capital describes the personal resources that an individual brings to various social contexts... [It] refers to two types of individual assets: *tangible* and *intangible*. An individual's intangible assets are those that are socially visible, that serve as "passports" into other social and institutional spheres. Examples of tangible assets would be one's academic credentials or group memberships. Intangible identity capital resources refer to individual personality characteristics and cognitive abilities used to negotiate various obstacles and opportunities within a certain context. Thus identity capital refers to investments that people make in who they are. Optimal identity adaptation is based on the wise use of one's tangible and intangible resources in the "identity markets" of late modern communities.

Based on this excerpt, one can argue that an adolescent whose academic performance is higher compared to that of his/her peers or who can help his/her peers get involved in social groups that were hitherto not accessible to them and experience the new rights granted after their 18th birthday is capable of

having an impact on the larger social group on his/her own. However, this impact can be either detrimental, as in the case of adolescents experimenting cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana as a result of peer pressure (Clark & Lohéac, 2005; Simons-Morton & Farhat, 2010; Simons-Morton, 2007), or beneficial by motivating them "to study harder in school, volunteer for community and social services and participate in sports and other productive endeavours" (de Guzman, 2007; p. 1).

In addition to psychological and societal issues, there are two questions that seem to require late adolescents' immediate attention: a future partner to marry and a career path to lead their life. As a result of the intense biological changes they go through, late adolescents start to "adjust to a sexually maturing body and feelings [and] establish a sense of sexual identity [which] includes incorporating a personal sense of masculinity or femininity into [their] personal identity, establishing values about sexual behaviour and developing skills for romantic relationships" (Teipel, 2012; p. 1). Following the emergence of the need for intimacy, the adolescent starts thinking about whether or not s/he'll be able to form a romantic relationship, with what type of a partner s/he is supposed to form that relationship, what the qualities of the person s/he would like to marry should be etc. During the quest for finding a suitable partner, the adolescent is likely to explore once again who s/he truly is and decide on the characteristic properties s/he would like her/his partner to have in order to find the right partner. Studies investigating the link between identity and intimacy have revealed that late adolescents "who have been more advanced in terms of identity statutes have also generally been more advanced in terms of their intimacy status development" (Kroger, 2007; p. 99). Another concern of the late adolescent that needs to be dealt with is the issue of finding a job that will satisfy their personal and professional needs. At this point of their lives, late adolescents may be forced to find a job to earn their living or they may feel obliged to draw a career path even before they are given a chance to understand what kind of a profession would fit their personal interests. This may oblige late adolescents to choose a particular career path not because they desire it, but because others believe that it is the correct decision. However, the choice of a particular career path may not always be affected by another subject; at times, the choice is made completely and solely by the individual involved. To illustrate, in a study of 3461 college students, both personal traits

such as being self-regulated and innovation oriented and external factors such as having entrepreneurial role models have a role in predicting entrepreneurial intent (Geldhof, Weiner, Agans, Mueller, & Lerner, 2014). Nevertheless, it is crucial for late adolescents to be set free in their choice of career paths since the "choice of vocational direction in late adolescence will set up the initial framework for the way in which one's early adult years will be structure" (Kroger, 2007; p. 101).

The three contexts that affect the identity development of late adolescents are family, peers, and educational and work settings (Kroger, 2007). Studies showed that late adolescents who have already explored or in the process of exploring identity-defining values and commitments were usually raised in families that attach a great importance on individuality and connectedness (Kennedy, 1999; Kroger, 2007). On the other hand, adolescents who possessed a lower level of autonomy, who felt greater emotional attachment to others, and who had overprotective and overinvolved parents were frequently associated with adopting identity-defining values and commitments without sufficient exploration, usually likening their identities to those of their parents or beloved ones (Kroger, 2007; Perosa, Perosa, & Tam, 1996). Moreover, Schulthesis and Blustein (1994) found that being raised by overprotective and overinvolved parents to whom their child is emotionally attached had a bigger role in the identity construction of female late adolescents rather than males. In like manner, the identity-formation period of the late adolescent lasts shorter when the communication within the family is open and parents and children can put their concerns about each other more explicitly (Kroger, 2007; Perosa et al., 1996). It is for this reason that "identity achieved women reported feeling a balance between separateness and connectedness with their parents, and that parents did not triangulate them into their disputes but rather responded to their needs for autonomy by developing a mutual relationship with them" (Kroger, 2007; p. 108).

The peer group is another context that has a considerable role in the identity formation of late adolescents. As indicated earlier, as a result of their need for developing intimate relationship with their peers, late adolescents try to get involved in as many peer groups as possible. After a time, late adolescents start to develop an attachment to their peers similar to the one they feel towards

their parents. Just like those who are affected by the superiority of their fathers and mothers try to be like them, some late adolescents also try to adopt the possible aspects of the identity of their peers such as their personality traits and physical appearance. Nevertheless, the adolescents only take those who, according to them, is more capable than they are and those who hold an important place in the group which they want to identify themselves as a member of (Helms et al., 2014). As a consequence of the similarity between the connectedness they feel towards their parents and peers, over the course of adolescence, late adolescents start connecting more their parents than they do to their parents since they spend more time with their peers. To put it another way, late adolescents replace their parents as main caregivers and problem solvers with their peers because they are more close and more connected to their peers than they are to their parents. However, the connectedness between peers come to an abrupt end when the adolescents start to move into paired relationships with members of opposite sex (Kroger, 2007).

The last context that affects the identity development of late adolescents is the institution in which they study. Since these places can provide late adolescents with a chance of meeting a great number of people, they make it possible for late adolescents to investigate, explore and define many different types of identities that hitherto remained unknown to them. As they meet with these new identities, the adolescents make a comparison between what they have and what others offer, and thus, they start reconstructing some aspects of their identity by adopting the favourable aspects offered by others. Whether this adoption will be permanent or not depends on whether or not others will react positively to it, as the late adolescent had done before adopting it (Kroger, 2007).

Some studies indicated that not only the peers within those institutions but also the administrative structure of them is quite likely to have a role in the identity construction process of the late adolescent. Adams and Fitch (1983) and Kroger (2007) found that male students who have already gone through a period of exploration of values and commitments that are significant for their respective identities are more attracted to schools that are more disciplined and less communication oriented. That is to say that, having already investigated

and evaluated their own identity, such adolescents do not regard the school as a venue for interaction with others but rather as a platform on which they can thrive academically, which, in turn, will pave their way to becoming scholarly people, and hence reconstruction of their identity in accordance with their new status.

It is worthy of note that late adolescence is a period that coincides with transition into higher education. It is therefore necessary to understand the link between adolescence, transition into a higher education institution, and the identity of the learner. The fact that most of the students in Turkey are required to pass a foreign language proficiency test in their first year at university prompts researchers to include foreign language learning as a contributing cause of this relation. Taylor (2013, p. 1-2) explains the importance of gaining an understanding of this relation as follows:

The developmental stage when identity processes are at their most complex peak – adolescence – is also the period when most foreign language learning occurs...Identity complexities inherent in adolescence therefore overlap with the identity complexities that are inherent in language learning. It is sometimes said that learning a language means learning a new identity. Being an adolescent also means learning a new identity: the identity that one will manifest in one's community, at the hub of an intricate network of social relationships. Just as a new language is learnt by trial and error, by pronouncing a word wrong until one gets it right or by making a grammatical mistake until it does not feel 'right' anymore, in the same way teenagers learn 'who they are' by trying out and discarding alternative selves until one of them meets with social approval and gets adopted and sometimes internalised into their own identity.

Majoring in a foreign language is not the only fact that distinguished universities from other education institutions. While all of the institutions take helping their students enter a higher education institution as their fundamental objective, universities, the end-point of those objectives, aim to construct "a student identity emerging from the course of studies...and a professional identity related to the future transition to working life" (Lairio, Puukari, & Kouva, 2013, p. 115). To put in a different way, universities aim to prepare students for their professional lives whereas even students have their doubts as to whether or not they will be able to grasp that future. Stating the extraordinary unpredictability of the future as reason, Honkimäki (2006, p. 249, as cited in

Lairio et al., 2013, p. 116) argues that “the university plays an important part in supporting the psychological wellbeing of the young adult”.

Referring to Taylor (1991), Välimaa (1998) argues that identity construction is a process based primarily on dialogue with significant others and any change of significant others is likely to affect a change in the individual’s identity as well. Transition to a higher education institution, as mentioned before, helps the individual meet a considerable number of individuals for the first time, usually making a change in one’s group of significant others. Välimaa further argues that higher education institutions are places that have their own unique character and for this reason, they are more than likely to bring about a lot of changes for freshmen during their first year at college.

The uniqueness in the nature of higher education institutions also exist in Turkey. Compared to high-schools, universities in Turkey often require students to have more independent working and studying skills and to be more productive. Also, whereas students have a say in the courses they would like to take and their time in the schedule, students at high-schools must follow whatever rule is established by the school administration or the ministry of national education. Moreover, students attending high-schools must wear a uniform chosen by the school and make sure that their physical appearance and accessories are appropriate for the school’s code of conduct. However, at universities none of these rules exist and students are free to wear and appear however they like. In this regard, it can be concluded that the change experienced during transition between high-school and university is profound.

2.4 Identity and Language Learning

2.4.1 The Historical Context

Although many studies were carried out on the relation between the inner characteristics of learners and their performance in learning a language (Block, 2003) and some researchers conducted studies focusing on identity and language learning in 1970s and 1980s (Norton, 2006), almost no attention was given to the concept of identity and its relation to language learning until Bonny Norton completed her doctoral dissertation in 1993 (Ortega, 2009). In addition, the realisation that learners’ identity as native or non-native speakers were only

one of the many identities they had simultaneously (Firth & Wagner, 1997) and calls of some scholars to form a theoretical relevance between identity and language learning (Gass, 1998) encouraged researchers to look into the dynamic natures of learners and understand their relation to the language learning process. Moreover, as Block (2007, p. 864) states, the “general push to open up SLA beyond its roots in linguistics and cognitive psychology” resulted in a boom in studies linking identity and language learning after mid-1990s.

One of the most remarkable publications on the relation between identity and language learning is Norton’s doctoral dissertation, which reflected upon the identity change and power struggles of five immigrant women who tried to survive in Canada with no or little knowledge of English. Parts of her study later appeared in two “extensively cited sources, an article in *TESOL Quarterly* (Norton, 1995) and a book (Norton, 2000)” (Ortega, 2009; p. 241). The special issue of *TESOL Quarterly* on Language and Identity in 1997 and the introduction of a new journal named *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* in 2002 considerably increased the popularity of identity among SLA researchers. In addition, Toohey (2000) Blackledge and Pavlenko (2004), Norton (2006), Block (2007) and Block (2009) are regarded among valuable contributions to the field of identity and language learning.

2.4.2 Identity and Second Language Acquisition

Between the last years of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st century, the focus on psycholinguistics somewhat disappeared and the field of SLA experienced a “social turn” following an increased attention on the relation between language learners and the social contexts surrounding them (Block, 2003). However, this new area of attention brought about a number of complex issues as well. First of all, the link between identity and language was not always easy to understand since “in some settings languages function as markers of national or ethnic identities, in others as a form of symbolic capital or as a means of social control, and yet in others these multiple roles may be interconnected” (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2004; p. 2). Moreover, the fact that human beings may have a number of identities at the same time and there is a continuous struggle between these identities makes it harder to investigate the relation between identity and learning (Nilep, 2006). In their book on identity and language, Blackledge and Pavlenko (2004) mentioned these

difficulties and argued that identities are always a site of struggle within and between people, which made it a must for people to “negotiate identity positions in the larger economic, historic, and socio-political structures that they inhabit and which inhabit them” (Blackledge and Pavlenko, 2004, as cited in Ortega, 2009; p. 242). They state that there are various ways in which identities can be negotiated and propose three alternative paradigms in which identities can be negotiated in multilingual contexts.

Six years after the publication of her prominent book, Norton (2006) reconceptualised the theoretical framework regarding the link between identity and language drawing on the studies of five scholars, namely Mikhail Bakhtin, Pierre Bourdieu, Christine Weedon, Jean Lave and Etienne Wagner. She defined the sociocultural theory of identity under five characteristics (p. 3):

- (i) Identity is conceived “as dynamic and constantly changing across time and place”.
- (ii) Identity is conceived “as complex, contradictory, and multifaceted, and rejects any simplistic notions of identity”.
- (iii) Identity constructs and is constructed by language.
- (iv) “Identity construction must be understood with respect to larger social processes, marked by relations of power that can be either coercive or collaborative”
- (v) Identity theory should be and is usually linked with classroom practice.

Arguing how successful Bourdieu and Bakhtin were in transforming language learning from a set of rules, structures and “must learn” vocabulary items into a social and dynamic process, she presents an earlier study she conducted together with Kamal (2003) in which they investigated the investments of Pakistani students in learning English and their future desires. It was then revealed that most of the learner-participants in the study wanted to learn English hoping that they would be able to interact with people from other countries. In addition, as mentioned before, “they imagined a future society in which Pakistan was peaceful, true to the principles of Islam, and a contributing member of the international community” (Norton & Kamal, 2003; p. 301). The authors argue that students’ relation to the target language was considerably affected from the political problems and geographical isolation their country had been going through. By giving this example, Norton (2006) argues that

language is a lot more than a combination of systematic rules and it is a social construct which has a deeper meaning for learners.

In two consecutive publications, Block (2007, 2009) argues that identity construction and identity negotiation do not follow the same route for all language learners and this difference is primarily caused by the difference in the contexts learners practice the target language and their reasons for learning it. The first two contexts he mentions are learning a language as a second language and as a foreign language. Richards and Schmidt (2002; p. 472) defined the difference between the two concepts as follows:

Second language: In a broad sense, any language learned after one has learnt one's native language. However, when contrasted with FOREIGN LANGUAGE, the term refers more narrowly to a language that plays a major role in a particular country or region though it may not be the first language of many people who use it. For example, the learning of English by immigrants in the US or the learning of Catalan by speakers of Spanish in Catalonia (an autonomous region of Spain) are cases of second (not foreign) language learning, because those languages are necessary for survival in those societies. English is also a second language for many people in countries like Nigeria, India, Singapore and the Philippines, because English fulfils many important functions in those countries (including the business of education and government) and Learning English is necessary to be successful within that context. (Some people in these countries however may acquire English as a first language, if it is the main language used at home).

In line with their distinct nature, second language learning and foreign language learning also show different characteristics in their relation to learner identity. Block (2007) argues that the fundamental difference lies in the reason of learners for learning a language. As mentioned above, people learn a second language in addition to their native language and oftentimes, this is done in order to survive in a particular community, which is the case for immigrants. The reason why they left their homes and crossed borders might be different; however they go through a similar phase learning a language in which they can interact with the local people of their new homeland and they experience a reconstruction of their identity in line with the reason they left their native area of residence, the status they have in their new community, the power struggles between them and the local people etc. On the other hand, learners learning a foreign language have totally different reasons for doing so. They might be learning it because it is must at their school, they want to find a better job,

earn more money etc. That being the case, the reasons for learning a foreign language may also have nothing to do with materialistic gains and obligations. A learner may learn a language to have a friend from other countries, to familiarise himself/herself with another culture and learn their language in order to achieve this, to make things easier if the language s/he is learning is a common medium of communication in the country s/he intends to visit in the future etc. Similar to this is what Spolsky (1989; p. 171) argues about the difference between formal (in the classroom) and informal (in the community) language learning:

The distinction between the two [second language learning and foreign language learning] is usually stated as a set of contrasting conditions. In natural second language learning, the language is being used for communication, but in the formal situation it is used only to teach. In natural language learning, the learner is surrounded by fluent speakers of the target language, but in the formal classroom, only the teacher (if anyone) is fluent. In natural learning, the context is outside world, open and stimulating; in formal learning, it is the closed four walls of the classroom. In natural language learning, the language used is free and normal; in the formal classroom it is carefully controlled and simplified. Finally, in the natural learning situation, attention is on the meaning of the communication; in the formal situation, it is on meaningless drills.

It is possible to increase the number of possible scenarios for both contexts. However, what matters is the fact that a foreign language learner does not learn the target language for survival reasons, which means it is not a matter of life and death as is sometimes the case for second language learning (Norton, 2000).

As mentioned earlier, Lambert (1967) was one of the first figures to refer to identity (Block, 2009). In his study, Lambert mentions that a successful language learner should be “both able and willing to adopt various aspects of behaviour, including verbal behaviour, which characterize members of the other linguistic-cultural group” (p. 102). Lambert further argues that this willingness and ability are subject to bring change on the learner by stating “the more proficient one becomes in a second language the more he may find that his place in his original membership group is modified [and the target linguistic group may] become a second membership group for him.” (p. 102) Also, he notes the possible consequences of this change as follows: “Depending upon the compatibility of the two cultures, he may experience feelings of chagrin or

regret as he loses ties in one group, mixed with the fearful anticipation of entering a relatively new group.” (p. 102). Lambert formed a similarity between the chagrin or regret that learners may experience and Durkheim's (1982) concept of anomie, which he used to refer to the “ever-increasing complexity which came with the rise of industrialized cities in Europe in the nineteenth century, and the effects of this complexity on individuals” (Block, 2009; p. 48). To clarify what he meant by referring to the concept of anomie, Lambert gave the example of Canadian learners of French who were living in Quebec and had participated in one of his studies. When students started to master the target language “they said they ‘thought’ in French, and even dreamed in French, their feelings of anomie also increased markedly. At the same time, they began to seek out occasions to use English even though they had solemnly pledged to use only French for the six-week period.” (p. 104). Lambert, after a time, noted that these learners become annoyed at themselves and they deliberately reverted to their native tongue, English, in order to minimize their annoyance. Although, Lambert does not use the term identity, he does enough to show that language learning may bring about a social struggle for learners, which is not very easy to overcome.

2.4.3 Identity and Foreign Language Learning

As Graddol (2000) states, the political and geographical power of the UK over many other countries at the beginning of the 20th century and the rise of the USA as a superpower in the 1950s drastically changed the number of people who can speak English. English, as the native language of the most powerful two countries in the World, became a language that can provide its speakers with valuable social and materialistic advantages. As a result, English ended up being as one of the languages with the greatest number of foreign language speakers. According to *Ethnologue: Languages of the World (2014)*, an institution that has been cataloguing all the living languages of the World since 1951, English is spoken as a first language by about 335 million people and as a second language by about 430 million people worldwide. Furthermore, the *British Council (2014)* states that English is spoken by about 750 million people as a foreign language, which makes the total number of people who can speak English approximately 1.515 billion. Kachru (1992), drawing on the difference between the number of native speakers and foreign speakers, argue that

English does not only belong to the countries in which it is spoken as a native language as follows (p. 357):

The result of [the spread of English as a lingua franca] is that, formally and functionally, English now has multicultural identities. The term "English" does not capture this sociolinguistic reality; the term "Englishes" does.

However, although the number of foreign language speakers doubles that of second language speakers, the research on identity and language learning has focused on SLA environments and only little attention has been given to the identity of foreign language speaker (Block, 2009).

As mentioned before, second language speakers and foreign language speakers differ greatly from each other due to their distinct natures and diverse reasons for learning the language. Unlike the second language learners who use the language in naturalistic settings while learning it, foreign language learners are exposed to the target language only within the borders of a school or a similar educational institution, making the amount of interaction and the level of authenticity relatively insufficient. In addition to its natural difference from second language learning contexts, the foreign language learning settings also vary a lot in itself as Block (2009; p. 112) asserts:

Conditions in these different FL contexts vary considerably as regards teacher/student ratios, the age of students, teacher preparation, intensity (hours per week), accommodation, technological backup, availability of teaching materials, the relative importance of learning the FL and, above all, the language studied.

Another scholar who draws attention on the variety of difference between foreign language contexts is Taylor (2010; p. 15), who argues how these contexts may stand as "a blessing" or "a curse" as follows:

Expressing yourself in a different language from your own might expose you to ridicule, projecting a vulnerable self in the eyes of peers who regularly have fun counting your mistakes. But expressing yourself in a foreign language can also be an excellent tool for identity exploration, in a period when identity exploration is of paramount importance.

She further argues that the most positive identity development will be in communicative foreign language classes in which students freely express

themselves, talk about their own emotions and dreams, discuss about real life incidents etc.

Individuals can display more than one identity image at the same time and these identities sometimes clash with each other. As Taylor (2010; p. 25) argues, "[t]hese identity images are composed of particular traits that are sometimes called self-defining goals and which represent the interface between identity strivings and motivation to act". This is to say that a young adolescent who dreams of becoming a professional football player knows that he has to reach at enough physical strength as well as developing his tactical and technical skills accordingly. A learner, in the same way, gets more interested in the target language and spends more time and effort in order to learn the language if s/he, say, dreams of living/studying/working abroad, reaching at some capital advantages that are only possible with enough proficiency in the target language, or familiarising himself/herself with the target culture etc.

2.5 From Motivation to Investment

As mentioned before, starting from the 1950s, many linguists focused on the concept of motivation as a facilitator in language learning. However, it was later realised that sometimes even the most motivated learners cannot make enough progress in the target language (Norton, 2000). Also, following Kohn's (1993; p. 198-9) assertion, motivation should not be regarded as a must for learning to occur:

[C]hildren do not need to be motivated. From the beginning they are hungry to make sense of their world. Given an environment in which they don't feel controlled and in which they are encouraged to think about what they are doing (rather than how well they are doing it), students of any age will generally exhibit an abundance of motivation and a healthy appetite for challenge.

Norton (1995), who introduced the concept of investment into the SLA literature, explains why there is a need to work more on language investment as follows:

The concept of motivation as currently taken up in the SLA literature conceives of the language learner as having a unified, coherent identity which organizes the type and intensity of a language learner's motivation. The data indicate that motivation is a much more complex

matter than hitherto conceived. Despite being highly motivated, there were particular social conditions under which the women in my study were most uncomfortable and unlikely to speak.
(p.19)

In a later publication, Norton (2013; p. 120) further argues that

[A] learner's motivation is mediated by other investments that may conflict with the desire to speak - investments that are intimately connected to the ongoing production of the learner's identities and their desires for the future. In order to capture the complex interaction of different forces on the women's desire to speak and practice English, I have talked about the women's investment in English, rather than their motivation to speak.

All of the five participants in Norton's abovementioned study were immigrant women living in Canada and they all moved in Canada because of various problems they had experienced in their native countries such as the threat of terrorism, poor financial conditions, and the hope for better education for children etc. Some of them had a respectable social status and full-time jobs in their native countries, which means they had possessed economic, cultural and social capitals. However, after they moved in Canada they had either no jobs or jobs that did not provide them with a good deal of money and social value. They all had hoped that learning English would have enabled them to earn more money and hold a more respectable position in their societies. Later, it was revealed that even though they wanted to learn English and were motivated towards it, not all of them were successful enough. Another revelation was that "they felt comfortable speaking to friends... [but] all the women felt uncomfortable talking to people in whom they had a particular symbolic or material investment" (Norton, 2000; p. 120). That being the case, Norton understood that the will to learn a language was not enough on its own and the relations of power between the learners and the others in a language learning context is of crucial importance as well as how much they invest in learning the language. For example, one of the participants of the study, Eva, was working at a restaurant and she became more proficient in English as she continued to interact with her co-workers in English. However, she still had problems while speaking to her boss and the customers in English, fearing that they would happen to regard her utterances offending and she would lose her job as a result. The main reason for this was that Eva had unequal investments, that is,

she thought earning money and making a living was more important than being beleaguered at that time. This is a clear example that even though Eva was quite willing to learn English and she invested in accordingly, the clash between her investment in English and her relatively higher and more significant investment in the economic capital resulted in a loss of confidence for her. Nevertheless, as she became more and more proficient in English, she started to speak to people with better economic and social capitals in English with greater confidence. In her book, Norton (2000; p. 74) reports an example of such a case as follows:

Eva told me a story of a male customer who had said to her "Are you putting on this accent so that you can get more tips?" Eva had been angry, but had said to him: "I wish I did not have this accent because then I would not have to listen to such comments". Eva was no longer silenced by ethnocentric comments, she was angered by them. Her identity had changed and, with it, her inclination to speak in the public world.

Norton believes that "Eva's investment in English must be understood with reference to her reasons for coming to Canada, her plans for the future" (p. 61). Eva had come to Canada to have a better financial position and she also dreamed to attend a Canadian university to get a degree in business administration. She was aware that she had to master English in order to achieve both of her goals. This was quite obvious when she had declined to return to the Italian store where she had worked before she started at the restaurant. Although her co-workers had respected her more and she had felt more comfortable and confident at the Italian store, she had little chance to practice English, which had led her to change the place she works at. In other words, Eva preferred to work at a place where she felt less confident and comfortable only in order to improve her skills in English, which, according to Eva, was the only way of reaching at her ultimate goals.

Despite the distinction between ESL and EFL caused by the differences mentioned before, the term of investment is also applicable to foreign language learning settings. As was the case in Huang's (2012) study, learners may invest in learning the target language in accordance with their imagined careers and social status. One of the participants in his study, Greena, mentioned in her diary that after understanding she had to practice more to make progress, she spent more hours and effort to learn the language. Furthermore, she paid more

attention to pronunciation of the words and participated more actively in the course taught by a foreign teacher, thinking that “classes given by English native speakers could be better for English language competence training” (p. 103). In addition, although she had regarded herself as a “successful learner” while she had been preparing for the university entrance exam, she regarded herself as an “average learner” after she started studying English at the university. The change in her own perception of herself, which, according to Huang, was a change of identity, made her invest more in learning the language and regaining her identity as a “successful learner”. Greena’s experience as a language learner and her journey between being an average learner and a successful learner help us see that there is a mutual relation between investment and language learning.

2.6 A Quadripolar Model of Identity in Foreign Language Learning

Complaining about the lack of a framework that fully covers all aspects of human identity, Taylor (2013) proposed the Quadripolar Model of Identity. In this model, there are four components of the self which are linked to each other with multidimensional processes (Table 2).

Table 2: Possible and actual selves

<i>Self-dimension</i>	<i>INTERNAL</i>	<i>EXTERNAL</i>
POSSIBLE	Ideal	Imposed
ACTUAL	Private	Public

2.6.1 Possible Selves

According to Taylor (2013; p. 42) possible selves indicate the “desired future states that originate in the individual and outside the individual, respectively.” However, what the individual desires may contradict with what those outside the individual desire for him/her considering the fact that while the individual has one future state in mind, external wishes on the individual will be plenty since a lot of people who believe they have a say in the individual’s life will have different expectations of him/her.

2.6.1.1 Ideal Self

Ideal self describes the future position the individual thinks is the best for him/her. It is a form of personal expectation and therefore, covers almost every aspect of human life such as financial situation, job status, marital status, family/friend relationships etc. Similarly, Taylor (2013; p. 42) explains the ideal self as follows:

In the Quadripolar Model of Identity, the ideal self is understood to mean *a personal representation of what an individual would like to become in the future, irrespective of other people's desires and expectations about the individual*. Rather than suggesting a restrictive and inaccessible end state, the term 'ideal' is taken to represent the best possible combination of attributes that a person would like to have in the future, from a strictly subjective point of view.

From Taylor's (2013) definition, it can be concluded that ideal self is not a static objective. Rather, it is capable of renewing itself as the individual arrives at the goals s/he had set beforehand. However, there should be a distinction between "sheer fantasy" and the ideal self (Taylor, 2013; p. 43) because in the ideal self, there exists a strategy that will be implemented in order to reach at the desired self. In this regard, it can be argued that if a language learner would like to speak the language fluently, s/he should attentively practice his/her speaking skills and look for practice opportunities whenever possible. In the contrary case, if the learner desires to learn a foreign language but doesn't invest accordingly, learning that language is more of a dream rather than a desired future state.

The ideal self may also serve to motivate individuals by increasing their awareness on the benefits and costs of reaching or failing to reach at a particular future position. For example, if a student studying international relations desires to learn French in order to have a job that requires applicants to be proficient in a foreign language other than English, the cost of not knowing French is obvious. Such an awareness is likely to push learners towards reducing the gap between their current state and the future state they would like to arrive at.

2.6.1.2 Imposed Selves

Imposed selves are the combination of future states not the individual, but those who are close to the individual would like him/her to have. There can be

many members of the “those who are close to the individual” group including, parents, friends, romantic partners, teachers, relatives, neighbours, etc. and all these people may set objectives for the individual expecting him/her to achieve them. In Taylor’s (2003; p. 45) words, imposed selves are defined as follows:

[I]mposed selves are defined as representations of other people’s hopes, desires, expectations of what an individual should achieve, the number of such representations depending on the number of social relational contexts in which the individual functions...imposed selves originate outside the individual’s volition and have only an indirect connection to one’s personal desires. The degree of ‘imposition’ will vary from mild metaphorical (i.e. ‘normal’ social conditioning that results in all of us adopting beliefs that are promoted in our social context) to strong literal (for example, in the case of some teenagers who are forced to pursue a particular career against their will).

Since people can improve personally as well as professionally by learning a foreign language, individuals may be encouraged, or at times forced, to learn a foreign language. To illustrate, a student may want to learn English since his parents would like him to have a respectable position at an international company. Similarly, a student may study harder and participates more actively in Maths class than he does in other classes in order to please the teacher who s/he loves madly. In these two examples, learners are not trying to achieve certain objectives because they believe achieving them will provide them with benefits. They rather regard them as a tool of reaching at a secondary objective, pleasing the parents and the teacher respectively.

Imposed selves can contradict both with each other and the ideal self of the individual. For example, a new graduate may feel torn between his professor who wants to hire him as a research assistant and his father who would like him to take over the family business. A learner of English who believes it will open many doors into new opportunities would experience a similar feeling if his religiously oriented parents asked him to drop the class because they think learning a foreign language is a sin. It should be noted that, in both examples, learners. Taylor (2013) argues that this is the norm especially for late adolescents who are about to make important decisions that are quite likely to shape the rest of their lives and may have potential dangers since “they are expected to be very different things at the same time, while the stakes are very high in both contexts” (p. 46).

2.6.2 Actual Selves

Differently from possible selves, actual selves cover “the dynamics of one’s present-day identity” (Taylor, 2013; p. 46) and just like possible selves, actual selves also include components from internal and external contexts.

2.6.2.1 Private Selves

Private self can be defined as the point of view an individual has regarding his/her own experiences, capabilities, limits, and boundaries. Attributes within one’s private self may not be disclosed socially and their priority and importance might differ according to the social context in which they are to be performed such as school, family, peer groups etc. (Taylor, 2013). For example, a student who would like to have a master’s degree from a university abroad might work very hard to meet the requirements of the university of his/her dreams but might give up later after finding out his/her family lacks the resources to support him/her financially during his/her time abroad. This is mainly because the learner understands s/he is a member of a not-so-rich family and thinks s/he has no right to get the education of his/her dreams because of his/her membership to that particular family. Similarly, a student who failed twice on the university entrance exam might completely lose his/her interest in studying for the next exam because s/he believes s/he lacks the capability needed to pass the exam. The two examples illustrate that our understanding of what we are now is not randomly formed. As put by Taylor (2013; p. 47), it is formed through a self-reflection of past experiences:

Being an appraisal of one’s present attributes, the private self is a cognitive, emotional and relational crystallisation of past experience translated into perceived competence or ability and affective perceptions. What I believe I am as an individual at the moment is the result of what I believe I can do, what I like and do not like doing, what I tried to do – and succeeded or not – in the past, as well as how I believe I compare to my peers and to my own ideal representations of myself. In this way, the past influences the future via the private self, given that a strong future guide will have to be formed on the realistic basis of one’s actual self appraisal: if a student believes, for instance, that she cannot pronounce English correctly because there is something wrong with her phonatory apparatus, it is quite unlikely that impeccable English pronunciation will be part of her L2 ideal self.

The above excerpt helps us understand more clearly that the private self is a bridge between who we think we were and who we think we will be. In this

regard, it is possible to conclude that a learner with a strong private self will be aware of his/her mistakes and deficiencies and will make an effort towards getting over them and reaching at his/her ultimate goal.

2.6.2.2 Public Selves

Similar to imposed selves, public selves can also be many in number and they are also displayed by the individual according to the relational contexts in which the individual is a member. That is to say that it is not the individual's desire to perform a particular actions. The individual feels obliged to behave in a particular way in order to be in accordance with other people's wishes about him/her. For example, a student may hard work at home in order to win his/her parents' appraisal but may not perform as s/he is expected at school in order not to be called a nerd by his friends who wouldn't want any geeks in their group. Although the student in the example is hardworking and has the capability to perform well in the classroom environment, s/he refuses to do so in order to sustain his/her membership in a particular peer group. Similar to imposed selves, public selves can also be conflicting. The example from Taylor (2013; p. 48) may help illustrate it:

For example, when spending some time with her family, a teenager knows that her parents expect her to be a dutiful daughter may choose to play that part submissively, but later complain to her group of friends and blame her parents for being old-fashioned – an attitude that she know may be appreciated by her peers. What the teenager in this example does is juggle with two different public selves, displaying an image that she feels is expected of her in the circle she finds herself in at a given moment (i.e. dutiful daughter versus independent teenager).

Imposed selves, the other externally shaped component within the ideal self, may also be in direct relationship with public selves because what the other people want the individual to be is like to have an influence on how the individual chooses to perform among those people. For instance, a learner who is forced to learn English by his/her parents because English is the most dominant language and it will help him/her find a better job may study English at home to show his/her parents that s/he is behaving in accordance with their wishes. In this scenario, whether the learner actually wishes to learn English or whether s/he agrees with his/her parents' idea that English will help him/her find a better job does not matter. What matters is the fact that his/her parents

have already shaped a particular form of future for him/her and s/he must behave accordingly in order to sustain their appraisal.

2.6.3 Self-System Types

While moving from actual selves into possible selves, individuals might experience conformity or contradiction between the four abovementioned types of selves. Throughout the process these four types of selves are constantly in a dynamic relationship with each other. Taylor (2013) argues that these relationship may end up around four self-system types described below.

2.6.3.1 The Submissive Self System

For individuals whose identity is crystallised around the submissive self-system, “a strong imposed self generates responses against the ideal self” (Taylor, 2013; p. 52). In this sense, such an individual would give up what s/he believes is the best for him/her and tries to conform with what is thought to be the best for him/her after realizing that the latter will provide him/her with more pleasing benefits. The following vignette (Taylor, 2013; p. 54) might serve as an example of a submissive individual:

They know very well what sort of person I am. What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that’s why I prefer to give up my intentions and do what they think is better for me. What they want me to do in life is more important than what I’d have liked, so I’ll do what they say.
(p. 54)

2.6.3.2 The Duplicitous Self System

The duplicitous self-system refers to the case where “a different ideal and imposed self generate parallel responses” (Taylor, 2013; p. 52). A duplicitous individual tries to achieve what s/he believes to be the best for him/her in a covert manner while also pretending to working towards what others ask him/her to do. According to Taylor (2013; p. 54) “[t]his state of the self-system might not be long-lasting, as sooner or later the person would have to commit either to the ideal self or to an imposed self.” The vignette (Taylor 2013; p. 55) for a duplicitous individual is as follows:

They don’t really know what sort of person I really am, and it’s not important for me that they do. They would like me to do something else

in life than I would, and that's why I'll pursue my own dreams without letting them know. At the same time, I'll give them the impression that I do what they ask me to, even though I'm actually seeing about my own business. I know better.

2.6.3.3 The Rebellious Self System

The rebellious self-system refers to the state in which "a strong ideal self generates responses against the imposed self" (Taylor, 2013; p. 52). A rebellious individual refuses to obey what others ask him/her to do if s/he isn't attracted to it in the first place because s/he already has something better to do. In a classroom environment, this state is visible in students who refuse to obey to what the teacher asks (stop using the mobile phone, bringing class materials, listening to the teacher carefully) because what the teacher asks isn't in their best interest. The vignette (Taylor 2013; p. 55) for a rebellious individual is as follows:

What they would like me to do in life is different from what I would like to do, so that's why I'll pursue my own dreams even if I have to rebel against them. They know me well, I haven't got anything to hide, and if they want to force me into doing something, I am likely to refuse it openly. What they want me to do is less important than what I want.

2.6.3.4 The Harmonious Self System

The harmonious self-system refers to the state in which "equivalent ideal and imposed selves generate congruent responses." (Taylor, 2013; p. 52). It only emerges when the wishes of the individual regarding his/her personal and professional life exactly match those of others around him/her. However, as put by Taylor (2013; p. 57), [a]lthough it is theoretically possible to imagine a person with private/public selves incongruence in this system, these components are more likely to be convergent when the person does not feel hindered in his/her pursuit of the ideal self by any externally imposed future guides. This means that, in most cases, for the harmonious self-system to emerge, it is not the individual who tries to bridge the gap between his/her own dreams and wishes and those of his/her parents, teachers, and friends. The vignette for a harmonious individual is as follows (Taylor, 2013; p. 58):

They know me very well and appreciate me for what I am. My dreams for the future are very similar to what they'd like me to do in life. They don't want to impose anything on me, but give me the total liberty to

choose, and they always appreciate my decisions about my future. They help me feel really fulfilled.

2.7 Self-Identity Changes

According to Gao, Zhao, Cheng, and Zhou (2007), there are six categories in which changes in self-identity are observed within EFL contexts. The categories put by Gao et al. (2007; p. 137-139) are as follows:

1. Self-confidence change: Change in the perception of one's own competence. "I feel terrific when I find my command of English is better than that of others." "English learning has a great impact on my self-confidence." "When I have difficulties in English learning, I begin to doubt my own ability."
2. Additive change: The co-existence of two sets of languages, behavioural patterns, and values, each specified for particular contexts. "I can easily change between Chinese and English according to situational needs." "I prefer to listen to the original English dialogue when watching English movies, just as I enjoy the original Chinese dialogue when watching Chinese movies."
3. Subtractive change: The native language and the native cultural identity are replaced by the target language and target cultural identity. "With the improvement of my English proficiency, I feel my Chinese is becoming less idiomatic." "After learning English, I feel my behaviours have become somewhat Westernized." "After learning English, I have begun to reject some traditional Chinese ideas."
4. Productive change: The command of the target language and that of the native language positively reinforce each other. "With the improvement of my English proficiency, I can better appreciate the subtleties in Chinese." "After learning English, I find myself more sensitive to changes in the outside world." "After learning English, I have become more understanding and can better communicate with others."
5. Split change: The struggle between the languages and cultures gives rise to identity conflict. "I feel weird when my speech in Chinese is subconsciously mixed with English words." "When parting with foreign friends, I'm frequently confused as to whether I should shake hands, or hug and kiss." "After learning English, I am often caught between contradicting values and beliefs."
6. Zero change: Absence of self-identity change. "No matter which language is used for expression, I remain to be myself." "An instrument is an instrument. It is impossible for me to change into another person after learning a language."

2.8 Need for the Study

Although the relation between identity and language learning is gaining more interest in the Western World, only few studies investigating this relation in the Turkish context exist. In addition, most of the studies conducted on this topic focused on second language learning (ESL) contexts and the number of studies conducted in a foreign language learning (EFL) context is considerably less. As Longcope (2009) indicates, in an ESL context, learners live in a country where the target language they are trying to learn is the official language. As a result, they feel obliged to learn the language in order to survive in that country and communicate with the local community. In an EFL context, on the other hand, learners live in a country where the target language is not one of the languages that people learn for daily communicative purposes. Hence, learners do not learn the target language in order to survive in a given community but to obtain practical advantages that can be achieved only by learning that language. Considering these facts, a study which tries to understand the relation between identity and language learning in the Turkish context, where English is learnt as a foreign language, is needed.

An overview of the status of foreign languages and English in Turkey also shows that there is a need for a study which looks into the relation between learners in the Turkish context and their process of language learning. During the 19th century, learning a foreign language was not a popular activity for the Turkish people and the only people who knew a foreign language were either elites or members of minority groups (Konig, 1990). This changed immediately after World War II and lots of words were loaned from English due to the increasing power of English speaking countries (Moody, 2009). Konig (1990) also states that in 1980s, many people in Turkey started to learn German as a result of the close language contact through Turkish workers in Germany. At that time, many people who were dreaming of working in Germany, and earning a lot more than their counterparts in Turkey consisted the majority of the learners of German. Konig argues that in the late 1980s, English was a language of attraction for students since English was the medium of instruction in some high schools and universities and graduation from these institutions helped students find a job rapidly thanks to their knowledge of English. The status of English remained the same in the outset of the 21st century. Learning English was available only to members of the upper and middle class and people learnt English mainly

because it was seen as a requirement for “better-paying jobs as well as for academic advancement” (Doğançay-Aktuna & Kızıltepe, 2005). In a similar manner, Zok (2010) argues that Turkish governments have attached a special importance to teaching English in state schools realising the fact that English was the main medium of communication for people who did not share a common mother tongue. All in all, English has been traditionally seen as a medium of obtaining materialistic benefits in Turkey and people have been trying to learn English as a result of their hope for a better future. In this regard, a study which aims to understand the effect of such a relation between the language learner and the learning process is needed.

Another reason why there is a need to investigate learners’ identity in the Turkish context and their English learning is the official value attributed to English. To give an example, students may have to prove their proficiency levels when they want to pass the preparatory programme in many universities and in order to graduate in some universities. In addition, in order to find a job in a government or private office, an applicant may have to prove proficiency in a foreign language. Similarly, in all government offices and in most private offices employees are entitled to an increase in their salaries if they can meet certain language-related requirements. Lastly, in order to get promotion, many private offices demand their employees to reach an advanced level of proficiency in a foreign language. All these examples display that English serves as a materialistic tool for Turkish learners not only during their education but also after it. In such a context, learner identities are likely to change quite differently compared to how they change in a second language learning context.

Finally, in this study, learners’ identities and their English learning will be investigated only during their first academic year in the university. In Turkey, transition from a high-school to a university is an important incident both for the learners and their families. Most families in Turkey spend a considerable amount of money and provides their children with private tutoring (Tansel & Bircan, 2008). Similarly, most students spend many hours studying for the university entrance exam. As a result, they regard enrolment at a university as the realisation of their dreams. In the case of the Turkish context, students experience a big change as they start their first year at the university. They oftentimes change their cities and sometimes move in a town which they have never been to. Usually, they change the type of the place they live in and most

of them stay either in a dormitory or they share a flat with some friends. As Huang (2012; p. 5) states, what students experience during their first year at university is quite likely to have an impact in their studies during succeeding years:

[T]he first academic year in university is crucial to students' study in their whole university life, since it is a transition between middle school and higher education. The understandings of and attitudes toward English learning greatly affect their study in later years.

Considering the changes that Turkish learners are likely to experience during their first year at university, this study will investigate the relation between learning English as a foreign language and learners' identities at a time the learners are having their first year at the university and studying English at the preparatory program.

2.9 Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The main purpose of this study will be to understand the mutual relations between self-identity and language learning process for EFL students at an English preparatory school in Turkey. The study will also seek to explain the relationship between students' perceived identities and their academic performance.

In this regard, the present study seeks to understand the answers for the following questions:

1. How do the students with different levels of academic performance describe the change on their identity after learning a new language?
 - a. What is the story for identity change for learners with different academic performance?
 - b. How do the students describe the role of the institutional practices on their journey of identity change?
2. What is the role of students' perceived identities and future goals in learning a new language?
 - a. What were the future aspirations of learners when they started their first year at the university?
 - b. How do the students describe the relation between their backgrounds and their attitudes towards learning English?

- c. How can the students' perceived identities be related to their academic success/failure in learning English?

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Methodological Review

3.1.1 Qualitative Inquiry

As argued by Creswell (2009, 2013), Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2011), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991), the essential task for researchers is to find the most suitable research approach to their studies. While looking for a link, a special attention should be paid to the relevance between the purpose of the study and the selected research approach (Huang, 2012). As mentioned earlier, this study focused on learners studying at an English language preparatory school, and it aims to explore the mutual relation between the concept of identity and students' process of learning a target language. The aim and questions of this research study make an in-depth investigation of the issue a must and this investigation requires a qualitative design considering the fact that "qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009; p.4). In a later publication, Creswell (2013; p. 44) defines the qualitative inquiry design and its main characteristics as follows:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is both inductive and deductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature or call for a challenge.

Other frequently-cited definitions of qualitative research include "a cluster of continuum of approaches that generally seek contextualized, naturalistic, holistic understandings and interpretations of phenomena that occur in

particular types of contexts” (Duff, 2007; p. 974; as cited in Huang, 2012; p. 36) and “research about persons’ lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations” (Straus & Corbin, 1998; p. 11, as cited in Huang, 2012; p. 36). In the same publication, Straus and Corbin (1998; p. 11, as cited in Huang 2012; p. 36) further indicate that “[q]ualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional research methods”.

Another key characteristic of qualitative research is its interpretive nature (Creswell, 2009; 2013), which means rather than carrying out numerical calculations and statistical analyses, “qualitative approach attempts to develop insights into the investigated phenomenon from the patterns emerging from the data observed by the researcher” (Huang, 2012; p. 36).

Considering that this study investigated human participants, in their natural settings, with the aim of exploring their feelings, thought process, emotions, previous experiences, and future hopes while they were learning a language in order to have a deep understanding of the issue, a qualitative design was considered to be appropriate.

3.1.2 Case Studies

As put by Yin (2009), the simplest definition of a case study is the investigation of a specific case within a natural setting. Some detailed definitions of case studies are as follows:

A case study is and exploration of a “bounded system” or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (Creswell, 1998; p. 61; as cited in Duff, 2007; p. 22).

The qualitative case study can be defined as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit. Case studies are particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic and rely heavily on inductive reasoning in handling multiple data sources (Merriam 1988, p. 16; as cited in Duff, 2007; p. 22).

Although these two definitions somewhat differ from each other, they equally stress out the importance of descriptive nature of the approach, in depth data collection using multiple tools and inductive analysis of data through interpretation. Also, they emphasize the necessity of concentrating on a specific case or multiple cases, an opinion which is also supported by Stake (2005; p. 443) who stated that whatever the method is “we choose to study *the case* [and]...we concentrate... on the case”. Moreover, Simons (2009; p. 21) sums up the purpose of conducting a case study as follows:

The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action.

In this regard, it can be argued that “a case study is about the particular rather than the general” (Thomas, 2011; p. 3) and the results of a case study are not generalizable by its nature. On the contrary, a case study should aim to gain a deeper insight into the issue at hand and the output of the analysis of the data collected within a case study should be used to promote human action and provide a person, a group, an institution, a country etc. with better life quality.

In line with Stake (1995) and Simons (2009), Creswell (2013) also propose three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. Based on what Stake (1995) had argued, Grandy (2010; p. 474-5) defines the three types of case studies as follows:

The intrinsic case is often exploratory in nature, and the researcher is guided by her interest in the case itself rather than in extending theory or generalizing across cases. In an instrumental case study the case itself is secondary to understanding a particular phenomenon. The difference between an *intrinsic* and *instrumental* case study is not the case but rather the purpose of the study. In instrumental case study research the focus of the study is more likely to be known in advance and designed around established theory or methods. A collective case study involves the exploration of multiple instrumental case studies.

Based on this excerpt, and abovementioned definitions and characteristics of case studies, this study investigated a specific case in its natural setting. The data were collected through multiple tools and analysed inductively together with an interpretive framework. The findings of the study will be used to provide

the participants of the study and future members of the institution with a better learning experience. As for the types of case studies, this study was an instrumental case study since the main focus was on having a deep understanding of the research problems that will be introduced in the next section.

3.2 Research Setting and Participants

At the present time, Turkish students start learning English when they start the 2nd grade in the primary school and they continue to take it as a must course throughout the compulsory period (Board of Education and Discipline in Turkey, 2013). After graduation from high-school, if they enrol at a university, students will continue to receive formal instruction in English since English is offered as a must course at all universities in Turkey. According to the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (2008), students of the departments in which at least 30% of the courses offered are taught in a foreign language are subject to meeting the foreign language proficiency requirement in the target language by submitting the result of an exam approved by the senate of the related university. If the learner does not have any certificate about his/her proficiency in the target language, s/he must study in the language preparatory program until the requirements stipulated by the senate are met. According to the same legislation, English courses at a university should aim to provide learners with a chance to learn about grammar rules, increase the number of the vocabulary items that they can use, and help them understand what they read and listen as well as communicate verbally and orally. In this regard, it can be inferred that in Turkey, where all of the participants of this study have been living throughout their lives, relevant institutions and organizations place a particular importance on teaching English. However, as the statement of course objectives by the Higher Council of Education indicates, the practices within the English classroom focus on grammatical structure and memorisation of vocabulary items rather than improving students' communicative skills.

The participants of the present study were students at a private university in Turkey, studying English in the English preparatory program. According to the related university regulation, all of the newly enrolled students must take the proficiency test administered by the Department of Foreign Languages.

Students who get a score below 40 (out of 100) on the test study in the AF (beginner) level and those with a score between 40 and 60 study in the A (elementary) level. Only if a student can get a score over 60 on the initial proficiency test, can s/he take the TOEFL ITP test, and while students who get a score below 450 (out of 677) on the TOEFL ITP test study in the B (pre-intermediate) level, those who get a score between 450 and 499 study in the C (intermediate) level. Repeat students who are having their second year at the university study in the D (pre-intermediate) level if they fail to get a score over 449 on the TOEFL ITP test. Each semester, the school administration repeats the placement of students in the classrooms based on their academic performance (using the results of midterms, quizzes, reader exams³, and AP grades⁴) in the previous semester, which means the first class in each level will consist of the students who had the highest semester grade average in the previous semester and the last class will consist of the students who had the lowest semester grade point average.

In order to pass the preparatory class, a student must get a score above 499 on the TOEFL ITP or 60 on the TOEFL Internet Based Test (IBT). Until the time a student is exempted from the preparatory class, s/he studies in the same level throughout the year. A student can pass the preparatory school without successfully meeting the requirements if Turkish is the medium of instruction in his/her department. However, s/he has to meet the requirements for English proficiency in order to graduate. Students of departments in which the medium of instruction is English have to repeat the preparatory school if they cannot pass the proficiency exams during their first year.

The initial selection of the participants of the study was based on "outstanding successes [and] notable failures" (Patton, 1990; p. 169), which is commonly associated with extreme or deviant case sampling. The participants of this study were students studying in two different classrooms of the same level. The first group, high achievers, consisted of students who had the greatest semester

³ In reader exams, students read a pre-assigned book and later, they take an exam based completely on the content of the book they had been assigned.

⁴ AP stands for Assessment and Performance. Students' AP score will be given in accordance with the percentage of the homework they completed and the teacher's final grade based on the performance of the student in the classroom.

grade point average in the previous semester and the second group, low achievers, consisted of students who had the lowest semester grade point average. Before selecting participants for individual interviews, the main course, reading and writing, and listening and speaking teachers of both classes were consulted and informed about the scope and aim of the study in the hope of receiving suggestions as to which students in these classes would be ideal participants for the present study. For “maximum variation” (Creswell, 2007; p. 127), I tried to invite that participants were going to study in different departments, had different socio-economic backgrounds, from different geographical parts of Turkey, and had distinct career aspirations.

The pseudonyms for each participant along with their departments and their status after the end of the preparatory programme are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Participants’ pseudonyms, departments, and statuses after finishing the preparatory programme

Group	Pseudonym	Department	Status after the end of the preparatory programme
HIGH ACHIEVERS	Cenk	Psychology	Passed
	Melih	Electrics and Electronics Engineering	Passed
	Özgür	Electrics and Electronics Engineering	Failed
	Fatih	History	Passed

Table 3: Participants' pseudonyms, departments, and statuses after finishing the preparatory programme (continued)

HIGH ACHIEVERS	Eray	Electrics and Electronics Engineering	Passed
	Sevde	Architecture	Passed
LOW ACHIEVERS	Kerem	Political Sciences	Failed
	Murat	Law	Failed
	Furkan	Electrics and Electronics Engineering	Failed
	Vedat	Biomedical Engineering	Failed
	Mehmet	Economics	Failed

3.3 Data Collection Tools

As mentioned earlier, one of the characteristics of qualitative case studies is to collect data from multiple sources. In this regard, this study will collect data from three sources, namely student interviews, teacher interviews and assessment and performance (AP) reports.

Interviews can simply be defined as “a story that describes how two people, often relative strangers, sit down and talk about a specific topic” (Rapley, 2004; p. 15). According to this definition, interviews do not only exist as a tool for data collection in scientific research, but as a common tool of interaction in which many people have experience. As a common and frequently encountered tool of interaction, “[t]he interview – seen in various forms of news interviews, talk shows, and documentaries – pervades and produces our contemporary

cultural experiences and knowledges of authentic personal, private selves" (Rapley, 2004; p. 15). Also, as argued by Atkinson and Silverman (1997), Rapley (2004), and Huang (2012), interviews are unique tools when it comes to having an insight into the voices, past experiences and thoughts of people. That being the case, interviews do not only help us by providing us with insight into learners' past experiences and current thoughts; it is also possible to learn about their career aspirations and future intentions through interviews.

Similar to many other fields of social sciences, interviews are also a common tool of data collection in research concerning social identity, mostly thanks to the fact that "in-depth interviews have been successfully used by many sociologists to obtain rich biographical data about individuals' identities and their perceptions of the world around them" (Park, 2009; p. 34; as cited in Huang 2012; p. 46). As mentioned earlier, one of the questions explored within this study was the role of students' experiences as language learners prior to the outset of data collection. As stated by (Merriam, 1998) and supported by Rapley (2004) and Huang (2012) "it is also necessary to interview when we are interested in the past events that are impossible to replicate". Conducting interviews with learners, this study, aimed to gain an insight into the learners' past events and experiences which could have possibly had a role on their process of language learning. Based on the arguments mentioned so far and the fact that the main concern of this study was on the social identity of individuals and the threefold relation between learners, language learning, and the learning context, interviews were seen as the ideal tool of data collection for the present study.

In accordance with the suggestions emphasized in Creswell (2007; 2013), the interviews were semi-structured, which means they had several questions and prompts to start the interview and more questions were formulated as it went on (Flick, 2014; Willig, 2013). Questions were open ended so that the respondents were able to express themselves freely and in-depth. To achieve this, interview questions started with "how" and "why" in order not to limit the respondents within certain boundaries, since such a limitation would not allow "the interviewee to tell [the interviewer] about a variety of activities [the interviewer] didn't think of asking" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; p. 133). As mentioned before, the selection of participants for this study included two steps.

After deciding on which students were going to participate in the study, they were invited to a face-to-face interview session at a quiet location in the school. As recommended by Creswell (2007), a quiet location was considered to be ideal since it would not cause any distractions for the respondent and the audio recording would be less affected from outer sources and the recording would be more accurate. Although carrying out the interviews in a naturalistic setting (the school for students) was one of the main characteristics of qualitative inquiry, interviews via instant messaging applications (such as Skype, Google Hangouts etc.) also had to be conducted since it was not possible to have a face-to-face meeting with two of the participants. Since the participants were asked to share their lived experiences and personal opinions on specific issues, the interviews were conducted in their mother tongue. They were also given the opportunity to start with English (the target language) and change to Turkish (the native language) if they feel uncomfortable. In addition to recording the interview, salient themes, patterns, and points that could have been of vital importance in data analysis were noted down during the interviews. Eleven interviews were conducted with students to collect the data needed.

Before beginning to collect data, a pilot study was conducted in the same institution and on participants with similar characteristics "in order to test the feasibility of data collection instruments and identify weakness in data collection" (Huang, 2012; p. 41). In addition, three professors were also consulted and asked about their opinion regarding the interview questions. In accordance with the feedback I received, two of the questions on the interview were changed as they were thought to be difficult to comprehend for the participants. Next, actual interviews were conducted with all the students who were selected and volunteered to participate in the study. The interview included questions about their beliefs regarding the role their identity had on their process of language learning and whether or not they felt a change in their identity after learning a new target language (see Appendix A).

In addition to student interviews, semi-structured interviews with current and previous teachers of student participants were also conducted (see Appendix B). The interviews with teachers included open ended questions and they were all conducted in the school. All the teachers were individually interviewed, and they were asked about their observations and opinions about the student

participants' change of identity between the time they had started learning English and at the time of the interview. Lastly, the AP comments, which are formal online reports written for each student by his/her three teachers, will be used to as prompts during teacher interviews and, when necessary, teachers will be asked to focus on specific incidents they had mentioned in the AP records.

Scholars including Cieurzo and Keitel (1999), Edwards and Mauthner (2012), and Ryen (2010) argued that although much emphasis has been given for many years, research ethics still stands as a discussion item in academic contexts. In their article, Orb, Eisenhauer, and Wynaden (2000; p. 93) explains why ethics is an issue worth stressing as follows:

Qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining, and describing people and their natural environments. Embedded in qualitative research are the concepts of relationships and power between researchers and participants. The desire to participate in a research study depends upon a participant's willingness to share his or her experience.

In this regard, the present study showed utmost respect for the confidentiality of the participants by not revealing any personal information during or after the data collection period. All participants were informed about the scope and aims of the study and only after that, were they invited to participate in the study. They were informed that participation in the study would be totally based on voluntariness and they would be free to quit whenever they wanted without facing any negative consequence. It was also ensured that the data they shared with me would not be shared with third parties and they would not be used for any purpose other than the needs of the present study. Lastly, the participants were asked to sign a consent form in accordance with the regulations proposed by the Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University (METU) and data were be collected only when the required permission is obtained from both the ethics committee at METU and the university where the students study and the teachers work.

3.4 Data Analysis

Similarly to many other qualitative studies on sociolinguistics, the goal of the present study was to “understand or interpret the experiences and dilemmas of participants ... in light of various sociopolitical and other contextual factors” (Duff, 2007; p. 153). Since the study was not mainly interested in the language proficiency of participants or their strategies for language use, the transcription of the pre-recorded interviews only included the words and statements of the respondents rather than the length of pauses, the non-verbal behaviours performed during the interview etc. As mentioned before, the participants were given a chance to select their native tongue or the target language, and all students preferred to have the interview in their mother tongue. Since the study aimed to have a gist of what the respondent stated, “an utterance-by-utterance or turn-by-turn translation” was adopted rather than a holistic one (Duff, 2007; p. 155). Transcription conventions were adopted when a specific part of the speech is remarkably and meaningfully different from the other parts such as loud speech, laugh or a sign of anger, high rising intonation, an abnormally long pause while responding the question etc. Transcription of the both students and teacher interviews were carried on a Windows application, Easytranscript⁵. When needed, participants were consulted during the transcription of the recordings to verify the accuracy of the transcription of their utterances and the reliability of the transcript for an in-depth, contextual analysis. The transcription, initial coding, and rough analysis of the data took place immediately after the collection of data.

The data analysis procedure followed an order in accordance with the suggestions listed in Creswell (2007, p. 156-7). After the organization of the files, each transcription was read again to create “margin notes” and “form initial codes” and memos. As one of the characteristics of qualitative inquiry, some unexpected themes emerged during coding and these codes were assigned at this stage. Next, “the case and its context” was introduced after creating context maps in XMind for each student participant (see Appendix D for a screenshot). After coding the transcripts in Maxqda (see Appendix C for a screenshot), categories and themes were established based on the codes and

⁵ <http://www.e-werkzeug.eu>

"naturalistic generalizations" were developed using "direct interpretation". Finally, an "in-depth picture of the case" was presented "using narrative, tables and figures". In order to be able to interpret the data through analytic induction, the individual codes, categories, themes, salient patterns, clusters, and critical incidents were analysed.

Before finalising the analysis procedure, member checking were adopted and three participants were consulted to check if interpretations made were accurate. Also, one participant were inviter for a follow-up interview in order to have a deeper understanding about things that were not underscored during the initial interview. Doing this helped me "enrich [the] analysis, ensure the authenticity or credibility of interpretations, [and] shed more light on the [analysis]" (Duff, 2007; p. 171).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will begin with detailed reports of each of the 11 cases of this study. After a detailed introduction of all the participants, the answers to the research questions will be presented along with the discussion for each participant for the related question.

4.1 Case Reports

4.1.1 High Achievers

4.1.1.1 Cenk

Cenk was born in a city in Central Anatolia. He was raised by his authoritarian grandparents. He regards himself as a perfectionist and responsible man; therefore he wants everything he does to be perfect and he wants to complete his tasks as soon as possible. Hence, he does not want to participate in group work activities stating that it is not easy for him to trust in what someone else does. Since he does not think that he can work cooperatively with others, he prefers to avoid group work. Similarly, he usually avoids participation in student clubs although he follows their activities regularly. However, only recently did he start participating in the activities organised by a student club that focuses on domestic politics and soon after he was promoted to the administrative unit of the club.

According to Cenk, his friends would think of him as a calm and quite man who is extremely fond of tidiness. He believes he has an obsessive need for symmetry and he always wants things to be in an order both in his room and his life. In a similar vein, he likes to plan his activities beforehand because doing so helps him feel more comfortable. On the other hand, his parents may think that he often fails to defend his own rights.

As a perfectionist individual, Cenk wants to feel safe at all times and, as a result, he wants all his answers to be correct. Unless he is completely confident in his answer to a question, he refuses to answer the question or participate in the activity.

Similar to the majority of his peers in Turkey, Cenk started learning English at the fourth grade in primary school. At first, he was quite interested in learning English because it was different from what he had learnt by that time. He was always aware that learning another language would make him different from the people who do not know it. Nevertheless, in due course, he neglected some of his classes and English was one of them. He explains the stages of learning English he went through as follows:

In time, learning English lost its uniqueness and stopped being entertaining. After a while, it became no different from the other classes I took and this caused me to feel less responsible towards learning it. I cannot blame my teachers, though, because both my primary and high-school teachers showed maximum effort to teach us English. After seventh and eighth grade, what I felt towards English was hatred. It felt the same while studying in my high-school. I only studied English to pass the exams and my studies were limited to reviewing grammar topics and memorising vocabulary items. My hatred grew even more when my friends forced me to study.

When he was about to take the university entrance exam, Cenk regained his interest in some other classes, especially in those that would help him get a higher score in the exam, but he felt it was already too late for English. However, as an instrumentally oriented learner, he admits that if they had been required to pass an English proficiency test as a part of the university entrance exam, he would have taken it much more seriously because he believes “classes other than those that must be studied to do well on the exam do not really matter for 12th graders”.

As one might expect, Cenk started the preparatory class in the lowest level, which was not surprising for him as well because he was aware that he was a zero beginner at the time who did not even know which test he had to pass to finish the preparatory program. That being the case, he soon realised that he had to improve his language skills because the proficiency test of the university was the only barrier between him and his classes in the department of psychology. After he inquired about his department, he found out that learning

English would not only help him pass the preparatory program, but it was also required to be successful at his department:

As far as I am concerned, I need to learn English not only to pass the preparatory program. It is a necessity for students in my department because many of the books listed are in English and, for this reason, I need to have a good command of English.

His increased awareness on the potential benefits he could get by learning English led him to think that he would attend the preparatory school even if he didn't have to take the proficiency exam to start his department:

If I had been asked before I found out about the courses in my department whether I would like to attend the preparatory class even though it was not a must, I would have said no because my hatred towards English still existed at that time and I would have not thought that learning English was necessary.

After starting the department, Cenk was able to overcome his hatred towards English and was once again interested in learning it. Although he felt it would be too hard to master the language once he hated, he felt more motivated as he got high scores on the tests and soon understood that he could do even better. However, he still regards himself as a "mostly unsuccessful learner" because he believes "no matter how perfect someone is, there is still room for improvement".

One of the reasons why he regained his self-confidence was the teachers he met at the preparatory school:

Truly, I have met with some of the most sympathetic teachers ever. They took all kinds of students kindly. Also, the native English-speaking assistants helped us a lot improve our speaking skills.

As a responsible individual, he also likes the fact that teachers were assigning a lot of homework because doing his homework made him feel he was studying English and fulfilling his responsibility.

Cenk states that he tries to use his knowledge of English out of school as well. From time to time, he practices his speaking skill with his friends also studying in the preparatory program. At times, he helps his weaker friends, just like his friends used to help him when he was in high-school. He also has an opportunity to practice while playing online games. However, he also states that he cannot feel comfortable when he doesn't have a dictionary at hand:

I can't feel comfortable when I don't have a dictionary. It is not because I am afraid of other people mocking me or because I would get a low score on the speaking test. It is because I feel out of depth, incompetent. If I cannot be sure that a sentence is correct, I cannot feel comfortable. For example, since I do not have my dictionary in a speaking exam, I cannot be sure about the correctness of the sentences I form; and because of that I cannot feel comfortable...I don't really care what the other side would think of. I, myself, do not want to make that mistake.

Cenk can overcome his fear of making a mistake only when he thinks that the listener would not realize it even if he made one, and as an example, he states that he would feel under much more pressure had my interview with him been in English. He explains why we would feel that way as follows:

I would avoid it because I can make a lot of errors, and because I wouldn't be able to express my opinions as I would do in my native language. I want the information you get from me to accurately express my opinions.

However, Cenk doesn't experience the same level of fear once he realises that the listener is able to understand what he wants to say:

My hesitance in speaking in English is replaced by comfort when I can express my opinions in English. Both the fact that other people can understand me when I speak in English and that I need no one else to communicate with a foreign person with whom I wouldn't have been able to communicate if I had met before...I enjoy speaking to different people and I am sure many people feel the same. It will be even more enjoying when I completely overcome this fear of making a mistake.

Cenk also states that his level of participation throughout the year and his involvement in class activities depended heavily on his relationship with the teacher. He describes some of the teachers under whose supervision he wasn't able to learn much as follows:

First term, the main-course was taught by [teacher's name]. I know I am talking behind her back, but to be honest, she lacked authority and this caused her to be controlled by the class. If you let students control you, you cannot teach...The teacher who taught listening-speaking class was a Turkish teacher who had spent some time in the U.S. I think she had problems adjusting to life back in Turkey. She made it obvious that she felt bored while teaching, which made us bored as well... In the second term, the main course teacher was [teacher's name]. I didn't really like her because she made us speak in English at all times. That was because I was not good at speaking in English and I was afraid of

making a mistake in front of my friends. Her forcing us made me hide from her.

On the other hand, he felt he benefited a lot from some of the teachers both as a person and as a student:

In the second term, the listening-speaking teacher was [teacher's name]. He was a native speaker of English and I thought I would have the same problem I experienced with my main-course teacher because we had to speak in English in order to communicate with him. However, soon I understood that there was nothing to be afraid of. He taught us vocabulary items by animating them in a theatrical way. It was interesting that he was trying to teach by moving both himself and us in the class instead of directly telling us what is what...In the third term, the main-course teacher was one of the best teachers I've ever met. No one can dream without seeing first and for everyone, their dreams are perfect. Since I have never seen anyone with better qualities, I don't think anyone can be better than him. To mention a few of his techniques, he prevented us from getting bored by giving mental breaks in the middle of the class. He made us all participate in class activities and allowed no one to remain silent or hide from him. While writing an example sentence, he wrote an example about an incident in the class that everyone in the class knew about instead of copying an absurd sentence from a grammar book. This helped us both learn and entertain.

Towards the end of his days in the preparatory program, Cenk realised that his English had improved a lot during his time in the program. The boy who once hated English started exchanging letters with a Korean friend of his without needing anyone's assistance, following the news on foreign language newspapers, and was able to solve some problems about his computer thanks to his knowledge of English. While he wasn't particularly interested in TV shows from the U.S. or the U.K., he now follows several of them regularly. Also, as a person who was not very much into reading books, he started reading books in English in order to take the pleasure in being able to read in a foreign language.

When asked whether he plans to study or work abroad, he couldn't give a definite answer. He stated that he had never thought about in the past, most probably because of his hatred towards English. Even though, after a time, he revealed that having a master's or PhD degree from a university abroad sounds like a good idea because some of his professors at the department of psychology mentioned that it was a must for them to get a Ph.D. degree from a university abroad if they wanted to become high quality psychologists. However, he still insisted that he would come back to Turkey as soon as he

completes his studies abroad because he believes there would be nothing living abroad can provide him with after receiving his PhD degree.

Cenk knows that the knowledge of English is extremely important for his profession. It is this awareness that encouraged him to plan a trip in Europe in order to relish the idea of being able to communicate with people with whom he didn't share a common mother tongue. More important than that is his desire to put an end to his perfectionism. He now knows that people will be able to understand him anyway and he is sure that this experience will help him feel even more comfortable. However, he doesn't feel that his knowledge of English will help him once he starts working as a psychologist unless he decides to:

I know that English will be crucial while I am acquiring my profession. However, if I am to work as a psychologist in Turkey, my clients will be from Turkey and I will talk with them in Turkish because it will be the language in which they can best express themselves. I can use my knowledge of English only when I am looking for ways to treat my clients. However, if I choose to have an academic career, I will be using English a lot in order to promote myself and my studies.

All of his teachers in the first semester thought that Cenk was a remarkably successful student who completed all of his assignments and had been an active participant and a careful listener in his classes. His teachers in the second semester also had very positive remarks both about his performance in class and his respectful behaviour as a student. His listening and speaking teacher from the USA stated that unlike many of his friends at the same level "[h]e was a joy to teach" and "definitely a very bright young man". Cenk continued to perform satisfactorily in the third semester as well. However, his listening and speaking teacher in the third semester complained that although he was very successful in the tests he took, he wasn't participating in class activities as much as a student with his profile was supposed to. The teacher understood that the problem was the proficiency test he was going to take at the end of the semester and he started focusing too much on the test than he did on class activities. On the other hand, the shift in his focus was appreciated by his main course teacher in whose class the main aim was to prepare students for the proficiency test:

Cenk does not only study very hard during the class; he also sends me e-mails in English to make sure that apart from the components of the proficiency exam, he can use English to communicate with others. We oftentimes talk with him on Skype in English. What is more, on many occasions, he sent me photos of questions he wasn't able to answer and I told him how to find the correct answer for those questions on Skype. Over the semester, he did everything he was supposed to do to pass the exam, and I think he'll pass it easily. Yes, he totally deserves it.

4.1.1.2 Melih

Melih was a well-known figure among students in the preparatory programme. Everybody at school was talking about him because he was constantly studying English starting from the first week of the first semester. He was also quite famous among the teachers at the department because he visited each and every one of them at least one time in order to ask a practice question for which he doesn't have an answer.

Melih describes himself as someone who tries to keep a positive attitude at all times. He was trying to lead a peaceful life, doing his best to stay away from troubles of all kind. In order to achieve this, he sometimes has to act differently from what he normally does. In his words, "it is not quite difficult [for someone] to change [his/her own] identity" in accordance with the situation at hand:

Sometimes I can be a serious man. Sometimes I can be a joy to have around. It depends on my mood and the context I am in. At times, I feel sorry about my performance in class or a low score on an exam, but I can pretend as if I am super happy although there is a problem.

Another important characteristic of Melih's is that he is quite an ambitious man. He always tries to do the best and doing above average or performing satisfactorily does not necessarily make him happy:

I can never admit defeat. If I am not capable of doing something perfectly, I prefer not to do it in the first place. How can I become happy when my score from an exam is 60? If I have a task at hand, there are two options for me: Do it perfectly or leave it as it is.

Before starting the preparatory programme, Melih was a student at a science school. During high school, he didn't pay a lot of attention to learning English just like many of his friends at the same school because "students at science high schools do not know English. It is typical of them. They are maths and science oriented schools". Melih always had instrumental motivation towards

his classes. Since he knew English wouldn't provide him with any advantages in the university entrance exam, he didn't pay any attention to his classes at the high school. For him, English was yet another unimportant subject to pass. Moreover, he was planning to study medicine and most universities in Turkey had Turkish medium faculties of medicine, which meant he wouldn't have to study English even when he started university. However, when he started university as a prospective student at the department of electrics and electronics engineering, that unimportant subject was the single barrier between him and his department. Because he didn't study English at all during four years at high school, he started the preparatory programme in a classroom in the lowest level. That being the case, he understood that English was now an important course and mastering it would provide him with practical benefits that no other tool could.

Melih understood that the knowledge of English would help him a lot with his future goals. He also understood that knowing English would provide him with access to leading articles and popular books in his field. Since not all his peers in the same department at different universities know English, this would also help him stay one step ahead of them. Apart from it, he also considered English to be an important way of developing as an individual. If he were to spend his time in the preparatory programme efficiently, he was going to learn to speak the language that would enable him to communicate with almost four billion people around different parts of the world. He thought that this would be a major improvement in his life and felt even more willing to learn English and started learning English under this positive attitude towards it.

In the first couple weeks of the first semester, Melih felt that his knowledge of English was getting better in a considerable way. He stated the difference as follows:

Before I learned English, I didn't want to watch movies if they were in English even though there were subtitles. I never went to a movie in English, for example. I always preferred movies dubbed in Turkish. Instead of learning the meanings of prompts and commands in video games, I preferred to memorize what to do when I saw those set of words. After I started the preparatory programme, I started watching even documentaries just to see whether I knew English enough to understand them. It took me a while to understand them but I enjoyed the effort I spent.

Seeing that he was able to speak with his friends, write 300-word essays on serious topics, listen to and understand his foreign teachers, and read 100-page fiction books in English pleased him and increased his motivation to try harder. Apart from the four main skills, he also tried to improve his grammar because it would help him a lot in the proficiency exam he was going to take. He studied the same books his teachers had used when they had studied for the language section of the university entrance exam which was much harder than the exam he was going to take. After a time, he had memorised so many grammar rules that students from other classes started coming to him to ask about the grammar points they had missed or couldn't understand. His feelings after this experience were quite clear: "It meant that I was in a completely different level. As a student, I was teaching them." His status as "the one who knows the best" increased his self-confidence even more. He too knew that he knew a great deal, but there was a problem: He didn't have any opportunity to practice his productive skills in real life. For him, mastering English would only be possible when he was able to fully communicate with a native speaker of English, which means he placed particular emphasis on speaking and listening. He prefers speaking to writing, but also agrees that he would prefer to communicate by writing were he to talk with a foreigner:

I want to speak fluently but in the speaking exams I always feel stressed and nervous. Maybe it is because I am afraid of making a mistake and losing points. I am much more comfortable when writing because while writing, I can form more complex sentences. It is impossible for the reader to read the message before I send it, which means I can make any alterations I want using a dictionary or proof checking what I wrote online. I like speaking, but I think I love being on the safe side.

Melih invested a lot of time and effort in learning English because he believed that there would be countless benefits of English to him both as an individual and as an emerging professional. He wanted to work abroad and knew very well he would have to use his knowledge of English to interact with his colleagues and the local people no matter what their mother tongue is. He also knew that having a proficiency certificate from a reputable institution or a high score from an internationally renowned exam would look perfect on his CV and attract his potential employers. Moreover, Melih was also aware of the fact that being able to speak English was a key to meeting people from other countries. As he was talking about this benefit of English he mentioned the following incident to show why it was important for him as an individual to learn English:

One day I saw my mother and father talking to tourists. I don't know how, but they made friends in a very short time. My father saw me and asked to join them. Then, he wanted me to speak to them in English. If he wanted me talk with a Turkish man about quantum physics, I could, but the only thing I was able to talk with those tourists was my name, school, and hobbies. That day, I understood that without knowing English I wouldn't be the man I wanted to be.

As a student in the department of electrics and electronics, Melih wants to work in the automobile industry, and if possible, in Germany. He knew that a good command of English was one of the most important requirements for such a possession. His wish to work abroad started to be shaped when he was a young boy:

I had designed a few projects when I was in the elementary school. I wanted to make things from scratch, design something that was not expected of me. My only source of knowledge was my teachers at school and an academic my father knew. I knew there was a lot of information available, but I couldn't access it because I didn't know English. Then, I decided not only to learn English, but also to live in one of those countries where that kind of information originates.

Melih's teachers in the first semester were quite pleased with his performance throughout the term. They all thought that he was the student who showed the greatest improvement and some of the adjectives they used to describe him were quick learner, hardworking, ambitious, positive, and friendly, more or less the same as what he had selected to describe himself. However, his overeagerness started to disturb some of his friends and teachers in the second semester. He was asking a lot of questions during the class time and this caused his teachers lose a considerable amount of teaching time. For example, his reading and writing teacher described him as a student who is hard to deal with and more hardworking than he was required to:

He asks the meanings of so many vocabulary items that sometimes both he and his friends confuse the meaning of a specific vocabulary item with another. Nevertheless, I know that he is a very innocent and well-intentioned boy. That is why I always try to help him even though it costs me a lot of time.

Similar to his teachers in the previous semesters, his teachers in the last semester enjoyed having Melih in their classrooms.

4.1.1.3 Özgür

Differently from many of his peers, Özgür attended a reputable private school from first grade to the end of his high-school period. This provided him with more exposure to foreign languages because French was the first foreign language that was taught to students in his school. In addition to French, they also learnt English and when he graduated from high-school, he both knew French and English enough to survive in a foreign country though his French was much better than his English. He thinks that after graduation from high-school, he was able to speak French fluently and he could easily give an answer if a French-speaking person asked him something, but he didn't have the same level of confidence in English.

Özgür considers himself to be a logical man who always tries to do what his mind tells him to do without really caring about his emotions. However, he agrees that, from time to time, his heavy emphasis on logic and his strong confidence in his decisions caused him to defend his stand even when he knows he is wrong. On the other hand, there are two contexts in which he does not exhibit rebellious behaviour when he is told he is on the wrong track:

I am tend to think that I am always right even when it is obvious that I am not, but not in my classes. I cannot know better than the teacher. If the teacher says that I am doing something wrong, then I know that it is wrong. I believe what my teacher says until another teacher proves that it was actually wrong. I also trust my parents. If they want me to do something, or if they warn me not to do something, I know that they do so because they care about me.

Although he thinks his parents did not adopt a rule-based control on his lifestyle, he agrees that they are inclined to be overprotective at times, but he is sure that they are doing it because they always want his own good. He also stated that he had expected his parents would be less protective as he grew up, but that was not the case:

I got my driving license last year. I believe that I am good enough to hit the roads, but my mother thinks I am still too young to do it. I ask her to lend her car to me at least once a week, but she doesn't. She knows I am right, but she thinks she is doing the right thing to protect me. I understand her, but I cannot say I am pleased with her decision.

Özgür chose to attend his university not because he wanted it, but because his parents, teachers, and some members of his family thought it would be the

best option for him. He knew he had to have a good command of English before he could start studying in his department. After taking the initial proficiency test at the university, he was expecting a better score, but his score was only high enough to study in the lowest achievement level of the programme. Although he felt discouraged to find that even though he studied for years, he still had to study in the lowest level, he knew that learning English would help him a lot in the future:

I always knew that I have to know English. It is the language of the world. Even my father started employing people who know English because the type of limber they use is only available in Nigeria. He told me a story last month. They went to Nigeria and people there mostly speak English and French. The merchants there are not really trustworthy, and he told because not many people care about legal practices, we have to keep a close personal relationship with the people we work with. He told me they have translators, but they cannot trust them as well. He wants me to learn English and French very well and help with this kind of work.

Because he attended a private school for 12 years, he had participated in a lot of listening, and speaking activities, which is not an opportunity easy to find for students in state schools. His knowledge of grammar, on the other hand, was weak and the proficiency test of the university had a particular emphasis on grammar. As soon as understanding this, he started studying grammar. Soon after, his scores were the highest in his class, which made him one of the students in the classroom that was composed of students with the highest grade average. Since he had already practiced speaking before coming to university, he thought having foreign language teaching assistants from Canada was a great asset and he occasionally visited them in order to improve his fluency. He also enjoyed helping other students who had problems communicating with native assistants because it was a proof for him that his English had improved considerably. Moreover, he was feeling quite comfortable talking to them thanks to his prior experience with English-native teachers:

Of course I feel comfortable, why shouldn't I? They also are human beings and they already know that my English is rubbish compared to theirs. Even if I use a wrong word, or my sentences are grammatically problematic, they can still understand me, and I think that is what matters. I mean I won't feel ashamed. I will do my best to tell him whatever is in my mind and they will reply back based on what they understand. That is how people communicate.

Özgür was quite pleased with his time at the preparatory programme. First of all, he thought that their teachers were great. He thinks so because he thought his teachers were experts of their fields. He respected their knowledge and the way they transferred that knowledge to their students:

Especially our main course teachers were perfect. They personally cared with us; not only what we were doing in their class, but also other things like how we are studying, what resources we use, how many hours we spend studying etc. That's why I believe the school administration should assign the best teachers for main course. If I enjoyed my classes, it was because the teachers made them enjoyable. It would have been a very different experience if I had a teacher with strict rules and no concern for his/her students.

Another thing that pleased him particularly was the academic progress he made in a year. He mentioned two situations in which the progress he made was very clear to him:

I can't say I liked my English teacher at the high-school. I hated participating in her class and I always wished she didn't ask me to answer a question. Maybe I was afraid that I would do it wrong and she would get angry with me. It changed here. I am one of the quickest to raise finger when a teacher asks a question. It makes me happy. My self-confidence has increased above all else. I believe that I can do it and doing it makes me happy. Seeing that I can now read and understand news in English also makes me happy. I sometimes read the English newspapers in our department not to practice my English, but to enjoy the glory of being able to read like native speakers...Since English is the most-spoken language in the world, many movies and TV series are in English. When I go to the cinema, I used to prefer movies that either has Turkish subtitles available or those that are Turkish dubbed. Sometimes I felt I was not really watching the movie because I was too busy reading the subtitles. Now, I can watch movies with English subtitles. I can't say that I understand every part of them, but I understand what is happening and who is doing what.

As it was also obvious in earlier parts of my interview with Özgür, he was under strong influence of his parents. Even when he was asked about his future goals, he referred to what his father, the teachers at his department, his aunt, and his mother's cousin think about his future. In brief, his father wants him to finish university and take care of the family business currently run by his father and his uncle. He talked to his teachers at the department of electrics and electronics engineering and they, too, agreed that working with his family members would be a better option for him instead of trying to pursue a career

in the private sector. According to them, “running after a new dream” would be meaningless since he already had a career opportunity waiting for him. His aunt, who, according to Özgür, is the most educated person in their family, thinks that now that he is studying at a reputable university, he should do his best, learn as much as possible, and follow his own dreams. Lastly, his mother’s cousin, who is a professor of medicine, thinks that Özgür should work with his father; otherwise, he will have to work for at least 20 years before making the same amount of money as his father does.

Özgür finally gave an answer after telling what every person he respects considers to be the best for him. His reasons, expectably, were under the influence of those he hold dear:

I used to have my own dreams as a kid, like being a director. As I grew up, I found out that one cannot make the same amount of money working in a state office as they would do working in the private sector. Working in the private sector might have some problems because you work under someone else, which makes promotion into higher ranks harder. We have our own company. It is ours. In a company, you have to listen to what the boss tells you, but here, I will be the boss. I realised that working with my father for a time and then taking over the business made more sense to me. For the last couple years, things have been very positive and they are making good money. I think I will go with it.

As an emerging electrics and electronics engineer, he is not very sure whether he can contribute anything professional to a company that makes garden furniture, but he thinks knowing English and French will make striking deals easier and safer. It was for this reason that he tried to improve his English throughout his time at the preparatory programme. He didn’t have the opportunity to practice his French, but showed willingness to improve it by selecting French as an elective course in his department. In addition to his professional life, Özgür showed glimpses of instrumental motivation in his personal life as well. He had started attending a salsa course after starting university, but later, he decided to quit it as moves started to be harder to perform. He was not going to be a dancer after all.

His teachers in the first semester was very pleased with Özgür. They all agreed that he is a careful listener and active participant in his classes, and his level of proficiency was above that of his friends in the same class. However, his teachers in the second semester complained that despite his high performance in tests and his success in class activities, he started talking a lot with his friends

in the class on matters that do not belong to what they are learning. They all believed that he had what it takes to be successful in the proficiency test, he had to concentrate more before it got too late. Although he again received complaints in the third semester that he was distracted easily in class, he was overall a satisfactory student. He was "a pleasure to have in class" (listening and speaking teacher) and "the most active participant and the student who asked a lot of questions about things he didn't understand" (main course teacher). However, his reading and writing teacher insisted that Özgür was a student who didn't pay enough attention to what was going on in the class, chatted a lot about things off-topic which distracts both the teacher and the students, and sometimes disturber of the peace in the classroom. Despite his teachers' growing concern that he was not performing as well as he should have been, they still believed that he was a successful student who could pass the test provided that he started concentrating more on his lessons and speaking less with his friends.

4.1.1.4 Fatih

Fatih has always been an introvert. It has never been easy for him to talk with others unless there is a close relationship between them. Therefore, he hadn't had many friends during his school life. He wasn't a very talented boy when it comes to human relations, but he never shut himself off from what was happening in the world. He was rather curious about his areas interest such as history, politics, and football. He has read many books about history and politics, and he enjoyed it a lot. However, his timidity has occasionally caused him some problems in his classes:

Sometimes I want to ask a question to my teacher about a part of the lesson that I couldn't understand, but I am oftentimes too shy to do it. If I feel I can find the answer the answer on my own or by asking to one of my friends, I do not ask it to the teacher. I ask it only if it is something I am extremely curious about.

Fatih was not a very competent speaker of English when he first started university. He had English classes at his high-school, but similar to many of his peers, they were not considered to be of vital importance since it was not one of the components of the university entrance exam. Fatih describes his experience of learning English at high-school as follows:

We had English classes in all of the four years I attended my high-school. I learnt a few verb tenses but I forgot most of them while preparing for the university entrance exam. We were only studying for the courses that would be in the exam. Knowing about our priorities, the teachers were also trying to teach what they were responsible for teaching in one or two classes and allocate any remaining time to study for other classes. Because of this, the only students who learnt English in our high-school were those who were going to take the foreign language exam and those who were very interested in English. I cannot say that no one cared about English; it was not a priority at that time of our lives.

However, the order in his table of priority changed once he started university. Now, he was entitled to study in the field of his dreams, history, and in order to get his degree in history he had to improve his English considerably. He understood as soon as he started that he needed to care about English as he once cared for maths, literature, and social studies in high-school. He knew that since the medium of instruction at his department was Turkish, he could start his department after studying one year at the preparatory programme no matter if he passes the proficiency exam or not. However, he also knew that if that was the case, he would still have to pass the proficiency exam any time before his graduation. He talked to some of his friends who were already studying in Turkish medium departments and he realised that postponing the exam would be choosing the wrong path:

I talked to some students studying in Turkish-medium departments who had not passed the proficiency exam then. They all said it would be much harder to pass the exam while also studying for departmental courses and advised me to do it when I was still in the preparatory programme where my only concern would be learning English. Therefore, I convinced myself that passing the proficiency exam was of the highest priority. I studied very hard from the beginning. All of a sudden, I found myself listening to English songs and watching English TV series. I started reading articles in English about history and politics. I can't say I didn't enjoy it.

Unlike many of his peers at the university, Fatih also had the opportunity to practice his English with foreigners. His hometown attracts thousands of foreign visitors every year, and for some time, he has helped them with directions to certain attractions. He stated that thanks the increase in his self-confidence after getting better at English, he was able to engage in longer conversations with tourists:

I used to get nervous whenever a tourist asked for directions to a restaurant where they could taste the local food. I always felt they spoke too quickly and my knowledge of English was not high enough to respond their questions in the same way. Before I started the preparatory programme, my responses only included words. When I went home during the semester break, I found out that I was able to give longer answers forming sentences with multiple clauses. It was when I understood I was getting better at English.

Fatih started the third semester with even more motivation because he knew that things he would learn during those 13 weeks were of paramount importance for his performance on the actual proficiency exam. He already knew that if he could build on what he had learnt in the previous two semesters, passing the exam would not be too much of a problem for him. However, the fact that he had been working a lot for 6 months without giving a long enough break made him feel tired and he decided to take a one-week vacation in the middle of the third semester. When he came back, he took a practice test and he was baffled when the results were announced: His score was the lowest in his classroom. This helped him realise that what he had done previously would not be enough for him to pass the proficiency exam, and therefore, he had to study much harder. He understood he was again getting his efforts' worth when the results of the next practice test were announced:

The happiest moment of my time at the preparatory program is when I learnt my score on the second practice test was 540. It was way above my expectations because my previous score was 417. I had spent my following three weeks studying English, but I honestly didn't hope for such a big leap.

As I also mentioned before, Fatih did not have to study that hard for the test because as a student in a Turkish medium department, he was given the opportunity to pass the test any time before his graduation, without being obliged to repeat the preparatory programme in case of failure. However, he always felt he had to master English if he were to fulfil his career aspirations. He knew what he wanted to be in the future, and he was ready to do what it takes to accomplish it:

I want to be an academic. In order to become a research assistant, I must get a certain score on the national foreign language exam. To be an associate professor, I must take that exam again and get a higher score. Apart from the tests, I also need to know English very well because I want to conduct my graduate studies abroad.

He had already decided on the country he would like to live and study in, Egypt. He believed that Egypt's richness in terms of history and some similarities between Turkey and Egypt would be very beneficial for him as an emerging academic. He was sure that his current knowledge of English would be enough for him to survive in a foreign country, but he needed to improve considerably in order to be successful at an English-medium university. Fatih wants to achieve all these, i.e. learn English and become an academic, because he feels he has to return the favour to his country which helped him all along:

I feel I must do something for my country; I must return the favour. That is why I want to become an academic. If I can become, I want to be the best. That way I can help my country by showing that I was worth the effort and resources this country spent for me.

His teachers in the first semester was mostly pleased with him and his performance in the classroom. All of his three teachers indicated that he was respectful towards them and that he was quite willing to learn English. The only problem was his inadequate level of participation in class activities. His teachers in the second term made almost the same remarks about his performance in the classroom and described him as a respectful and hardworking student who only participated when asked directly by the teacher. His teachers in the third semester still agreed that he was a respectful students, but this time his performance in the classroom raised a few eyebrows. His reading and writing teacher attributed this to the fact that the medium of instruction in his department, history, was Turkish; therefore, he didn't need to pass the proficiency test to start his department. His main course teacher, on the other hand, thought that the problem needed much more care and attention and decided to talk with him personally:

It was obvious that he was the least successful student in the class. In the first practice test his score was 417, the lowest in the classroom. I decided to talk with him and told him that it was the beginning of the semester and it was too early to become anxious. I told him that with enough attention and effort he could get a score above 500 and pass the test. He seemed unsure about his own capability of achieving that target, but later in our talk he, too, agreed that it was not impossible. Starting from that day, he made much more effort and finally, in the last two practice tests, he exceeded 500.

4.1.1.5 Eray

Eray has always been an ambitious and determined student. In his courses, his motivation was instrumental, that is, in order to feel motivated towards a particular course, he needed to be sure that his efforts would provide him with some practical advantages. It was why he didn't put very much effort in learning English when he was in high-school:

I studied at a science high-school. In a science high-school, students always focus on courses like maths, physics, and chemistry because only the students who dream to be an engineer or a doctor want to study in those schools. I was one of them and I studied maths, physics above all else. Of course, there were English classes, but I can't say I learned a lot in those classes.

His reason for not studying English was quite clear in his mind: Studying English would not provide him with practical benefits as studying maths and physics would because it was not a component in the university entrance exam. He was determined to study at the faculty of engineering of a reputable university, and studying English would not help him in that regard. Looking at the result he got on the university entrance exam, one may decide against arguing that his strategy had been false. He was entitled to study where he always wanted to be, and what is more, he was going to study in a private university without paying anything thanks to his being one of the most successful 100 students in the exam.

Similar to many of his peers, his list of priority had changed because now he had to learn English in order to be successful at the language preparatory programme and pass the proficiency exam at the end of the year in order to start taking classes in the department of electrics and electronics engineering. For him, English was finally a tool that could provide him with practical benefits.

Determined to learn English as much as possible, Eray took his courses very seriously and soon he was in the class which was composed of students with the highest grade point average on all the exams they took. Everything seemed to be on the right track because his scores were high and he was quite pleased with the progress he was making. However, there was one problem that bothered him. Eray was famous for his silence; he wasn't a boy that liked speaking with other people neither in the classroom, nor in his social circles. Right after starting the program, he noticed that all the teachers were speaking

in English, which was something he had never witnessed before, and the teachers also expected students to talk with them in English:

When I was in high-school, I did not like talking in my classes. I liked listening to the teacher, but I did not feel very comfortable answering a question aloud when everybody's attention was on me. I already mentioned I did not really like English classes either. However, in my English classes at the university, I was required to speak in English. I tried to avoid speaking again, but the teachers understood my reluctance, and asked me questions deliberately hoping that doing so would make me more eager to participate.

After being certain that his teachers were not going to leave him alone, he understood that he was going to do something about it:

My roommate was also studying English at the preparatory programme and he was suffering from the same problem I had. One day, I offered him to speak in English whenever we were together in the room. I must say it proved to be very useful. I knew I had learnt a lot of vocabulary items and grammatical structures, but I also knew I lacked fluency, which was also apparent in my scores on the speaking exams. We continued to do it for a month or so, but later it stopped. I think we got bored with it and lost our motivation because it was not something we felt obliged to do.

Although it didn't last for a very long time, it shows us how ambitious and determined Eray was. It should be noted here that Eray's motivation to master English did not only stem from his teachers' continuous encouragements. He wanted to master each and every skill of English because he had one dream he wanted to achieve:

I want to study abroad because I know that the quality of education in –let's say- the United States will be much higher than it is here. They have greater financial resources for researchers. Also, there are many important people working in our field and they all live abroad. I will not be able to meet them if I stay here throughout my life. I don't want to go abroad because it is fancy. I want to do it because I want to be the best in my field. I do not care about studying abroad and earning a lot of money upon coming back to Turkey. I care about what good I can do for the world. In order to contribute to humanity as much as possible, I feel I need to study abroad. I think about the time when I am very much close to death, and I do not want to feel like a useless man before closing my eyes forever.

Even now, as a student at the preparatory programme, Eray reads articles and books about his department in English. He knew he did not have to put this

much effort to pass the proficiency exam, but then, he would have to do it after his graduation, which would mean that he would spend a year learning English instead of starting his master's program right away. The fact that he was able to create a connection between what he was doing at the preparatory school and what he wanted to do in the future contributed a lot to his willingness to learn English and helped him become more aware of the progress he made during his time in the programme:

I always know I was an ambitious man, but I didn't know I could be this ambitious. There was always a distance between me and English. I always considered it to be foreign. I used to study things that I loved studying, and English was not one of them. I had to learn English without loving it in the first place, which meant that I could also achieve things that I do not like. I found it out when I was in the preparatory programme. I started reading articles about my field and I enjoyed that I was able to learn new things about my field and practice my English at the same time.

Eray's teachers in the first semester were all pleased with him. The adjectives they used to describe him included careful, hardworking, successful, respectful, responsible, and shy. His teachers indicated that considering his performance in the first couple weeks of the semester, it was apparent that he wouldn't have any problems passing the proficiency test. In the following semester, Eray continued to receive positive comments from his teachers, but they started to raise concerns about his participation and shyness in the classroom. His listening and speaking teacher from the U.S.A. complained that because he started having private conversations with a classmate of him, he didn't participate in class activities because he was too shy to speak in front of others. Eray continued to receive mostly positive comments regarding his performance in the third semester; however, there were some remarks about his low level of participation, especially by his listening and speaking teacher:

Eray is a pleasure to have in the classroom. He rarely participates in class activities, but has a good attitude. However, he was quiet this year, and, I would have liked to have heard him participate more verbally because it was obvious that he was capable of doing it.

4.1.1.6 Sevde

Sevde considers herself to be an honest, sociable, and logical girl. She thinks so because she often quarrels with other people if they persist on doing something she doesn't regard as logical. Although she is generally a quiet

student, she argues that her family members would think just the opposite. She, too, would like to be more serious towards other people because other people, especially her classmates, frequently made fun of her because of this:

When I was in elementary school, some students used to make some jokes and I would laugh at them because I loved being happy. When I laughed, my friends would laugh at me saying "You laugh a lot and at everything". This made me angry for a long time.

Sevde is a member of a conservative family with strong religious roots. Since her parents thought girls are not to live alone away from their families, they moved to Ankara when her sister got admitted to a high school there. This caused her many problems because she had troubles adjusting to the new life in Ankara. The biggest change was in her relations with her friends because while she enjoyed her friends back in the old city, she almost hated the new ones, which caused her to develop a negative attitude towards her new school.

Sevde believes that her family members deliberately avoid telling her about the things she is good at because they think not doing so would make her even better at those things. According to Sevde, her mother always claims her to be a rebellious, disobedient, and untidy girl because her mother believes being well adjusted, obedient, and tidy are essentials of being woman and by criticising Sevde frequently about her lack of these qualities is her way of strengthening those. Her father, on the other hand, has no such obsessions; he loves her daughter and her daughter loves him back even more.

Sevde started learning English at primary school. She had a negative attitude towards English until she started the preparatory program at university. This was because she believed there was no way for her to succeed and English was too much for her:

Before university, I didn't really care for English. I was always interested in grammar because I love maths and physics, and grammar was similar to them. I hated writing. I was asked to write essays in English, when I was not able to do it in Turkish. I was afraid of listening because it was too hard and I hated reading because the texts were complicated. I wasn't even paying attention when I saw a sentence in English because I knew I wouldn't understand. After coming here, I started in the lowest level because I didn't think English was important at the time, and I had to focus on courses that could help me enter a university. Although maths and physics were much more important, I never let English go. I was at least trying to do my homework regularly. My English grades

were either 3 or 4, but not 5. English classes were very hard at our high-school.

Sevde understood very clearly that the problem had nothing to do with the quality of English teaching at her high-school when she saw one of her classmates was studying in the B level in the preparatory program. It was her attitude towards English that prevented her from learning it:

I studied at a private high-school and I didn't really like our English classes because I didn't like my first English teacher since she taught her classes as if everyone in that class was a fluent speaker of English. Some of my friends know English better than I do because they attended private school also at elementary school. I learned almost nothing at the state school I attended. I knew some grammar rules but nothing else. It was too hard for me. Since I knew only a little when I started my high-school, I was able to improve it only a little during high-school.

However, right after she started the preparatory program, her attitude towards English went through a great change because she understood that English could be a tool that can open many doors. She was able to get into the department of architecture and students of her department was not required to pass the preparatory program to start taking courses in the department. Having understood the importance of English for her future career, she decided to try very hard to learn it:

Students in my department do not really care about the TOEFL test because they will be given exemption since the medium of instruction in the department is Turkish. Nevertheless, I started working very hard starting from the first day I came here. In fact, English means a lot more to me than it does to students in the faculty of engineering. If one is to become an architect, s/he must visit different countries, see different buildings, and walk around them. In order to be able to survive in those countries, I must learn English very well. I intend to learn another languages as soon as I feel I am a competent user of English. I want to learn languages, but I am not really sure if I can go and see different countries.

Sevde started the preparatory program in the lowest level mostly because she never thought English would be of much use to her. However, as soon as she started university and thinking about the career she would like to have in the future was enough to conceive her that English was now a must. Although once she was a student who thought English was not necessary at all, she was now spending hours to improve it. She was able to improve her English day by day and by the second semester her scores were so high that she was in the best

class of her level. In addition to her hard work, there was another thing that contributed a lot to her improvement in such a short time:

I really liked the teachers here. They were all very thoughtful and paid very close attention to us. They helped us especially with grammar. I did not even know about verb tenses when I started here, but now I can form sentences with many clauses in them. They were always motivating us to do better. Thanks to their efforts I never stopped studying even when I thought the topic was easy to learn. I studied vocabulary every night. I learned at least a couple of new words every day by studying for 15 minutes. I wanted to learn and the teachers wanted to teach. It was a perfect combination.

That being the case, there were some other things that she was not pleased about. Now that she wanted to learn English in order to communicate with foreigners, she was starting to complain about the school's strategy of teaching productive skills, especially speaking:

We were not able to improve our speaking a lot. The school wanted us to improve it from the first day as if we were not in the lowest level. It was too early. We had never spoken in English until we started here. They should have given us more time to get ready to speak in English. Since my English was really bad, I was not able to speak very much in English in the first semester. Because I was not able to do it then, the problem still went on in the third semester. I was afraid to speak. Although the teachers always asked me to speak in English, I was still speaking in Turkish. I even think that the Canadian teaching assistants were not of any use. The school brings them here to improve our speaking skills, but no student takes them seriously. Our classes with them were a complete waste of time. I only participated in their extracurricular activities because I would be able to get some points by doing so.

Although she had her complaints, she understood that studying in the program for a year had changed her attitude towards English. She used to deliberately avoid paying attention when she saw something in English, but now she pays immediate attention to it. She started reading articles about architecture in order to both improve her reading skills and learn more about her department. She was doing so because she thought she was capable of doing it and she was confident that her knowledge was enough to do so.

As a prospective architect, Sevde did not want to stay in Turkey throughout her life. However, although she was quite willing to see different places and

different people, she had her suspicions most of which stem from her conservative family:

My father won't let me go. I don't want to live or study there, but I feel I must see those places to be a successful architect. I want to see the buildings there, I want to be inside and think about how their architects felt while designing those buildings. If my family lets me do things, I will be much more sociable. I always felt myself to be a sociable person, but recently I have been feeling as if I am trapped. I know this is not because they don't trust me. This is their world view and I must follow it and conform to their boundaries.

Sevde understood that the traditions that her family members hold dear were about to pose a challenge for her to fulfil her dreams. Instead of rebelling against them, she chose to comply with them because she loved and respected each and every member of her family. She was afraid that doing something against their will would hurt the relationship between them and put her dreams aside. She decided to be the girl his family wanted her to be.

At the end of the third semester, she was able to get a high score on the TOEFL and pass the preparatory program. Even though she could have been exempted from the English classes in her department because of her high score, she still wanted to take those classes in order not to forget what she had learned throughout the program. However, before too long, she decided to be exempted from those classes because she started believing that improving her English wasn't going to be as useful as she had believed once. At the time of this interview, Sevde was pondering about quitting her department and retaking the university entrance exam. She wanted to study medicine this time because it was medicine that her parents had wanted her to study in the first place.

Her teachers were mostly pleased with her performance in the first semester. They described her as a hardworking, successful, and careful student. The only problem about her was that she easily lost her motivation, which caused her to lose interest in class activities and miss some important points. Nevertheless, it was not very hard for her to get her motivation back. Her reading and writing teacher indicated that because she was too obsessed with her performance, she felt anxious whether she would be successful or not, and this caused her to get into stress whenever she made a mistake even when it is a slip of tongue. Similarly, her reading and writing teacher in the second semester stated that although Sevde was a sweet girl, she was also very sensitive and fragile. Because of her anxiety, she was learning slowly because she needed to ask a

lot of questions to the teacher just to make sure that she learnt them correctly and there are no questions marks in her head. The following statement reveals more about her inner world:

Sevde frequently participates in class activities and asks many questions, but at times you see that she is not in the classroom mentally. Because she is an introvert, she doesn't let her feelings manifest themselves even when there is a storm breaking within her heart and this causes her to lose her interest in the class.

Her teachers in the final semester were pleased with her, but they all agreed that there was one very obvious problem: She focused too much on the mistakes she made, depriving herself of the courage needed to follow even greater achievement. That being the case, her teachers still believed that she was good enough to pass the test because she had spent a great deal of effort even though she was going to study in a Turkish medium department.

4.1.2 Low Achievers

4.1.2.1 Kerem

Kerem lived with his grandparents until he was 8 because of his asthma. As he grew up, he started missing his parents more and his parents decided to move him back to their own house in Ankara. By doing so, they also wanted to make sure that Kerem would get a quality education in the country's capital because they were worried about his grades in his first grade. After moving back to Ankara, Kerem started studying harder as a result of his increased feeling of responsibility which, according to him, stemmed from living away from his parents for a long time. There was another reason which motivated him to study harder and it was his fear that his parents would send him back to his grandparents' place after seeing his academic performance did not really improve. Worried about their kid's academic performance, his parents sent him to a reputable private school and provided him with everything he needed. Studying at a private school provided him with more exposure to foreign languages, especially to English. He liked his teachers and the way they tried teaching English to them. Therefore, he started paying more attention to his English classes because he loved learning another language.

After his elementary school, Kerem started at a regular high-school because he couldn't get a high score on the high-school entrance exam. Studying at a

regular high-school caused him some problems and he believes that his performance in English classes was what suffered the most during this process:

Maybe that is not the most politically-correct term to use but many of the students in my class were empty. They were paying only little attention to what we were learning at school, and I was the only one who paid any attention to English classes. Knowing that no one was interested in their classes, our teachers did not try very hard to teach us. I mean there were no example sentences, no group activities, and we didn't even do any exercise. It got even worse in the last two years. The university entrance exam was getting closer and all the students started studying for it. English was not one of the components of the exam, and this made everybody study for other classes during the English class. After seeing the English teacher asking us to study for other classes instead of his own class, I also started studying physics and mathematics in his classes.

Kerem considers himself to be a responsible man who always tries to keep a level head. This was so apparent in his manners that some of his friends started calling him "dede" (the Turkish word for grandfather), which soon became a trend and made every student knowing in class that way. However, during the time he spent in high-school he was neither responsible nor sensible. Instead of following what he believed to be true, he chose following his friends who cared for nothing except lazing around. Having been convinced that studying English would provide him with no practical benefits in the short run, he relinquished his will to study it and focused more on classes that would result in such benefits. Considering the fact that he is instrumentally motivated towards his classes, it is no wonder that he bought grammar and reading books the next day he learned he was going to study at a university which was renowned for its highly-demanding language preparatory programme: He now understood that studying English would provide him with practical benefits.

His score on the university entrance exam made him eligible to study political sciences at his university. Although he wanted to make a solid start to the preparatory program by starting studying English much earlier than his peers, he fell short of his goal before too long. He wanted to study very hard because upon completing his official registration to the university, he talked to some teachers from the preparatory programme and realised that it would be rather hard to pass the proficiency test. He bought some books from the nearest store, went home, had a short look at the books, and that was it. His excuse was ready:

I was already too tired because of the university entrance I exam I took only two months ago. I later thought one year would be more than enough for me to learn English. At the end of the first term, I understood that it wasn't enough at all, at least for me.

As a result of his little interest in English in his final years at high school, Kerem performed poorly on the initial proficiency test and he started studying in the class which was composed of students whose score was lower than most of the students who started that year. As a student with a past history of following friends without questioning the destination, he was worried again because his class was again full of students who were not willing to learn English. Their unwillingness was not a problem of their own; they were also influencing other students and doing everything in their power to make the teacher give up as well:

There were only three or four students who paid attention to what was going on in the classroom. The teachers are trying very hard to increase their interest in the class, but most of the time they also understand that it can't be helped. There are opportunities for those who want to learn, but if you do not pay attention, participate in class activities, and respect the teacher, there isn't much that the teacher can do.

For him, the problem was so serious that he described the ideal classroom in which he would enjoy the most as a classroom in which all the students listen to the teacher very carefully, without interrupting the class in any way.

Kerem was mostly pleased with his school and teachers. He believed that the school provided students with every possible opportunity to learn English. The things about his school that he is most pleased about are the teachers and tests. He believes that the midterm exams and quizzes are prepared in accordance with their capabilities and they start getting harder as they learn more. He admits that being a student at the department of foreign languages in his university is mostly hard, but he also thinks that it is not possible to pass an international proficiency test without studying hard. He even believes that, regardless of the many requirements he had to meet in his classes, having an international proficiency exam is what makes his university superior to others who administer their own proficiency test.

Arguing that Kerem loved his teachers at the preparatory program would not be an exaggeration. When he was asked to mention his teachers he started by

claiming that his teachers at the preparatory programme were four times better than those in his high-school. He explained the reason for this as follows:

They are all knowledgeable about what they teach in the classroom. Their own skills are highly developed. Some of them can speak like native speakers, some of them can write so complicated sentences that it takes me some time to grasp their meaning. They are trying very hard to make us love English and what we are learning. They try to answer every single question we ask, no matter how silly they are. If they think we cannot understand, they invite us to their offices and study together with us so that we can learn. Most of them have master's degree and I think this helps them realise the importance of their jobs. If I am still a weak student, it is only because of me. My teachers did everything in their power.

Thanks to his teachers' efforts, Kerem was able to improve his English considerably. However, he felt that was not enough because what they were required to achieve was already too difficult for zero-beginners. The first semester was not very hard because most of the things they learned were quite easy for him; however, the second semester was a lot harder because reading texts were now longer and grammatical structures were much harder. He understood very quickly that if he did not start studying very hard, things would be very hard to deal with later.

One of the problems Kerem experienced during his journey of learning English was that he couldn't find enough chance to practice what he learnt at school, or even if he did he was unwilling to pursue such opportunities. He knew there were a number of ways available for him to improve his productive skills, but he preferred to avoid them:

I could improve [my speaking skills] by speaking to the English-native teaching assistants. In addition to speaking to foreigners, there are also private speaking classes offered by different language teaching institutions. We too have some opportunities here at school such as the second foreign language classes.

Despite his high level of awareness on the issue, Kerem did not take any step to improve his productive skills. Even though he is a car fanatic and spends most of his time reading about cars and their parts, he has never read a single paragraph in English. When I asked whether he ever thought of becoming a member in a web-forum that focuses on cars in order to practice his English and follow his main area of interest at the same time, his answer indicative of his lack of self-confidence:

No. It occurred to me some time ago though. Then I thought I didn't know enough English to write in a foreign forum. I consider myself to be not knowledgeable enough to participate in discussions, share new information, and answer questions that are asked to me. My lack of success in writing pushes me to feel that way. I can understand if I read, but it is a bit of a problem when it comes to writing.

Later in that discussion, Kerem made it clear that his English won't be perfect by just attending classes, listening to his teachers, and passing the proficiency test. Soon came one of the most important questions of our interview, but this one did not belong to me: "Does my English need to be perfect?"

Apparently, Kerem believes that his English does not need to be perfect because he regards English only as a way of developing as an individual. Although he studies political sciences, and political sciences may seem to be a field in which one would hold English very dear, he doesn't think that English will hold an important place in his professional life. The reason why he thinks this way is the fact that he is in the department of political sciences not because he loves politics, but because his father asked him to do so:

I don't like politics. It is something really different. You must be a hypocrite if you want to achieve things. That causes a great amount of harm on one's own personality in time...I cannot avoid politics but I don't want to be actively involved in it. A lot of people try to obtain personal gains and an active politician needs to be prepared accordingly. After learning about this fact and understanding how difficult it was in Turkey I wanted to do something I loved instead of doing something I didn't really like for money. I chose what I loved. I will either open up a business in auto sales or I want to work as an adviser in one of the leading car dealers.

When asked whether he has any plans to work or study abroad, Kerem stated that he would consider such an option only if he believes doing so may help him develop professionally in the area he wants to work. Therefore, he wants to spend some time in Germany, the leading country when it comes to the automotive industry, and he hopes he will be able to conduct his internship in one of the leading auto companies in Germany before he graduates although he has doubts whether they would accept a student from political sciences as their intern. That being the case, he also stated that if such an opportunity arose, he would then work very hard to improve his English because, in that case, the knowledge of English will help him achieve his dreams:

In order to achieve it, I must have certain knowledge of English. In order to be at that level, first I would set a target, then I would do everything I can do to reach at that target. But my current knowledge is nowhere near that. I know English is important for my professional and personal development. In countries like Turkey it is very important. You need to be well-equipped. If you are not, you cannot achieve what you want. If you cannot achieve what you want, you cannot live the way you want.

Kerem's teachers in the first semester all believed that his scores on the exams did not reflect his performance and willingness in the classroom. His main course teacher was afraid that this could cause him to give up:

Kerem was a student who worked, but couldn't get the return for his efforts. This made him quite upset. Perhaps he was the one who paid the greatest effort, yet his scores were still lower than the class average. I thought it was his anxiety of failing to pass the preparatory programme and hoped that he would find a way to get over it because that, otherwise, he was destined for failure.

His teachers in the following semester indicated utmost pleasure about his behaviour in the classroom. They were extremely pleased with the way he treated his teachers and friends and they all thought that he was the most respectful student in the class and oftentimes, he tried to convince his friends to behave in the same manner as he did. Though he was a popular figure as an individual, he was having even more serious problems in the classroom as a learner. His teachers mentioned that he had problems with grammar, but his most serious problem was the lack of self-confidence. The fact that he had had a low grade point average in the first semester made him think that he was an unsuccessful student. Therefore, as his teachers indicated, he still paid good attention to the lessons by taking notes, doing activities etc., but he was too afraid to talk or answer a question verbally in front of his friends. His teachers in the last semester stated that they all thought Kerem was in the class composed of students with lowest academic performance because he had a problem in his private life because his performance was way above that of his friends. They all believed that he was the best in their classes. In the middle of the third semester all his teachers realised that he almost completely lost his interest in classes and his listening and speaker teacher approached him, trying to understand what was wrong. However, he didn't want to reveal what the problem was and asked his teacher not to bring up the subject again. Starting from that moment, they all observed a considerable deterioration in his performance in class and he didn't want to talk in the classroom unless his

teachers made him. Kerem continued to behave in the same way until the last day of school.

4.1.2.2 Murat

When asked to introduce himself, Murat defined himself as someone sociable, entrepreneurial, idealist, and tolerant. Moreover, he had detailed explanations for each of the adjectives that “make him who he is”:

When I say sociable I mean I have a close relationship with my friends. I believe I can easily relate to other people and I have good communication skills. I think I am an entrepreneur because, to give an example, recently one of my friends contacted me and offered cooperation. He wants to import calamari from China but he wants to do it with me. I accepted it and we went to the marketplace to learn about this calamari. I have talked with people about it and I learned a lot about something which was completely unknown to me before then. We asked them how we could import calamari and sell it to the market. That kind of things attracts me. I think I am an idealist because I want to do my best for my country and this world. Just like Martin Luther King said “I have a dream”, this is my dream. I feel it is possible to create a more liveable world and I must take responsibility to do whatever I can. Lastly, I consider myself to be tolerant because I always take what other people with different opinions say kindly and I value it. That’s because I believe every individual is a new door to a different world and we can never be sure that what we believe in is the ultimate truth. That’s why I believe everyone should be tolerant towards each other. I believe I am able to look at a situation from different point of views because I have been in many different settings. I am 20 years old but I have seen a lot.

Murat stated that there were several reasons why he felt this way. The first one is that he studied at a boarding high school and stayed away from his family for a long time. When he was alone, he needed to take care of every need of him on his own. He also thinks that the consecutive deaths of his father and his brother made him more experienced than his peers and forced him to deal with many downturns when they were most unexpected.

Murat has an eager interest in politics and his greatest desire is to become a member of the administrative board of the country. Although he has no interest in becoming a member of a political party in Turkey, he has already started working to start a student club which will mostly be interested in internal and foreign affairs of Turkey. He states why he doesn’t wish to be a member of an existing political party and why he wants to start such a student club as follows:

My understanding of life is much broader than that of political parties and non-governmental organizations. I haven't been a member in either of them because I believe none of them truly represents my own views. On the other hand, this year, I started working on a student club with some of my friends and we are about to submit our application. This club will be interested in everything that is essential for human beings. We will set our actions considering this question: What is an undergraduate citizen of Turkish republic can do for this country? The club will consist of idealist members just like me. We are ambitious and will work towards turning Turkey into a more enlightened and developed country. We have already determined a name for the club: *Aydınlık Türkiye İdealistleri Topluluğu* (Idealists for Enlightened Turkey). Its initials are ATI and ATI is the old Turkish word for future. By setting this name, we indicate once again that we are candidates for governing Turkey in the future.

Murat started school at a state primary school in his hometown. He studied at a social sciences high school in a city almost 800 kilometres away from his hometown. Although his family members offered him the opportunity to study at a private high school in his hometown, he refused it because he believed that that school was the one that could best help him reach his dreams. However, living that far away from his family caused him to miss them a lot and always think about them and the city even when he was in class. He also believes that his brother, sister, and mother do not have sufficient knowledge of his capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses because they were not with him when he developed those.

After his primary and elementary schools, Murat went on learning English in the language preparatory program of his high school. However, he believes that since the school had only recently started admitting students, the teaching of English was not helpful for students. He stated that many of his language teachers quitted their jobs and the school hired new teachers in their stead and since they all had their unique styles of teaching, Murat failed to adapt to all of them and let English go. Later, he admitted that the real reason why he paid almost no attention to learning English was different:

I think it was about my teacher at the primary school. I was not able to communicate with that teacher. We have experienced many breakdowns. All my other classes were 5⁶, but my English was 4. I have always believed that the teacher is representative of the class s/he is teaching and student identify the class with that teacher. If you do not

⁶ 5 represents the highest grade a student can get at the end of a semester in primary, elementary, and high schools.

like your teacher, you cannot love that class. That I had personal problems with that teacher caused me to keep my distance from English classes. To be honest, what I felt was prejudice, but that was not only me. At least fifteen of my class mates also hated him. It was a clear example of what they call the herd mentality.

To this day Murat believes that his most important shortcoming is that of English. That is why he doesn't regard himself as a successful learner although he has no significant problems with the other courses. Although he still doesn't consider his current knowledge of English to be enough, he knows that it has much improved since he started the preparatory program:

I know how it was when I first started here. I compare what I know now to what I knew when I graduated from high school and the difference is significant. I can speak much more comfortably now. My self-confidence has increased and especially my listening skill has improved greatly. We used to have writing classes in high-school as well but we never learnt how to write an essay. I learnt how to write a well-structured essay at this school and I believe it will help me a lot in the future.

Murat started in the best class of his level but in the second term he was placed in the lowest class of the level because of his poor grades. He stated that there were two main reasons why he performed poorly:

I never believed that English was very crucial for those studying law. Only if you have greater goals than becoming a lawyer or a district attorney, will you need English. In our school, students studying at the department of law don't have to pass the TOEFL to take courses in their departments. You have to pass the exam any time before you graduate and because of that I did not push very much. Moreover, I was very ambitious and very eager to learn in the beginning, but after a couple of weeks I lost them all. I understood that one must learn a foreign language in a place where a lot of people speak it for their daily needs. For example, you can talk with native speaking people a lot and while trying to adjust to the new setting, you feel motivated because using their language will make it easier for you to settle. I understand that we have to learn a lot to pass the TOEFL, but the school is trying to achieve this by increasing the course load and this both tires and demotivates students. I learned a lot in the first term and I was quite pleased with almost everything here. However, in the second term all the topics were repetitions of what we had learnt in the first term. As the TOEFL date was coming closet, we started to have less speaking activities, play less games and this caused students to feel demotivated. We did not want to participate even in TOEFL classes.

Although Murat had a number of complaints about the school, he was generally pleased with it because it was thanks to his time at the preparatory program that considerably improved his level of English and he believes he was able to learn a lot owing to his teachers above all:

Our teachers are really qualified. They never leave a question unanswered. I can easily argue that most of them love being a teacher. They always take care of our progress and do their best to motivate us, especially in speaking activities. They have a great system for homework. Even if a student didn't do any extra study but completed all of his/her assignments carefully, s/he would easily pass. It was my teachers that made me a man who can now communicate in English.

Unlike many of his friends, Murat was able to make close friends with some of the native English-speaking teaching assistants. He stated that he feels very comfortable speaking to them because he is a sociable person. They do not only talk about daily routines but also about some serious topics such as education systems in Canada and Turkey, socialism, liberalism etc. However, there was one big question mark remained in his mind:

I felt quite comfortable talking about these issues but I was not sure if they were able to understand what I was trying to tell them. I can easily talk about these topics in Turkish, but I was not sure as for English. I decided to ask them. One of them said "I can understand you 85%. You have no problem communicating." I can't stress out enough how amazed I was. Then I understood I wouldn't lead a poor life even if I were to live in England.

After realising his willingness to communicate in English, I asked him whether or not he would like to continue the interview in English. His reply was now in English: "If you want, we can try. But I don't know this is how many good idea". Soon he understood there was a grammatical error in his sentence and stopped for a moment. Next, he came up with the following explanation in his native language with some humour involved:

I feel comfortable but this is a complicated topic and I can offer you more if we speak in Turkish. If am to speak in English about this topic, the language would suffer a lot.

Murat regarded learning English more as a way of personal development rather than professional development because he believed his future plans had nothing to do with English:

I believe learning English will help me develop personally and provide me with a broader point of view. A new language means a new culture and a new way of living. This will make one's identity and personality more enlivened. It can give you the opportunity of travelling abroad and living in another country. When it comes to my career plans, I do not want to become a lawyer, a judge or a district attorney. I am studying at this department owing to the contribution it might make on my point of view and personal development. I once desired to become an academic, but I gave up because I wanted to work actively and I realised my character wasn't suitable for making academic studies. Going abroad, learning a language there, doing research were not my main areas of interest. I want to be actively involved in politics in the future and I want to do my best for this country. I know English can help me in that regard but not as much as it would for students at the department of international relations or a lawyer who would like to work abroad.

When he was asked about his families' attitudes towards his learning English at the preparatory program, he told a memory about which he feels regretful even today.

My brother always motivates me to learn English because he knows English can open many doors, especially for businessmen like us. One day, I found out that it was possible to illegally pass an exam which was accepted to be equal to our own proficiency exam. There were some men who could take the exam instead of me in exchange for some amount of money. When I first learned about it I was eager because I thought doing so would earn me a lot of time. When I told about it to my family members, they were extremely angry. They told me I was attending a program to learn English and my suggestion was nothing but taking the easy way out. My brother told me that what I was suggesting was unethical and it was embarrassing for me even to give it a thought. Soon I also understood that while trying to do my best for country and helping it develop, I was about to do something illegal. I felt what I did was shameful and I still regret it deeply.

All of Murat's teachers indicated that they knew him as a respectful and hardworking student who was very much interested in class activities. Most of the things they indicated were also mentioned by Murat in his interview such as frequent visits to his hometown, considerable improvement of his writing and listening skills etc. For his progress in the first term, his teachers mentioned that his biggest problems were vocabulary and pronunciation. His main course teacher mentioned his frequent hometown visits and said that he needed extra care because he was psychologically down and was missing a lot of time that caused him to delay doing his assignments. Both his main course and reading

and writing teachers said that he was the most respectful and most hardworking student of the class for the second term. They agree that he was the one who struggled the most to improve his speaking skill. Moreover, they mentioned their belief that he would be successful at passing the TOEFL at the end of the year. However, in the third term, his teachers started to complain that he was not doing enough. Throughout the semester he completed only 30% of his assignments in the main course. He started to talk to his friends about matters that are not related to the class activities and according to his teachers, this was the main reason why he was not able to sustain enough academic performance along the semester. That being the case, they still believed that he was going to pass the TOEFL in the first exam of the following academic year if not at the end of the third semester.

4.1.2.3 Furkan

Furkan considers himself to be a well-intentioned individual. He also admits that he is selfish and always looks for better options, most probably because he is the only child in his family. Moreover, being the only child made him overly attached to his parents. As a result, he always feels obliged to consider what his parents would think about a decision he is about to make. Even when he was asked to mention a couple of his personal traits, he started talking about what his parents would say about him. However, he doesn't complain about his attachment to his parents, on the contrary, he finds it very hard to live away from them.

I love living with my parents. I felt very comfortable while living with them. Similar to many people who feel the same, I had difficulty adjusting to my new life without them. We have developed effective communication between us. It is my parents who know everything about me because I tell them everything about myself. I have nothing to hide from them.

His attachment to his parents was so strong that it had an influence even on his future goals. When asked whether or not he would like to work abroad, he said it was improbable and the reason was that he didn't want to live that far away from them. He dreams of a life in which he will do only what he thinks to be the best for him. Therefore, he is most afraid of harming himself and that's why he has always avoided potentially health-endangering habits and decided to lead a steady but safe life.

Whereas Furkan prefers to have solitude within his living space, he prefers to have a lot of friends when he spends time outside. However, after his first days at the university dormitory, he realised that he was going to experience the opposite from then on:

I had a very different profile in high school compared to the one I have now. I used to have a say in the decisions we were going to make as a group, participate in the sports clubs of the school. That was why everybody in our school used to know me. It was easier for me to communicate with others. Here at this school, I feel lonely. I have only few friends. What is worse, I am sharing my room with another student. I missed having a room that belonged only to me.

Furkan knew it wasn't going to be easy for him to settle in a new city, away from his parents and friends. He also knew that things would be much more comfortable if his parents were able to hire him an apartment, but he did not wish to lay an extra burden on their shoulders. Another problem that hindered his adaptation to life at university was his lack of friends. His most important criterion while making a new friend was his knowledge of him/her and his/her parents, which caused him problems at making new friends at university because he had almost no knowledge about themselves and their parents. As a result, he was not able to make new friends during his first few weeks at university. He explains the reason as follows:

I did not trust them because I did not know who they were. When you do not trust someone, you cannot make friends with him/her. I have only few friends and they are those who came to me asking questions in the classroom. I cannot talk easily to someone I do not know, but I can answer their questions if they ask me first. That is how I communicate.

Before starting college Furkan was able to get high scores without making a great effort. He was extremely pleased about his knowledge of English at elementary school because his teachers knew his parents in person and they helped him a lot not only in class hours but also in their free time. He still believes that what he learned at primary and elementary schools was much more helpful compared to that of high school:

I believe my English was much better at elementary school than it was at high school. It was a teacher training high school, but the teachers focused on science classes as if it was a science high school. To be honest, I did not complain about that because I knew science classes would help me a lot in the university entrance exam whereas English classes would be of no benefit. When you have an important exam

coming, you only focus on whatever helps you most and English was nowhere near that, of course at that time. I know that knowing English would help me a lot in my professional life, but then I only cared about getting into a reputable university.

It can be said that his negligence of English helped him achieve his main goal and he became a student in the department of electrics and electronics at a university he loved. On the other hand, he understood that the time when he needed to have a good command of English to achieve another important goal had come because he had to pass the English proficiency exam held by his university to start studying at his department. Furkan had a low score on the exam and he started from the lowest level. Even though he was able to get high scores at his high school even though he did not study a lot, he was not unable to get enough scores even though he worked hard, a situation which he defines as "hitting the wall". According to Furkan, there were two other reasons for this problem:

That I didn't know enough English forced me a lot. We didn't took the English classes at high school very seriously and I hadn't practiced my skills for ages. I tried, but I couldn't get my efforts' worth. Being lonely in a new city, having only few friends, and being less sociable that I used to be in my hometown have all affected my performance. When I do something well, I am capable of doing it even better, but if I do it bad, I get hopeless and it becomes only worse.

Another problem for him was the number of group activities he was asked to participate in. As an individual who wanted to live and stay alone, he also wanted to learn and study alone:

I am the sort of person who can achieve things when he is alone. I used to play in school teams and I know the value of assisting a teammate, but when it comes to learning, you need to do it on your own. For example, if the teacher asks me to write an essay in cooperation with one of my classmates, I may not focus on it a lot because I know there is another person responsible for completing the task at hand, but when I'm alone, I need to take care of every part of it on my own. It is for this reason why I feel more successful when I study alone.

However, after studying at the preparatory program for a semester, he understood that what was past was passed and he had to do his best if he was to pass the exam and start his department:

I do not consider the first semester to be a complete loss. In fact, I believe that the higher number of tools we possess, the better we are

prepared for the challenges in the world. Learning English is one of the tools that can help us do this. Here at this university, we have the opportunity to learn English and we are paying a price to learn. If it is possible for me to learn English here, and I believe it is, why shouldn't I learn it?

Similar to his past experiences, Furkan needed to set learning English as a main goal of him in order to be successful at his department and things started to change for him as soon as he shifted his attitude towards learning English. He was pleased with his teachers and the school in general because he believed the school had a teaching system that every learner could benefit from provided that they are willing enough. Similarly, the teachers provided students with support by both increasing their motivation and helping them with their mistakes. The only problem about the school was the testing system, and he thought it was an important problem:

I do not think that the proficiency exam accurately assesses our knowledge of English. Maybe the school can give other exams a chance. The midterm and quizzes, on the other hand, do test our knowledge because in those exams we have questions about the topics we learn at school including our writing and speaking skills. I believe our own exams are good but the one that we have to pass to start our departments is not capable of measuring our performance.

Furkan did not enjoy the classes he attended and the games he was asked to participate in during the first semester. However, starting from the third semester he understood that he had to attach a greater importance to the in-class activities if he was to become successful. He later revealed that he started studying and taking things more seriously not only to become successful, as he once was, but also because of his parents: "I always thought about my parents and I did not want them to consider me to be an unsuccessful student." In addition to the possible reaction of his parents, there was another thing that stimulated his interest in his classes. He was extremely pleased about his main course teacher in the third semester. He regards his classes as those in which he enjoyed the most:

Other teachers did not try to involve the students who didn't care about the course in the class, which caused us to stay away from them so that they wouldn't ask us to do anything. Since we spend three months with a teacher, this avoidance from the teacher turns into a habit. They used to let inattentive students sit in the back row of classes and not care about what they were doing. That disturbed me a lot but I thought it

was better to remain hidden. But in [teacher's name] classes, he asked everyone to participate and let no one hide from him. After a time, I understood that learning English was kind of fun.

All in all, his time in the preparatory program made Furkan "considerably more experienced and prepared towards various other challenges in life". This was because as he realised things were getting harder for him, he felt the need for studying even harder and this, according to him, was the key to deal with all the problems he may come across. Moreover, as he got the return for his efforts' worth, his self-confidence improved and he understood that he could overcome any obstacles in front if he puts enough effort into dealing with them. Another issue that pleased him a lot is that, during the time he spent in the program, he learnt some English words that do not have an equivalent in Turkish. The knowledge of such words made him a more sophisticated individual and he extremely enjoyed it.

When asked about his future goals, he revealed that he hated thinking about the future:

I was always afraid of thinking about the future. It is not an anxiety about my future because I believe things will be fine if I do what I need to do. Thinking about the future has always scared me. I do not want to think about that will become of me in the future. I will of course have a job and I will change my job if I do not like it. It is not what frightens me. That I will have to get out of my current position, the position which I am used to, is scaring me.

However when the question changed and he was asked about his intentions he revealed that living or studying abroad did not attract him only because he would have to leave his parents and other members of his family in Turkey. He wants to find a job in Turkey and live not so far away from his parents. Soon after, he started talking about the position in which his parents, especially his father, would like to see him:

My father always thinks that I should study and try harder. My mother does not talk about it, but I know my father would like me to have a prestigious job and be in a position that would earn others' respect. I know they trust me and my decisions. I do not want to live abroad not to be away from them, but I know they will support me if I decide to do so.

In his interview, Furkan mentioned that the first adjective his parents would use about him was unsteady. When he was asked to give further details as to

how his attitude changes from one situation to another, his response was as follows:

It is my decisions that are unsteady. In times when I am usually a pessimist, I may cheer up all of a sudden. Maybe it has to do with my zodiac sign. My mood can change very easily. You know what, I can easily control it. If I want to look happy even when I'm not, I can easily do it. If I want to make sure that other people keep their distances from me, I can do it.

That he was an unsteady boy was also apparent considering what his teachers told about him. While the first comments about his class participation and performance are extremely positive, there were also signs that something was not right. His reading and writing teacher who was a native speaker of English noted down the following:

Furkan has completed 100% of the homework. He is perhaps my most inconsistent student. Many days he has a positive attitude and seems eager to learn. Other days he seems bored and sleepy. Sometimes he seems rude and obstinate when I ask him to pay attention or stop talking. His midterm was representative of this: He did very well on the first four parts of the exam. Then didn't even try to write an essay because he couldn't understand one word on the writing prompt.

Even though he completed most of his assignments in the first half of the first term, he submitted almost no assignment in the second half. Now, his teachers was sure that there was a problem:

Furkan has submitted no assignments. He is a silent student, but he has no interest in what we are doing in the classroom. He either talks with his friends or plays with his mobile phone. He has no interest in the assignments I give or the warnings I make. If he continues in the same way, he cannot succeed.

His teachers' comments for the second term were even worse. They indicated that he had no interest in classes and he openly refused to participate in class activities. However, they all agreed that he followed the lectures silently and carefully listened to his teachers. Still they all believed that he had to be more active in order to pass the exam. In his final term, the comments about his performance changed significantly. Now his teachers were pleased about his efforts and they showed their belief that he was going to pass the exam. His main course teacher stated the following:

Furkan was extremely motivated in the beginning. He was doing his assignments, he was listening to me carefully, and he was asking questions about things that he couldn't understand. He was silent and extremely respectful. Unlike many of his friends, he was not having chats with his friends or playing with his mobile phone. He participates in class activities and tries to do his best. I am pretty confident that he will get a high score and pass the exam.

4.1.2.4 Vedat

Vedat had a father who has worked as a teacher of geography for long years. He had a good care of his and his brothers' academic progress starting from the first grade and advised them whenever he felt necessary. That was why he introduced his family as one that is "hungry to succeed". In high school he studied at a teacher training high-school, his elder brother studied at a science high-school, and his younger brother is currently studying at an Anatolian high-school, all of which require its applicants to have achieved a certain score on the high-school entrance exam.

Vedat's elder brother was studying for the university entrance exam when Vedat was still in high-school. His brother performed below his father's expectations and seeing how his father felt after learning his elder child's performance on the test proved to be a key source of motivation for Vedat:

My father was deeply disappointed. He was expecting a lot from him. After he failed to meet my father's expectations it was as if he stopped expecting anything from us. To be honest, that frightened me and made me wonder what if he feels the same after learning my score. I knew I had to study a lot.

Even though the hope of meeting his father's expectations was very important for Vedat, it was not the only thing that showed him he had to start very hard, but studying very hard was not the easiest thing for him. He had to stop doing some of the things that were of great importance to him:

In Turkey there are hundreds of universities, thousands of departments, and thousands of unemployed graduates. I didn't want to be one of them. I knew I had to study, but studying hard was boring. Therefore, while studying, I started doing things I already liked. For example, I listened to music while studying, but after some time, I understood that listening to music distracted me, so I decided to quit it slowly. I used to go to every match my favourite team played, and I was a famous figure among the fans. I had to quit it too. I started waking up at half past seven to study, and it went on until late in the night. I had to sacrifice a

lot in order not to disappoint my father, and make sure that I would be entitled to study where I wanted to.

Vedat had a very close relationship with his elder brother. He trusted him so much that he let him prepare the preference list for the departments in which he would like to study. His brother, who was also studying biomedical engineering, had always told him that the best department of biomedical engineering was at the university in which Vedat currently studies. He had also wanted to study there, but his score was nowhere near. His brother also advised him to master English because it would be a valuable asset for a graduate of their department. This made Vedat happy because he had been learning English for 8 years then, and he was a graduate of one of the teacher training high-schools in Turkey which are famous for their emphasis on teaching foreign languages. Apparently, the case was a bit different from what was usual:

I taught I knew English when I started here, but it turned out to be wrong. What I knew about English turned out to be rather limited. Now I understand that since we were thinking a lot about the university entrance exam, the teachers didn't really take things seriously. Our teacher of English, for example, gave us the answers of midterm exams during the tests. Everybody got a high score, but obviously no one learned a thing. I think we were considering English to be a millstone around our necks, and the teachers behaved accordingly.

Vedat was of the same opinion, and he was happy when his teachers let them study for courses that were going to be a part of the university entrance exam instead of teaching them English. He knew he had to learn English if he were to achieve his dreams, but English was not among his priorities at that time. He thought learning English at a university would be much easier and more efficient. The fact that some of his teachers gave the answer key before the actual exam so that the students wouldn't spend their "valuable" time studying for English also made him feel certain that he was doing the right thing by putting English aside.

That being the case, Vedat always believed that knowing English was one of the most valuable assets to have. He wanted to master English as much as possible and he wanted to learn another foreign language, which was one of the reasons why he wanted to study at this university because learning a second foreign language in addition to English was a must for students at this university. There were particular reasons why he was this willing to invest in learning foreign languages:

Since many institutions and scholars working in my field are in the States, almost all of the publications are in English. For me, not knowing English means having no access to those books and articles... I want to be one of those people publishing in English. Before coming here, I spoke to my father and told him that I wanted to study abroad after getting my undergraduate degree if he could provide me with the money I need. I want to spend some time abroad because I believe there are two rules to learn English: Wanting to learn it and making it a part of your life. If I live abroad, I will want to learn it to survive there and I will have to make it a part of my life because I will need English almost in every context I get involved.

The first semester at the university was a time of exceptionally high academic performance for Vedat: His lowest score on the tests was 90 out of 100. He thinks that the reason why he was this successful was not his hard work or effort, but his admiration to the new environment of which he was now a part:

As soon as I started this program I realised that English was something a lot different than I had known it to be. The teachers tried to help us feel English within this building rather than just learn it. They spoke in English in the classroom at all times. Rather than giving us the Turkish meaning of the new words, they explained them in English and encouraged us to learn vocabulary in the same way. I practiced listening and essay-writing for the first time at this department. For example, one day my writing teacher came and asked me to "think in English". She said I would make a mistake if I thought in Turkish. I always thought that that teacher meant a lot although her sentences were relatively short. Think in English. She meant that I should make English a part of me. What I also realised at this program was that learning English would be much more fun when done willingly. That was what the teachers tried to do. They didn't directly help us pass the TOEFL. They wanted to make sure that we knew enough English to pass the TOEFL. I was rather pleased about it because the reason why I attended this program was to learn English.

Vedat was particularly pleased with his teachers at the department who, according to him, are much better than his teachers at high-school. He stated that his success was mostly due to their efforts because he believes most of the teachers at the department spend more effort than do the students. Unlike the previous schools he attended, there was no teacher here that caused him to lose his interest in the class. On the contrary, the teachers here made in-class activities attractive and prevented him from sleeping on many occasions. He thinks that one of his main course teachers were exceptional in this regard:

[The name of the teacher] was our main course teacher. She taught in such an enjoyable way that we both laughed and learned in her class. I remember she was the only teacher whom the whole class listened to with utmost care. Sometimes we played games, sometimes we talked about daily matters. She even sang a song in the class. She did things we weren't used to seeing and kept us awake and wondering what the next amusing incident was going to be.

He was also pleased with the fact that the administration of the department kept a determined stance regarding obligatory attendance to classes, frequent assessment of student performance, and motivating students to visit their teachers during office hours.

His success and enjoyment in the class encouraged Vedat to look for further opportunities to practice his English skills. He decided to make friends with the teaching assistants from Canada. After spending some time with them, he realised an obvious improvement in his speaking, which was also approved by the high score he got from subsequent speaking tests. Another thing that Vedat was happy with was that he started using the same abbreviations the teaching assistants did in his text messages, which made him think that the time he spend with them was making him more native-like. He thinks that he was able to improve in a short time because he felt comfortable talking to the teaching assistants and didn't worry about making a mistake:

In fact, I felt quite comfortable. I was happy when I made a mistake because they were correcting it and I was learning the correct form. I laughed at my mistakes the same way I would laugh when a foreigner formed a grammatically wrong sentence. It's the nature of learning. For example, I had always thought that *sounds good* meant *beautiful voice*, and I felt quite pleased when I learnt it means something like *that's a nice idea*.

During his time at the department, Vedat did not only work towards improving his productive skills. He also put a great deal of effort in improving the areas that will help him pass the proficiency test. Even before the start of the last term, he was able to get a score enough to pass the proficiency test on the practice tests he took. He started having more correct answers on all the three parts of the test, with the structure part having the highest percentage of correct answers. His remarkable improvement made him realise that studying abroad was not a dream anymore, but a possibility that could be grasped easily because the most difficult barrier between him and studying abroad, learning English, was almost gone.

The improvement in his language skills increase his self-confidence as well. He thought the gap between the time he started and the time we conducted this interview to so high that he regretted not learning English before because he had missed some opportunities that he wouldn't miss had he known English:

Just like the saying we have "bir dil bir insan; iki dil iki insan" (literally translated as one language is one person; two languages are two persons). I felt like there was two different bodies in me and I felt more self-confident. For example, a couple of months ago there was a trip abroad. I didn't join them because my English was not enough to survive abroad. I wish I had the same chance now. The feeling of being able to do something gives one courage. I have that feeling now. It is due to that feeling that I started thinking about learning another foreign language.

Only a couple of days before the end of the second semester, his family members, his friends, his teachers, and most importantly, Vedat were confident that he was going to be in the best classroom in his level. When the results were announced one week following the exam, everyone but Vedat were shocked because he had failed the exam. Vedat wasn't surprised because he had already knew he wasn't going to pass the exam even before taking it. The problem was not with academic performance or knowledge of English. What his teachers, friends, and family members forgot was that apart from being a hardworking learner with a high academic performance, he was a teenager, and teenagers tend to have somewhat complicated lives:

I am certain that I wouldn't fail had it not been for the fight I had with my girlfriend two days before the exam. The fight resulted in our breaking up. Knowing that we broke up only because something I did devastated me. I couldn't sleep when I went to bed, and I couldn't eat even when I wanted to. Everything seemed meaningless to me. I hadn't slept for two days when I was in the classroom where I was going to take the exam I had waited for one year. I was so tired that while reading the questions in the first part I felt asleep and went on sleeping in almost all of the exam. Even if I had answered all the questions I could read in my remaining time, I wouldn't have passed.

All of his three teachers stated that Vedat performed above expectations in the first half of the first semester, which pleased all three of them. However, they all agreed that his performance deteriorated in the second half of the semester because of the negative influence of his lazy friends. His teachers in the second semester thought that he was usually a respectful and careful student. No one complained about his performance in the classroom, but they were all

concerned that he was having too many private conversations with his friends and spending most of his time in the class speaking, especially in the listening and speaking class. His teachers in the third semester stated that he performed a lot above the class average in the first half of the semester, but he experienced the same problem in the second half and lost almost all of his willingness to attend. One of his teachers even thought that Vedat was coming to class only in order not to fail because of his absenteeism from school because if that were the case, they school would sent his family a written report stating that he failed because he exceeded the absenteeism limit. Although they all thought there was something seriously wrong about him, no one wanted to get involved and understand what was going on.

4.1.2.5 Mehmet

If the interview with Mehmet showed me one thing about him, it was that he was a real car fanatic. He was not only in love with his mother's car, but he was also following the latest trends in automobile industry in order to make sure that the car he enjoys driving is always in the same league with classy cars. As a person who hated reading books, he did not prefer to buy printed magazines, but he rather followed several accounts on social networking websites in order to keep his information up to date. Doing so gave him an opportunity to practice his reading and vocabulary skills since all the accounts he fallowed were sharing information in English. His love of automobiles encouraged him to participate in a fan group consisting of members who owned the same brand of car. Mehmet's love of cars was mainly resulted from his frequent visits to his grandfather's store that sold auto parts. It was that store where his interest in trading was also inspired. After a time, he started selling auto parts to his friends. He invested the money he earned back into the business and he soon started selling larger parts of cars including winter tyres. The short-lived success he experienced encouraged him to take more interest in trading and now, as a student who will study in the department of economics, he's determined to start a business of his own.

Mehmet's main hobby is doing sports. He especially enjoys playing table tennis with his friends and regularly attends his sessions at a fitness centre. He likes it when he is with people that he can love and he believes he is a social person who likes to make new friends. Although he was a popular figure among his friends before starting university, he complains that he was not able to make

enough friends at his first year at the university. According to him, this was the main reason behind his negative attitude towards classes in the program:

I love fun. I also like to entertain others whenever I can. I like to have fun and travel. I am usually cheerful and I only rarely get angry at something. However, I don't think the school is fun. I love making friends, but I was able to make only a few here. That's why I couldn't get used to this school. I am still seeing my old friends and it makes me think that I do not belong here.

The fact that he was unsettled at this university also had an impact on his performance in the classes. He confesses that he had never been a hard working student, but he also reveals most of his teachers at the primary and elementary school considered him to be an intelligent student when talking to his mother.

Although he is labelled as a lazy language learner now, it was not the case for his entire school life. Since his father was working abroad, he spent about three months in a year abroad, mostly in the USA. He was four when he first went there and he kept on going every year and during some of his semester breaks. In one of his visits to the States he attended a language school and according to him, doing so helped him especially with his speaking skills. He also went to the United Kingdom once thanks to his grandfather who bought tickets for an all-inclusive hotel and a language school only because he was able to get a certificate of appreciation⁷ from his school. He believes travelling frequently to those countries made him a very sociable person because he made many friends there and he is still in contact with some of those. As a result, he still thinks that his speaking and writing skills are a lot more improved compared to his friends.

Frequently visiting the UK and the USA, the two countries that have the biggest number of native English speakers, and attending language schools there made Mehmet the best student in his English classes during high-school. His friends were begging him so that they could cheat from him and he was quite generous in that regard because he enjoyed the attention he was getting and his status as the most knowledgeable man at least in a course if not in all of them. His

⁷ According to the related regulation of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey, a certificate of appreciation is awarded to students whose average of all the exams held in a semester is between 70 and 85. Those whose average is between 85 and 100 receive a certificate of excellence.

knowledge of English also helped him in the first stage of his time at the preparatory school. Owing to his score on the preliminary proficiency exam, he started in the best class of his level and his scores on the first two quizzes were well above the class average. However, things changed considerably for him afterwards and the reason was quite clear for him: "I did not study at all and I slept in most of the classes." At the end of the first semester, Mehmet learnt that he was going to attend the class composed of students with lowest grade point average.

Apart from his laziness and lack of interest, there was another reason behind his failure: He did not favour the environment in which he was supposed to learn English. According to him, one cannot learn a language efficiently in a place where that language is not the medium of communication. He believes languages should be learnt in places where all aspects of life are based on communication in that language. Even though he was confident in his speaking skills, he still refused to participate in speaking activities in the class because he thought speaking in English in a class full of people with whom he can interact in his native language was absurd. He also stated there the school was not teaching in a way that was encouraging for learners and he believes the program should go under a fundamental change "from compulsory attendance to the examination system":

Attendance to courses should not be compulsory. If they do not want to come to the school every day, let them do so. It should not be a reason for repeating a semester. Also, the students are marked absent even when they are late for a couple of minutes. Maybe I would be more willing when I am coming to school had the school been more tolerant in applying the rules. The school is not prompting us to learn. If we had shorter class hours and longer breaks I would feel much more motivated. The school should also abolish TOEFL as the proficiency exam and should administer its own proficiency exam because we have speaking and writing classes but TOEFL does not have those components. We are learning more than we need. This causes lack of motivation. Sometimes I am visiting other universities and I think they are much better compared to ours. I feel tempted by them. I think the year I spent here was a complete loss.

Among all his complaints, there was one thing that he was pleased about: The teachers. He felt the teachers were doing their best to teach them, but he thought the school was preventing teachers from taking initiative and he felt sorry for them. He stated that he enjoyed only in few of the class he took and

those classes were taught by an instructor. That instructor did not lecture throughout the class, but divided it into smaller parts so that students would not get carried away. He liked his method of teaching so much that he believes he would do the same were he a teacher himself.

Similar to his peers, Mehmet does not have enough opportunity to practice English in his daily life. However, from time to time he exchanges e-mails with his friends in the UK and the USA. Moreover, he also talks to some of them online. He indicated that while speaking with them, he doesn't feel nervous at all. The only problem, according to him, is that sometimes his knowledge of vocabulary may not be enough while talking about some certain topics. However, he feels he would feel nervous if he were to speak in English with a Turkish person:

I don't know what the problem is. I am not afraid of making a mistake, but I think talking to a Turkish friend in English is weird. The problem is not that I don't want them to hear me when I am speaking in English since I would feel perfectly comfortable speaking to foreigner when there is a Turkish friend near me.

According to him, this is the main reason why he does not participate in class activities even though he knows he is capable of speaking English better than many of his friends. Although he was quite confident in his speaking skills, it was not the case when it comes to his speaking skills. He had difficulty in understanding the tracks they listened to in their listening classes and his scores on the listening component of his exams were lower compared to other parts. In order to overcome this problem, he asked one of his teachers for advice. He followed his advice but the result was another sign of his laziness and lack of effort:

He suggested me doing something I already liked doing. I love documentaries, so I decided to watch them in English. However, soon I realised that I was not able to understand them, so I started back watching them in Turkish.

Despite all these, he still has hope that he'll have to use his knowledge of English a lot in the future. He has recently created a website with a close friend of his and they are sharing recent news about fashion. Having attracted a considerable number of followers, they are now considering providing content also in English in order to attract even a greater number of visitors to their website. He is confident that a popular website reporting latest trends in English

will attract many visitors and they'll be able to sell the website for a great deal of money.

As I mentioned earlier, Mehmet is considering the possibility of getting involved in trading and setting up a shop selling auto parts. He wants to start his business abroad, in England if possible, because of the exchange difference between British Pound and Turkish Lira. He is dreaming of working in England but living in Turkey because doing so will help him earn a lot of money in a short time. However, this is not the sole reason why he chooses England over other countries. He also believes that his knowledge of English will help him a lot adjust to his new life in England because he is sure that he is already capable of communicating with English speaking people without much trouble. However, when asked whether he'll be able to deal with business-related issues, he doesn't sound so sure:

It may not be enough for talking about official things, but I am sure after attending some meetings and listening to other people talking about these issues, I can improve myself easily. Even if I fail to do so, I can easily hire someone to do the communication. If I have the money to start a business in English, I will have the money to hire a translator.

His teachers' comments on his progress throughout the year in parallel with what he said about himself. About his progress in the first term, both the main course and the reading and writing teacher mentioned his superiority during the first weeks of the first semester. However, they stated that he needed to be more motivated to be successful. About his progress in the first semester, his main course teacher noted down the following:

Mehmet benefitted from his existing knowledge for some time, but as the topics got more complicated, that knowledge proved to be inadequate. He would have been much more successful if he had been more motivated. I warned Mehmet many times. If he had paid more attention, he would have been much better. He now prefers to sleep in the class or playing with his mobile phone.

Despite all the negative comments, almost all of his teachers indicated that his performance was still satisfactory in those rare cases when he was asked by the teacher to participate in certain class activities. One example is as follows:

Mehmet has completed most of his assignments. He oftentimes chooses to talk with his friends on matters that are not related to the subject of the course or play with his mobile phone. When I warn him not to do those, he starts sleeping. He participates only when I ask him and in

those instances his performance is pleasing. I still believe he'll be successful provided that he starts studying regularly and changes his attitude in the classroom.

It seems that Mehmet did not act on his teacher's advice and stayed in the same classroom with other students who had the lowest grade averages among students in their level. Since his overall grade throughout the academic year was not enough, he was unable to become entitled to take the first TOEFL exam in the summer, and he failed to pass the second one held in the beginning of the next academic year. At the time of my interview with him, he was thinking of changing his university and transferring to a university where students in his department are not required to pass the English proficiency exam to take courses in their departments.

4.2 How do the students describe the change on their identity after learning a new language?

This section of the chapter presents the answer to the first research question together with the discussion of findings.

4.2.1 High Achievers

Students in the high achievers group experienced different numbers and kinds of self-identity changes. Table 4 demonstrates a summary of the kind of changes they went through.

Table 4: Self-identity changes in the high achievers group

	Self-confidence change	Additive Change	Subtractive Change	Productive Change	Split Change	Zero Change
Cenk	✓	✓		✓		
Melih	✓	✓		✓		
Özgür	✓	✓		✓		
Fatih	✓			✓		
Eray				✓		
Sevde				✓		

All of the students in the high achievers group experienced at least one kind of self-identity change. The most common type of change experienced by participants in this group was productive change which emerges as a result of a positive reinforcement between the native language and target language. Students in this group were in the best classroom in their own level, which also means that they showed greater academic performance than some 400 students in the same level. As hardworking students, they were also interested in the subjects of their own department and wanted to read about them as soon as possible. The problem was that most of the materials were available only in English, and they had to learn English were they to access the information they provided. It was this reason that pushed students in this group to master English instead of just practicing it enough to pass the proficiency exam. After learning the basics of English language, all of the students in this group started reading authentic materials in English. Some read the news online, some read the English newspaper available in their departments every day, some went to the library to check the highly-recommended books for students in their departments etc.

The second most frequent change experienced by participants of this group was self-confidence change. Almost all of the students in this group had instrumental orientation towards their lessons. In other words, they cared mostly about lessons that were certain to provide them with some practical benefits. English, which was once nothing more than a course to pass, was now a barrier between them and starting their departments. It was now English that was going to provide them with valuable benefits by serving as the single key to open the door to their departments. They started learning English with this thoughts in mind and as they were all hardworking and successful students, it wasn't hard for them to maintain a favourable grade point average. As they started collecting more points and brought together in the best classroom of their level, they understood that their hard work was not in vain. Studying very hard and getting the return for it by being popular figures in the school was the feeling that caused their self-confidence to increase. For example, Melih enjoyed being known by all the teachers in the school as a hardworking student who asks a lot of questions and by his friends in the same level as a friend to whom they could go in case they want to ask something about English. Similarly, while avoiding tourists at all times before learning English, Fatih, as a student in the best classroom of his level, started talking a lot more with them

and enjoyed it. In addition to their own success levels, the students also mentioned the positive influence of the institutional context. They all expressed gratitude to some of their teachers who had helped them both as a professional by personally caring with their progress and as a person trying to motivate and encourage them at all times.

Eray and Sevde didn't talk about an incidence of change in their self-confidence. This might have been caused from the fact that Eray had a considerably high level of self-confidence when he started the school. He got such a high score on the university entrance exam that he was going to study in a private university free of charge, he was one of the most hardworking students in his high-school, and he was completely sure that he could learn anything provided that he has enough time and necessary materials. Sevde, on the other hand, appears to have undergone a different journey. She was raised by a conservative, authoritarian family who appears to have decided on behalf of their little girl whenever they could. This, in the long run, might have left no space for Sevde to develop self-confidence in her own abilities. She had her parents to confide and they would know the best for her. This obviously was not something Sevde believed in, but it seemed that it was difficult for her to resist against them. Although she performed better than the majority of her friends in the same level, Sevde never thought that she was successful. She was always anxious when her teachers asked her something and thought very often that what she understood was totally different from what the teacher had taught although her scores on the exams proved otherwise. Both the interview with her and her teachers showed that she didn't trust herself and her abilities as much as she should have. Therefore, it wasn't surprising to see her not have developed self-confidence even after attaining a good command of English.

The least commonly experienced type of change for students in this group was additive change in which learners get closer to the behavioural patterns and cultural values of the target language and start adapting himself/herself to it and to a certain extent. Cenk, for example, starting exchanging letters with a Korean friend, watching TV series from the USA and UK, and reading English classics. One of the reasons Melih dedicated himself to learning English was that he was unable to share with his parents' foreign friends nothing but his personal information and in order to get over that memory, he invested a lot in learning how to communicate and what to say in certain real-life situations.

Both Melih and Özgür used to avoid movies with English subtitles and prefer those with Turkish dubbing. However, as they learned English, they found watching a movie originally produced in their target language with dubbing and started watching movies in English.

The other students, on the other hand, did not mention an experience of additive change. The reason why Eray and Sevde didn't experience such a change might be the same as that of self-confidence change. Eray was a very straightforward boy; he had his past and he had his dreams. He focused only on what would help him achieve his dream to become a renowned scientist in his field. He wasn't very much interested in the cultural aspect of learning a new language. Sevde, as mentioned above, was under the strong influence of her conservative family, according to whom, the cultural values of foreigners were not of much use. Under normal conditions, one learns a new language dreaming to be able to use it for communicative purposes. However, Sevde knew that her opportunity to practice English was already limited because she was not allowed to travel abroad because her father, who, by the way, travelled abroad many times, didn't think that a girl should travel alone especially in a foreign land. Raised under the influence of a negative attitude towards foreigners and foreign countries, Sevde might have not developed or even tried to develop any personal connection between herself and the target culture. Fatih, on the other hand, was not uninterested in what was happening in other parts of the world. He was rather curious about the history of a certain country, Egypt, but he wouldn't receive as much help from English as he would from Arabic while doing research about Egypt. Fatih was studying English for practical reasons rather than cultural ones. He wanted to become an academic and in order to become one in his country, one had to get a certain score on an English proficiency test. While studying Arabic in his free time in order to learn more about the lands he were curious about, Fatih didn't use English for the same reason, and most probably, it is why he didn't experience additive change during his time at the preparatory program. In addition to these reasons, the fact that the geographical distance between Turkey and the two countries with the greatest number of native English-speaking people, the USA and UK, is large could be another reason while additive change was the least commonly experience change.

Lastly, no student in the highest achievers group experienced subtractive change or split change.

4.2.2 Low Achievers

Table 5: Self-identity changes in the low achievers group

	Self- confidenc e change	Additiv e Change	Subtractiv e Change	Productiv e Change	Split Chang e	Zero Chang e
Kerem						✓
Murat						✓
Furkan		✓				
Vedat	✓	✓				
Mehmet					✓	

Compared to the high achievers group, students in the low achievers group experience fewer self-identity changes. Unlike the former, the latter included students with zero changes and a student who experienced a negative change during his time in the preparatory programme.

Kerem and Murat experienced no change in their self-identity during their time in the program. Kerem wanted to learn English in order to develop personally. He was a student at the department of political sciences, but he was there only because his father had wanted it. He had no interest in politics, and didn't want to use neither English nor Turkish as politician since he didn't wish to become one. In the beginning of the semester he decided to study a lot and learn English, but after a while, he understood the lack of enough opportunities to practice English out of school was going to be a barrier in front of him. His high level of awareness was praiseworthy, but he didn't mention doing anything to overcome this problem. Creating excuses and believing in the reasons he proposed for his own failure caused him to lose his courage to focus more on learning English. Even though he had a chance to write about his main area of interest, automobile industry, and practice his English at the same time, he didn't want to do it. As a result, his enthusiasm repeatedly failed to turn into action and didn't lead the way to a change in his self-identity.

Although he loved English and thought it was very important for his future life, Murat indicated no incidence of a self-identity change during his time at preparatory school. He didn't openly reject the occurrence of any such change, instead, he suggested that the learning atmosphere didn't offer anything that could lead to a change in self-identity. Murat believed that in order to learn a new language, one must live in a place where that language is the single language of communication between people. According to him, one must first learn how to express daily needs and basic feelings in a real context before learning the rules of grammar. This was also supported by the fact that his department, law, didn't require its students to pass the proficiency test before they could start the department. Instead of trying to pass the proficiency test, he preferred to spend more time with Canadian teaching assistants because not studying the test, but communicating with English-speaking people could provide him with what he wanted. Even though he spent a year in the programme, he never considered it to be enough and indicated his willingness to learn English in a native English-speaking country when he has the opportunity.

Furkan only experienced additive change during his time in the preparatory programme. When he started the program, he had more serious problems than learning English. He was over attached to his parents and didn't find it very easy to settle in a city far from them. He used to enjoy life in his hometown, but he didn't really like his new friends neither in his dormitory nor in his classroom. To make things worse he didn't favour the teaching method employed by his teachers and he never believed that the proficiency test they were going to take at the end of the year was capable of measuring their academic performance and level of proficiency. With all these problems in mind, he never really focused on the advantages of learning English and didn't seek ways to make it an entertaining process. It took him two semesters to settle in and adjust to his new life away from his parents and friends. The additive change he experienced emerged after his feeling of greater sophistication after learning. Now that he had learnt some English vocabularies that didn't have any equivalents in Turkish, he got to become a more sophisticated man and this experience encouraged him even more to focus more on English in the next academic year, because at the time when he felt this, it was already obvious that he was not going to have enough points to take the proficiency test.

During his time in the preparatory programme, Vedat experienced both self-confidence and additive change. Although Vedat was in the class composed of students with the lowest point average during the time of the interview, he had had a successful time in the previous two semesters. The reasons he failed in the third semester had nothing to do with his academic performance. He failed because he was unable to overcome a problem he had to undergo in his private life. Before starting the preparatory programme, Vedat knew that English was very important for him because it would provide him with more preferable career opportunities and more insight as an emerging adult. This was why he tried to use all the chances available to him to learn and practice English. As was also mentioned in his case report, Vedat felt the first change brought by learning English when his writing teacher asked him to think in English. Only then did he understand that he could act like an English-man although he was a foreigner to their language and culture. Starting from that moment, he grew more curious about the life of English people and read about them from time to time. The adaptation of mind-set also encouraged him to spend more time with the teaching assistants from Canada. After a while, he found himself using the same abbreviations and emoticons as the Canadians did, and he found this quite amusing. He started feeling as if he was one of them. This and his academic performance in the first two semesters also increased his confidence in his own ability to learn and speak.

The only change Mehmet experienced in his self-identity was split change. Unlike many people in Turkey, he had the opportunity to visit both the USA and UK multiple times and attend language schools there. As a sociable person, he was talking a lot with foreigners during his visits but speaking in English in a classroom full of people with whom he shared the same mother tongue didn't make any sense for him. Therefore, he wasn't willing to participate in class activities and speak about anything in English in the classroom. The problem was that he was required to speak in English in a class where he could interact with everybody in Turkish, his mother tongue, which led to an identity crisis he had to deal with. In order to overcome the problem, he chose to stay away from what was happening in the classroom. The reason why he had this attitude towards speaking English for purposes other than real-life communication is probably caused from the fact that differently from all his peers in the same classroom, he had been to lands where everybody speaks English and he spoke English multiple times in order to communicate with other

people with whom he didn't share a common mother tongue. The routine was quite the opposite in the classroom; he was required to talk with others in English in order not to communicate but to fulfil the wishes of the teacher. Similar to this is his attitude towards the English culture. He was very much interested in life in the USA and UK; however, he experienced no change in this regard during his time in the preparatory programme. When he started, he was already familiar with the target culture as he had lived and studied there before. In addition, he wanted to work in an English-speaking country, the UK, but it also had nothing to do with learning English. He wanted to work there and live in Turkey so that he would earn UK Pounds and spend Turkish Liras. According to him, employing such a strategy would make him a rich man before too long.

In the light of abovementioned results, one can argue that students with different levels of academic performance experienced self-identity change differently in this setting. While all participants in the high achievers group experienced productive change and mentioned the occurrence of positive reinforcement between their mother tongue and the target language, whereas in the low achievers group no students experienced that kind of a change. In addition, the majority of participants in the high achievers groups experienced increase in their self-confidence and half of them experienced additive change while the number of participants who experienced the same changes in the low achievers group is relatively fewer. No participant in the high achievers group experienced a negative change, but one student in the low achievers group experienced split change by refusing to speak English with his Turkish friends. Lastly, during their ten-month period the preparatory program, two students in the low achievers group experienced no change in their self-identity.

Almost all of the students experiencing a positive change in their self-identity mentioned the positive contribution of the school and the teachers, with the teachers being much more popular compared to the school. All the students agreed that the majority of the teachers in the department were doing everything in their power so that the students could learn English without getting bored. Moreover, they were spending their own private time with students in order to help them with their problems related to their classes and private life. Except for two students in the low achievers group, all students were pleased with the way the school was organised. However, it is worth noting that most of the students in the high achievers group thought that the

school had the potential to do much better. It was evident that students' respect towards their teachers and appreciation of the school was the key behind the change in students' attitudes towards English and they stopped feeling like an alien in an English classroom.

4.3 What is the role of students' perceived identities and future goals on learning a new language?

This section of the paper presents the answer to the second research question together with the discussion of findings.

4.3.1 High Achievers

Students in the high achievers group usually had personal traits that were closely linked with their future goals and this was a key component behind their motivation and courage to learn English even though they had limited levels of proficiency in the beginning of the year. Also, the perfect match between the wishes of students and those of the members of their relational contexts helped them go through the process of learning a foreign language more efficiently.

Table 6: Perceived identities and future goals of participants in the high achievers group

	Perceived Identity	Future Goals	Self System Type
Cenk	A perfectionist, calm, quiet, and organized person. Instrumentally motivated.	Graduate degree at a university abroad. Wants to become a famous and successful psychologist.	Harmonious Self System
Melih	A hard-working, peaceful, ambitious, and perfectionist individual who always maintains a positive attitude. Instrumentally motivated. A graduate of a science high-school.	Wants to focus on automobile industry and wishes to find a job in Germany.	Harmonious Self System

Table 6: Perceived identities and future goals of participants in the high achievers group (continued)

Özgür	A logical and self-confident individual raised by overprotective parents. Instrumentally motivated. Studied at a private school before university.	Decided to comply with his father's wishes and take over the family business after graduation. Thinks running after a new dream would be wrong for a person in his status.	Submissive Self System
Fatih	Introvert, shy, and interested in history and politics. Instrumentally and intrinsically motivated.	Wants to become a research assistant at a university and receive his graduate degrees abroad.	Harmonious Self System
Eray	An ambitious, determined, instrumentally motivated, and silent individual.	Wants to study and work abroad. Dreams to become a world famous scientist.	Harmonious Self System
Sevde	Sociable and hardworking student. Raised by conservative parents.	Doesn't think she can be happy in her department. Wants to travel abroad but her parents do not allow her. Considering changing her department to what her parents had wanted in the first place.	Rebellious Self System & Submissive Self System

Cenk indicated that he was a perfectionist. It was why he never considered himself to be a successful student because he believed there was always room for improvement. In his language learning being a perfectionist learner proved to have both advantages and disadvantages for him. To begin with, since he wanted to be as perfect as possible, he did his best to learn the skills needed to be able to communicate in English. He paid a great effort to pass the proficiency test because he wanted to study in his department as soon as

possible because in his ideal self he saw himself as a famous psychologist and in order to become one first he had to pass the proficiency test, then graduate from his department, and finally receive a graduate degree from a reputable university abroad and start working. Learning English was directly linked to the first and third step of reaching his dream. In order to pass the proficiency test and be entitled to study abroad he had to possess a good command of English. Moreover, knowing English would also help him access more resources about his field of study in his department, making English linked with every phase of the journey to his dream. However, in addition to being a perfectionist student he also liked to be quiet. This caused him to be less active in the class and limited his opportunities to access learning materials and practices. He was afraid of making mistakes because he wanted his sentences and utterances to be perfectly fluent and grammatical. Instead of facing the threat of making a mistake, he preferred to remain silent in the classroom although he knew participating more would make him a better learner. In this regard, Cenk's perceived identity helped him become more focused and willing to learn English while also limiting his chances of practicing it in the classroom environment. During his time in the preparatory program, Cenk experienced no conflict between what he wanted to do and what others wanted him to do. He was quite pleased with his teachers and his department, he had his parents' full backing, and he was encouraged to do what he believed to be the best for him.

Melih was another perfectionist and ambitious student. Differently from Cenk, he always had a positive attitude towards things around him and this was the key behind his high rate of classroom participation. He aimed to be a successful engineer and work abroad. In order to achieve both of his dreams, he knew that he had to have a good command of English. As a perfectionist and ambitious learner, he worked very hard and did not care about his mistakes and shortcomings because he knew that they were more than normal in learning a foreign language, especially when one is a zero-beginner. His ambition at times went on to a sickening extent for his teachers, but they knew it was because he wanted to learn English as efficiently as possible. The direct link between learning English and his dreams motivated Melih to do better and better every day. In addition, similar to Cenk, he also enjoyed a perfect match between his wishes and the wishes of those that were important to him. He was quite happy with his teachers and the opportunities his school provided him with. Learning

in such an environment was another encouraging element for Melih and he continued to do what he believed to be the best for him.

Studying at a private high-school had made Özgür more familiar with foreign languages. Özgür believes he always tries to do what his mind tells him to do, but my interview with him proved otherwise. The key motivation behind his learning English and continuing to practice French was the fact that he was going to be able to help his father with the family business with his knowledge of English and French. As was mentioned above, he was under the strict influence of his parents and when I asked him about his future wishes he first mentioned what his father, aunt, and his mother's cousin think he should go on with. Although, as a kid, he wanted to become a doctor he now decided to go with what his father had suggested: Working with him for a while and taking over the business. He is studying electrics and electronics engineering and knows that what he will study in his department won't help him with the family business which focused on furniture manufacture. Despite this fact and his own wishes, he thought his father's offer made more sense because looking for a new adventure would be a risk he didn't want to take. Even though it was not his own wish, learning English was still linked to what he wanted to do in the future. In his imposed self he was a businessman doing international trade and the knowledge of English would be of great importance for him. In this regard, bearing in mind that he preferred to internalise what was in his imposed self, rather than his ideal self, he can be said to have undergone submissive self-system.

Fatih was an extremely shy student who felt very nervous when he was to speak in front of a crowd. This is not one of the most favourable traits for a language learner as speaking in front of a crowd is an effective way of practicing language skills. He didn't have to pass the proficiency test to start his department, but he still wanted to learn English because he had to if he were to reach his goals of studying abroad and becoming an academic. In order to achieve both, one had to have a good command of English and Fatih was very well aware of it. He was a silent student in the classroom, but he listened to his teacher carefully. He felt terrible when he found out his score on the first practice test was the lowest in the classroom, and another student in the same situation could have laughed away. However, Fatih was dreaming to be a research assistant for some time and he knew it wouldn't come true without knowing English because

prospective research assistants in Turkey had to have a certain knowledge of English no matter what their field of study is. In addition, Fatih was trying to learn another foreign language, Arabic, because he was very much interested in Egypt. His case is a clear example that one's areas of interest and future wishes are quite likely to motivate him/her to study foreign languages. Lastly, Fatih was another student who had the harmonious self-system because there was no conflict between his actual and possible selves.

Similar to many of his friends in the same class, Eray was an ambitious learner. He was also strictly attached to his goal of becoming a renowned scientist. He didn't want to achieve it in order to earn much money or enjoy the feeling of becoming a famous face. He wanted to become a scientist because he felt in debt to the people of the world. He believed that he had become what he was thanks to what the world provided him with, and becoming a scientist would be a good way of returning the favour. For this reason, he wanted to become as successful as possible in his job and the key to that was getting his degrees from reputable universities abroad. He wanted to learn English for two main reasons: becoming a more knowledgeable individual and reaching at his dream of becoming a scientist. Even though he had only limited ability in communicating in English when he began the preparatory programme, he finished the programme as one of the best students in the school. He tried not only to learn English, but also to master it. This was apparent from the story he mentioned in his interview in which he talked about practicing speaking with a friend of him while they were together in the dormitory. Everybody around him including his family, teachers, and friends supported his wish of becoming a scientist and for this reason, he didn't experience any conflict between his ideal and possible selves, which means he also had the harmonious self-system.

The last participant in the high achievers group, Sevde, was a different case. She was a sociable person, but her family was trying to limit her opportunities to become a more sociable individual by not letting her travel abroad even though she wanted to do it because it would help her with her studies in the department of architecture. In the beginning of the programme, she still believed that the perfect field of study for her was architecture and she wanted to learn English very efficiently even though she didn't have to as a student in a Turkish medium department. She wanted to learn English because as a prospective architect, it was important for her to visit important buildings and

observe the architectural details on-site. In order to travel abroad she knew she had to learn English and so she did. While trying to learn it, she was also rebelling against the wishes of her parents who wanted her to study in the faculty of medicine. She decided to go on with what she believed to be the best for her instead of quitting her department in order to prepare for the next year's university entrance exam. She finished the preparatory programme and passed the test. Later, she asked her parents for consent to travel Italy, a country very popular among young architects. Upon finding out that her parents wouldn't let her travel abroad alone she felt as if she had learnt English in vain because she was constantly dreaming of the day when she was going to speak English with people with whom she didn't share a common mother tongue. Torn up because of her parents' decision, Sevde started questioning whether she made a good decision rebelling against her parents' wishes because at last she was doing whatever they allowed her to do. In the time of my interview with her, she had already started considering her department and do something that would please her parents. In her case, one might observe the transition from the rebellious self-system to the submissive self-system. Her rebellion against her parents' wishes did not lead to a satisfactory result for her and she later agreed to submit herself to their wishes. It is worth noting that the change in her self-system also affected her interest in English: She had wanted to learn English in order to speak with foreigners but that dream was long gone.

4.3.2 Low Achievers

The majority of students in the low achievers group had the submissive self-system, which means instead of following their own dreams, they preferred to do what others believed to be the best for them. Only one student had the harmonious self-system while another one had the duplicitous self-system.

Table 7: Perceived identities and future goals of participants in the low achievers group

	Perceived Identity	Future Goals	Self System Type
Kerem	Responsible, graduate of a private school, a level headed man who is called by his friends "dede" (grandfather).	Is unsure whether or not to study abroad. Loves automobiles and therefore, wants to live in Germany.	Submissive Self System

Table 7: Perceived identities and future goals of participants in the low achievers group (continued)

Murat	Sociable, idealist, and tolerant. Lost his father and a brother, lived away from his family for some time. Interested in politics.	Studies law but doesn't want to become a lawyer or a judge. Considered the possibility of being an academic but gave it up later. Wants to be a politician.	Harmonious Self System
Furkan	Selfish, only child, over attached to parents, likes solitude, and fears the future.	Doesn't want to study or work abroad in order not to stay away from his family. Wants to find a job in Turkey and stay close to his parents.	Submissive Self System
Vedat	Raised by ambitious parents, studies in the same department as his brother and frequently goes to him asking for his suggestions. Studied hard not to embarrass his father.	Would like to go abroad but because of the problem in his private life, he is unsure as to what to do in the future.	Submissive Self System
Mehmet	Loves cars, sociable, interested in trading, lazy. Been to the USA and UK many times and learned English there.	Wants to run a shop that sells auto parts in the UK.	Duplicitous Self System

Kerem was studying in the department of political sciences not because he wanted but because his father thought it was a nice field to study. As a responsible man, he worked very hard to learn English. However, his close friends didn't really like English and as he hanged out with them he started skipping his assignments and participating less in class activities. He feels he might consider studying abroad only if it is something about automobiles and is also aware of the lack of a common ground for the automobile industry and political sciences. Instead of behaving in accordance with his own characteristics as a responsible man, he took over the attitudes of his friends and lost his interest in learning just like his friends. Kerem had a tendency to

do what people in his relational contexts wanted him to do. This was apparent from the fact that he was going to study political sciences although he had no interest in politics and that he lost his interest in order to be like his friends who didn't have any interest in learning English.

Murat had a lot of images in his ideal self. From time to time, he dreamed himself as an academic, later as a member of parliament, and lastly as a prime minister. He was very much interested in international and national politics and read a lot about them. As a student in the faculty of law, he knew that learning English wouldn't be of much use in the profession that he will take up after graduation. However, he was very willing to learn English in order to ensure his personal development because it was one of the things that he cared most about. He was one of the students who spent the greatest amount of time with Canadian teaching assistants. He was the most active participant in his classroom and all of his teachers were pleased with the contribution he made to the learning environment as an entertaining and sociable young man. Despite all these, Murat was never labelled as a successful student based on his academic performance. I believe the main reason behind this was his frequent visits to his hometown. Both his father and one of his elder brothers had passed away at different times in the previous year and he wanted to help his brother take care of the jewellery shop they owned. Taking very close care of the family business along with his mother, brother, and sister didn't let him pay enough attention to his exams. However, based on his teachers' comments on his progress and performance in classes, no one can argue that Murat was a total failure. He might have performed poorly on exams, but everybody believed that he was a fluent speaker of English. Differently from many of his friends, Murat didn't study English in order to gain the materialistic advantage it would provide. He wanted to learn it in order to develop personally.

Furkan was the only child of his parents. It was for this reason that he believed himself to be a selfish individual who didn't like to share the things he had. He was overly attached to his parents and couldn't adjust to life in the campus as he was accustomed to living together with his parents. He likes solitude and doesn't like talking with people he doesn't know. The fact that he had personal problems with his friends in the dormitory and in his classroom caused him to get off to a bad start at his university. Under these circumstances he was unable to make a good start to learning English because whenever he was alone he

was thinking about the problems he had and how much he had already missed his parents instead of studying English and looking for ways to practice it. He doesn't want to study abroad because doing so would mean parting from his parents again. Instead, he wants to find a suitable job in a place that is close to his parents'. Furkan appears to have submitted his wishes and dreams to his parents' will. He believes that they know what would be the best for him and seems decided to take that path.

Vedat is another case worth paying close attention. The main reason he studied very hard for the university entrance exam was not to embarrass his father as his elder brother had done previously. He decided to study the same field like his brother because he had suggested him that studying in that department would provide him with a prestigious position in the future. He decided to learn English as much as possible because it was the wish of both his father and his mother. He, too, knew that knowing English would help him get a graduate degree abroad and getting a degree from a reputable university would help him find a better job. That being the case, he lost his interest in English and stopped dreaming about his future after breaking up with his girlfriend. It was very clear to me that Vedat's success, wishes, and failures were very much dependant on his private life. His father wanted him to learn English, his brother wanted him to study biomedical engineering, and he stopped dreaming about his future when his girlfriend with whom he hoped to share that future left him.

Mehmet was the only participant who had the duplicitous self-system. He was going to study economics but he wanted to run a shop that sells car parts. Although he had been to the USA and UK many times, he was unwilling to study English because he felt what the school taught them was not going to be useful to him. His mother and grandfather expect him to finish school and get a respectable job while he is thinking about the easiest way of earning a lot of money. Even though his current plan of earning that much money which is selling in the UK and living in Turkey requires the use of English a lot he still is not interested in learning it.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This section presents a summary of findings before suggesting the implications for related professionals and institutions. The limitations of the present study and recommendations for future research will also be included.

5.1 Summary and Discussion

The present study aims to shed more light on the relation between social identity and foreign language learning by answering the two research questions below:

1. How do the students with different levels of academic performance describe the change on their identity after learning a new language?
2. What is the role of students' perceived identities and future goals on learning a new language?

The findings suggested that students with comparatively higher academic performance experienced a greater number of changes in their self-identity. Every participant in the high achievers group experienced productive change, which means they enjoyed the positive reinforcement between their native language and the language they were learning. Soon after starting to learn English, all of the students in the high achievers group started watching movies and TV series in English and liked the fact that they were able to comprehend the content of what they were watching without using a dictionary. This is important because the students in this group both scored exceptionally high on their tests and constantly looked for opportunities to practice their language skills. It is probable that their academic progress and interest in the real-life use of English positively reinforced each other and brought about the change in their self-identity. It is more evident when the findings of the low achievers are considered. The students had the lowest grade point average among students in their level and none of them experienced productive change. It might have resulted this way since they were never pleased or satisfied with the academic

progress and didn't feel the need to practice their language skills out of school or learn more about the culture of the language they were being taught.

Another change experienced commonly by the high achievers was the increase in their self-identity. Quite similarly to productive change, change in self-confidence and learning English positively reinforced each other. Students who started to get higher and higher grades first became famous among their friends and teachers. When their family members and friends learned that they were studying in the best class in their level, they were most probably praised many times and must have felt quite happy being treated that way. The academic appreciation they received from their teachers and the emotional appreciation they received from their family members and friends led way to a boost in their self-confidence and showed them that they could achieve even harder tasks. Most probably, this was the main reason why most of the learners in the high achievers group had dreams like becoming a world-famous scientist, a renowned psychologist, professors etc. Considering the fact that every member in the high achievers group was a zero-beginner at the beginning of the academic year, they must have invested a lot of time and effort to reach the upper-intermediate level in seven months. It was not only their teachers who were aware of their amazing achievement; they also knew that they did something really hard to achieve. This fact helped them understand that they were capable of achieving tasks that seemed very difficult in the first place. Only one student in the high achievers group, who was under strong influence of his parents, accepted submitting himself to the will of his parents instead of going on with his own wishes and dreams. As for the low achievers group, only two had visions of their future that we can call dreams. One wanted to become a biomedical engineer after receiving his graduate degree at a university abroad, but his was a different case as I explained in detail in the previous section. His problem had nothing to do with learning English or performing above a certain academic level; he was a young adolescent and he had private problems that mattered to him a lot more than his progress at school. The other student who had a strong ideal self had a very specific dream: Becoming the prime-minister of Turkey, an honour that only 26 people could have in the 93-year-old history of the country. Considering the odds of becoming a prime minister in this country, one can argue that what he has in his ideal self is more of a fantasy rather than a goal to follow. Other participants in the group didn't have any career plans related to what they were going to study at university.

The findings of the second research question showed that almost every member of the high achievers group had instrumental motivation for their classes. To be more precise, none of them knew English enough to talk with a foreigner before starting university. This was mainly due to the fact that they were going to take the university entrance test and the knowledge of English would provide them with no advantages on that test. Therefore, they preferred to focus on other classes that were able to do what English couldn't. However, upon starting the preparatory programme, they understood that they had to pass the English proficiency test to start their departments and to pass that exam, they had to have a good command of both written and spoken English. Having understood its importance as a tool, they started investing more and more in learning English and they got the return for it by being placed in the best class in their level. The sudden change in their preferences was considered to be a clear indicator of instrumental motivation among these students. Other common personal traits between members of the high achievers group were being ambitious and determined. In the low achievers group, on the other hand, there were no character traits that indicated any relation to their language learning process.

As for the self-system types, most of the participants in the high-achievers group had the harmonious self-system, which means there was no discrepancy between their ideal self, the future condition which they would like to have, and imposed self, the future condition which the parents, friends, teachers etc. of the individual would like him/her to have. I believe this is another reason why their time in the programme was fulfilling in terms of both academic performance and personal development. They didn't have to convince others to think that what they believed was ideal for them. They received support from the members of their relational contexts and focused on doing what was expected of them. Two students in the high achievers group had the submissive self-system. One was Özgür, the boy who was under the strong influence of his parents, and the other one was Sevde, the only female participant of the study. Sevde first had the rebellious self-system and rebelled against her parents' wish of becoming a doctor. She wanted to study architecture and she was quite decided about it. The problem began when she asked for consent to travel abroad to see on-site some of the buildings she admired. Her father didn't grant her the permission she asked for because of his religious beliefs in accordance with which he believed that girls were not fit to travelling alone. When she

understood she was not going to be able to go after her dreams and make her family happy at the same time, she decided to stick with her family and gave up her dream of travelling abroad. At the time of this interview, Sevde was still considering quitting her department and studying medicine as her parents had asked her in the first place. Her case is a clear example of the importance of learners' social background. Not knowing about her case, her teachers could have thought that Sevde simply did not enjoy studying English and tribute her poor academic performance and lack of motivation to it.

The learners in the low achievers group mostly had the submissive self-system, which means they decided to do what their parents or other members of their relational contexts asked them to do. This is most probably because they didn't have a clear idea of what to do in the future. In Turkey, students traditionally dream to do something about their field of study. To give an example, it is quite hard to find a pre-service teacher who wants to be firefighter after graduation or a student at a medical faculty wishing to design professional web applications. However, two students wanted to do things that are almost completely unrelated to what they were going to study at university. Mehmet, who was going to study economics, wanted to sell auto parts and Kerim, who was going to study political sciences, wanted to have a job in which he will be working with automobiles. I believe this was because they didn't think that they could do anything related to their field of study due to their poor academic progress. Being labelled as a student in the class full of lazy students, they might have lost their courage to pursue genuine career goals and decided to stick to their hobbies and areas of interest.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

First, the findings of the study showed that all participants except for one experience either a positive or a negative change in their self-identity. The fact that their transition to higher education coincided with starting to learn a foreign language might have increased the possibility of such a change. Since many students in Turkey are exposed to English in the preparatory programmes of universities, administrators, teachers, and curriculum designer must have an agenda for dealing with the changes in learners' self-identities and look for ways to use these changes as reinforcements to their regular teaching plan. To achieve this, it is important to understand where the students are coming from and where they intend to go. In other words, all teachers should be

knowledgeable about the social history of their students as well as their future dreams.

Teachers can achieve this by spending more time with their students apart from the time they regularly meet in the classroom. Also, the information collected only from students may not be reliable at all since not all students will be willing to share the positive or negative experience s/he had gone through. When needed, parents and friends of the students can be consulted with the hope of giving students a better opportunity to make the process of learning a foreign language more efficient. That being the case, the teachers alone may not be sufficient to understand what the problem is (if there is any) and what needs to be done so that the case will help the students' work at school and the learning process in general. Institutions should employ professionals who have the authority to collect regular data to find out what is going on in the lives of students and the ability to share those results in a meaningful way that will help the teachers and administrators prepare accordingly. Moreover, the institutions can start career counselling offices as the findings showed a positive relation between learners' career goals and their academic performance. By helping more students to have a clearer idea of what to do in the future, the school can contribute to their academic performance provided that the link between their performance at school and the possibility of reaching at their future plans is made apparent to students.

Second, the fact that the members of the high achievers group and the members of the low achievers group demonstrated similar characteristics within their respective groups is another finding worth considering. In the high achievers group, the decision of getting the best students together in the same classroom seem to have worked for the good of both the school and the students as they tend to influence each other positively and create a positive learning atmosphere. However, the students in the low achievers group also influenced each other; however, since all the students were performing poorly on their exams and had already lost their interest in learning English, the influence couldn't become positive enough to support the continuity of this policy for relatively weaker students. It is apparent from the results that if school administrations do not wish to make low achievers even lower achievers, they should stop getting them together in the same class as their influence on each other will eliminate their hope of becoming successful. Also, when the

students' biological and mental development are taken into consideration, the identity as a student in the laziest class is not favourable for young adults. As was mentioned in the second chapter, young adults tend to think a lot about what others think about them, and knowing that people think of them as lazy students can only make things worse. The finding that grouping underperforming students in accordance with their academic performance might do more harm than good is also supported by Hartwick and Kubisiak (2014) and Cuban (1989). Both suggest that labelling students in accordance with their grade point average might expose them to a considerable amount of social stigma, causing them to blame others for their failure instead of taking responsibility of their own learning.

As the findings suggested, while most of the students in the high achievers group had the harmonious self-system, the majority of students in the low achievers group had the submissive self-system. In addition, one of the students who had the submissive self-system in the high achievers group was the only student in that group to fail the proficiency exam and the other student was considering to change his department in order to fulfil her parent's wishes. This might mean that having the submissive self-system, or accepting to do what other people ask them to do instead of following their own dreams didn't prove to be useful for students, at least for those participated in the present study. Bearing this in mind, I believe parents should look for ways to effectively guide and support their children instead of telling them what to do and forcing them to do things that they love.

5.3 Limitations

The biggest limitation of the study was time. Since this study was carried out to meet the requirements of a graduate program, there was a certain deadline to complete and submit it. This limitation caused me to limit the number of participants and the amount of data I had intended to collect in the first place. Since identity construction and formation is a long process, it would be much better had I been able to collect data for a longer span of time and interview people with a lot more diversity. Also, the tight schedule of the school made interviewing students and teachers quite hard. Therefore, conducting all the interviews with students and teachers took two months, and because of that, I had to interview some of the students before the end of their third semester, and some after the first week of their summer holiday.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

My recommendation to future researchers who would like to investigate the link between learning English as a foreign language in Turkey and social identity construction would be to collect data for a longer span of time and cover a larger part of their lives. As the amount of time they cover increases, they will be more likely to witness a greater number of changes in learners' social identities. I would also recommend conducting a study with a similar design at a state university to find out whether the type of university and opportunities provided to students have anything to do with their identity construction and formation during the language learning process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Students (in Turkish)

- 1- Öncelikli olarak kendinizi tanıtabilir misiniz?
- 2- Kendinizi nasıl tanımlarsınız? – Sıfatlar-
 - a. Şu anda sizi yakından tanıyan birisinden sizi tanımlamasını istesem hangi sıfatları kullanırdı?
 - i. Anne babanız da bu sıfatları kullanır mıydı?
 - b. Üyesi olduğunuz herhangi bir topluluk var mı?
 - c. Seni sen yapan bir özelliğini söyleyebilir misin? Bununla ilgili – varsa- bir anını paylaşabilirsen sevinirim.
- 3- Hazırlık programına başlamadan önce İngilizce biliyor muydunuz?
 - a. Biliyorsanız, bu güne kadar hangi seviyede ve hangi kurumlarda İngilizce öğrendiğinizi ve bu süreçlerden ne kadar memnun olduğunuzu anlatabilir misiniz?
 - b. Devam ettiğiniz lise ile ilgili detaylı bilgi verebilir misiniz?
 - i. Bu lisedeki İngilizce öğrenme deneyiminizden bahsedebilir misiniz?
- 4- Zorunlu olmasaydı da İngilizce Hazırlık Programı'na katılır mıydınız?
 - a. Programın sonunda TOEFL'a (hazırlık geçme sınavı) girme zorunluğunuz olmasa programa katılır mıydınız?
 - b. Kendini başarılı bir öğrenci olarak görüyor musun? Neden?
 - c. Sizce bir dil öğrenebilmek için en gerekli olan şey nedir?
- 5- Genel olarak programın gidişatından memnun musunuz?
 - a. Genel itibarıyla memnun olduğunuz noktalar nelerdir?
 - b. Genel itibarıyla şikâyetçi olduğunuz noktalar nelerdir?
- 6- İngilizceyi okul dışında kullanma imkânınız oluyor mu?
 - a. İngilizceyi okul dışında kullandığınızda kendiniz rahat hissediyor musunuz?
 - b. Sizce bunun sebebi nedir?
 - c. Bu mülakatı İngilizce yapsaydık kendini nasıl hissederdin?
 - d. Yabancı birisine İngilizce mail attığında ya da yabancı bir web forumda İngilizce yazı yazdığında nasıl hissedersin?

- 7- Bazı insanlar İngilizce derslerini çok zevkli buluyorken bazıları bu derslerde çok sıkılıyor. Siz hangi grup içindesiniz ve sizce bunun sebepleri ne olabilir?
- Bugüne kadarki İngilizce öğrenme deneyimlerinizi göz önünde bulundurarak sizi en çok sevindiren ya da en fazla zevk almanızı sağlayan anılarınızdan birinden bahsedebilir misiniz?
 - Bugüne kadarki İngilizce öğrenme deneyimlerinizi göz önünde bulundurarak kendinizi oldukça memnuniyetsiz hissettiğiniz bir anınızı paylaşabilir misiniz?
- 8- Programı başarı ile bitirdiğiniz takdirde hatırı sayılır bir süredir İngilizce öğreniyor olacaksınız. Sizce bu süre boyunca öğrendiğiniz İngilizce size hangi alanlarda yardımcı olabilir?
- Sizin İngilizce yeteneklerinizi özellikle kullanabileceğinizi düşündüğünüz bir kariyer hedefiniz var mı?
- 9- _____ Bölümü’nde okuyan bir öğrenci olarak, bölümünüzden mezun olduğunuzda hangi alanda devam etmek istersiniz?
- Yurt dışında çalışmak ya da eğitiminize devam etmek ister misiniz?
 - Bu ülkelerin yabancı dil gereksinimlerini nasıl karşılamak niyetindesiniz?
 - Program dâhilinde aldığınız İngilizce eğitiminin o ülkede çalışmak/eğitim almak için yeterli olduğuna inanıyor musunuz?
 - Program dâhilinde aldığınız İngilizce eğitiminin o ülkede yaşayan yabancı insanlarla iletişim kurmanız için yeterli olduğuna inanıyor musunuz?
- 10-Sizce bir yabancı dil öğrenmenin yararları ve zararları neler olabilir?
- 11-Program dâhilinde yaptığınız çalışmalar bir birey olarak sizin kişiliğinizi nasıl etkiliyor? Bu duruma bir olumlu bir de olumsuz örnek verebilir misiniz?
- 12-Sizce bir yabancı dil öğrenmek kendiniz ile ilgili daha çok şey öğrenmenizi sağlayabilir mi?
- 13-Ailenizin hazırlık programı ile ilgili görüşleri nelerdir?
- Genel olarak programdan memnunlar mı?
 - Genel olarak sizin akademik performansınızdan memnunlar mı?

- c. Sizce onlar size destek mi oluyor yoksa daha başarılı olmanızı mı engelliyorlar?

14- Sizce ne yapılırsa hazırlık programındaki dersler daha eğlenceli olabilir?

- a. Sizce ne yapılırsa hazırlık programındaki dersler hazırlık geçmenize daha yararlı olabilir?
- b. Derslerde kendi ilgi alanlarınızı pekiştirebilecek aktiviteler yapma imkânınız oluyor mu?

15- Sizce ne yapılırsa İngilizce sizin yaş grubunuzdaki öğrenciler için daha çekici hale gelebilir?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Instructors (in Turkish)

- 1- Öncelikli olarak, kendinizden ve profesyonel geçmişinizden kısaca bahsedebilir misiniz?
- 2- _____ dönem boyunca dersine girdiğiniz _____ isimli öğrencinin dönem başından dönem sonuna kadar gösterdiği performanstan ve gelişimden bahsedebilir misiniz?
- 3- _____ isimli öğrenciyi bir birey olarak nasıl tanımlarsınız?
- 4- Sizce _____ isimli öğrenci başarılı bir öğrenci midir? Neden?
- 5- Sizce _____ isimli öğrencinin başarılı ya da başarısız olmasında rolü olan etmenler nelerdir?
- 6- _____ isimli öğrenci ile ilgili olarak, okulun bilgi sistemine _____ şeklinde bir not düşmüşsünüz. Acaba bu yorumunuzu biraz detaylandırabilir misiniz?

Appendix C: Coding in MAXQDA

Document: yusra

103 Coded segments

Sonuçta mimarlık gezmenin, etrafını görmenin, farklı ülkelere gitmenin çok gerekli olduğu bir alan. Çok önemli dil öğrenmek bence. Ben İngilizceyi şöyle iyice öğreneyim diyorum.

Comment	Document	Code	Begin
		During Prep/L2 Practice	119
		During Prep/L2 Practice	123
		During Prep/L2 Practice	127
		During Prep/L2 Practice	135
		During Prep/entrepreneur	155
		During Prep/coop students	195
		During Prep/coop students	199
		During Prep/coop students	203
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	115
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	135
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	139
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	47
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	55
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	63
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	63
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	67
		During Prep/attitudes toward...	99

Document System

Documents

Sets

Code System

career plans

wants to go abroad

During Prep

self confidence increase

attitudes towards teachers

speaking in english

peer relations

instrumental motivation

academic progress at pp

attitudes towards english

attitudes towards the department

L2 Practice

entrepreneur

coop students

Before Uni

french

learning english at his

learning by memorising rules

attitudes towards teachers

private school

learning english at es

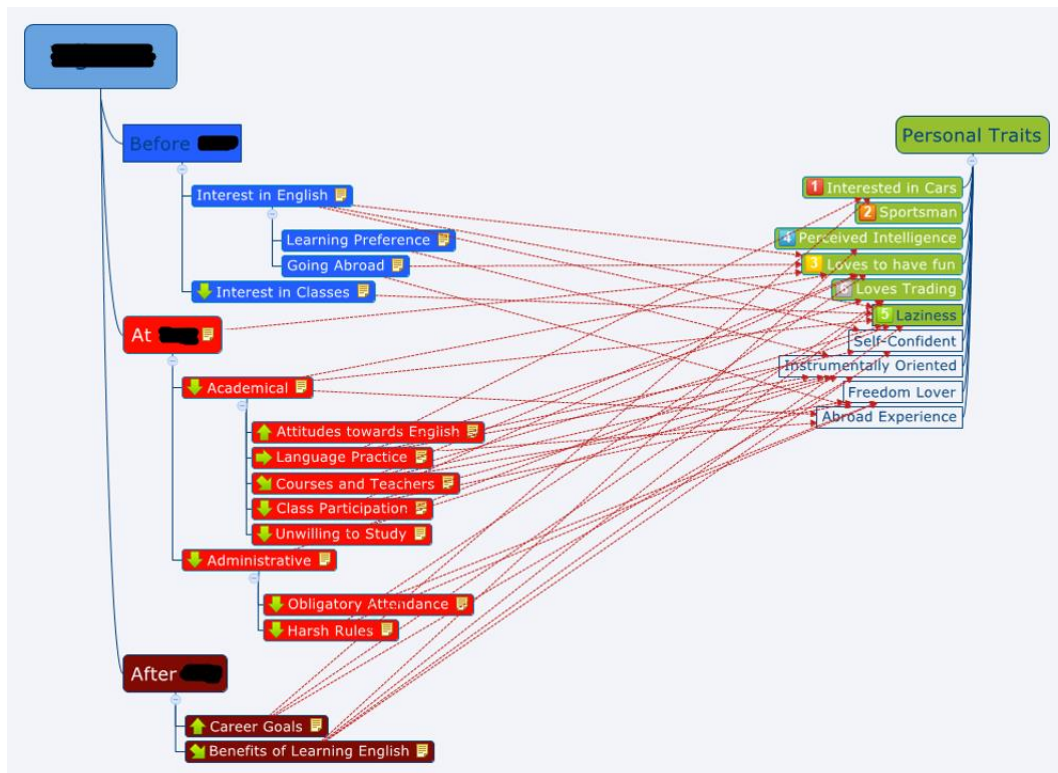
Personal Traits

entertaining

positive attitude

OR combination (standard analysis) 1 / 1

Appendix D: Concept Mapping in XMind



TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1. GİRİŞ

Dil öğrenimini sosyo kültürel bir olgu olarak ele alan çalışmalar geçtiğimiz elli yıl içinde önem kazanmıştır. Var olan birçok sosyo kültürel olgunun içinde güdülenme diğerlerine kıyasla daha fazla ilgi çekmiş ve 1970’li yılların başından itibaren pek çok araştırmacı güdülenme konusu ile ilgilenmiştir. Norris-Holt’un (2001) da iddia ettiği üzere, bu dönemde dil öğrenimi yeni bir kimlik kazanma isteği olarak görülmüş ve bu isteğin kapsamı ve niteliğine dair araştırmalar yoğunluk kazanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda çalışmalarını yürüten Gardner ve Lambert (1982), öğrencileri dil öğrenmeye teşvik eden iki temel unsur olduğunu öne sürmüşlerdir. Bunlardan ilki, öğrencinin hedef dili, daha iyi bir iş, daha fazla maaş, yüksek statü sahibi olma gibi çeşitli maddi kazanımları elde etme amacıyla öğrenmesi durumunu kapsayan araç güdülenmesidir. Diğer güdülenme türü ise, öğrencinin hedef dilin kültürüne ve o dile ait değer ve inanç sistemine duyduğu ilginin bir sonucu olarak hedef dili öğrenmesi durumunu kapsayan bütünleyici güdülenmedir.

Zaman içinde, güdülenmenin tek başına dil öğrenimini tek başına etkileyemeyeceği konusunda uzlaşan Markus ve Nurius (1986) gibi araştırmacılar, öğrencilerin kimlik kazanma arzusunun da dil öğrenimini olumlu yönde etkileyen bir faktör olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Markus ve Nurius’un Olası Benlikler teorisi öne sürmelerinin yirmi beş yıl sonrasında, Dörnyei (2009) sadece şimdiki ve gelecek zamana ait olguların incelenmesinin, dil öğrenim sürecini anlamamızı sağlamayacağını, bununla birlikte öğrencilerin geçmiş dil öğrenme tecrübelerinin de bu ilişkiyi anlama konusunda yüksek öneme sahip olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Bahsedilen araştırmacılara ek olarak, Lev Vygotsky (1978), öğrenmede öğrencinin belirli bir biliş düzeyine, kendisinden daha çok bilgiye sahip bir kişinin yardımı olmadan erişemeyeceğini iddia etmiş ve bu alanı yakınsal gelişim alanı olarak adlandırmıştır. Başka bir Rus filozof olan Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) ise bilgi düzeyi ile bilginin dış alıcılara sunumu arasında bir fark olabileceğini iddia etmiş ve yüksek düzeyde bilginin her zaman başarılı bir sunuma

dönüştürülemeyeceğinden bahsederek şu örneği vermiştir: "Bazı kültürel iletişim kanallarında çok başarılı olan, akademik makaleleri okuyup anlamada ve akademik tartışmalarda en önde gelen kişiler, sosyal çevrelerinde çok sessiz kalabilirler" (sf. 80). Bu doğrultuda, Bakhtin, dil öğrenimini bir tanıma ve alışma süreci olarak görmüş ancak bu alanlarda başarılı olunursa, dil kullanımının performansla başarılı bir şekilde dönüştürülebileceğini öne sürmüştür. Pierre Bourdieu (1984) ise insanların sahip oldukları üç sermayeye göre gruplandıklarından bahsetmiştir. Bourdieu'ya göre, çoğu insan maddi varlıkları kapsayan ekonomik sermayeye, bilgi ve yetenek gibi ekonomik sermaye ile elde edilemeyecek varlıkları kapsayan kültürel sermayeye ve kişinin ancak belirli ağlara ve kurumlara üye olması ile sağlayabileceği sosyal sermayeyi elde etmek için çabalarlar. Yeni bir dil öğrenmenin bu üç sermaye türü için de kazanım anlamına geleceğini belirten Bourdieu, öğrencilerin bu sermaye türlerinden hangisini daha üstte gördüklerinin, onların dil öğrenme güdülerini ve sebeplerini de etkileyeceğini öne sürmüştür.

Bu çalışmanın temelini oluşturan kimlik kavramı matematik (kimlik matrisi), felsefe (kimlik teorisi), teoloji (dini kimlik), psikoloji (kimlik çözülmesi rahatsızlığı), mantık (kimlik önermesi), botanik (genetik kimlik) gibi birçok farklı çalışma alanında varlık göstermektedir. Benzer bir şekilde, Block (2009) kimlik kavramının tek bir alan ile sınırlandırılmayacağını bildirmiş ve etnik kimlik, ırksal kimlik, milli kimlik, göçmen kimliği, cinsiyet kimliği, sosyal sınıf kimliği ve dil kimliği gibi kimlik çeşitlerine dikkat çekmiştir. Bu çalışmada esas olan sosyal kimlik tanımını ise Norton (2000; sf. 5) "bireyin dünya ile ilişkisini nasıl anladığı, bu ilişkinin farklı zamanlar ve mekânlar boyunca nasıl oluşturulduğu ve kişinin gelecekte karşılaşacağı olasılıkları nasıl yorumladığı" şeklinde tanımlamıştır. Bu tanıma göre, kimlik kavramı geçmişten gelen, içinde bulunduğumuz zamanda devam eden ve gelecekte meydana gelmesi muhtemel tüm gelişmeleri kapsamaktadır. Bu sebepten ötürü, yapılacak olan kimlik çalışmalarında bu üç zamanın da detaylı bir şekilde irdelenmesi gerekmektedir.

Tüm bu bilgiler ışığında, dil öğrenimin kelime ve dilbilgisi yapılarını öğrenmekten ibaret olmadığını, bunun tam aksine tabiatı gereği sosyal bir süreç olduğu görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, insanlarda sosyal gelişimin temel faktörü olarak değişimin önemine odaklanmaktadır. Dil öğrencileri, öğrendikleri dili kullanarak elde ettikleri finansal kazanımları sayesinde ekonomik sermayelerini, hedef dili

konuşan toplumun kültürel ve toplumsal değer sistemleri hakkında daha fazla bilgi sahibi olarak kültürel sermayelerini ve aynı anadili paylaşmadıkları insanlarla tanışarak sosyal sermayelerini artırma şansı bulacakları için sosyal kimliklerinde bir değişiklik görülmesi kuvvetle muhtemeldir. Bu bağlamda, bu tez çalışması temel olarak İngilizce hazırlık programına devam eden öğrencilerin bir akademik yıl boyunca tecrübe ettikleri bireysel kimlik değişikliklerini incelemektedir. Öğrencilerin dil öğrenme geçmişleri ile gelecek planları arasındaki ilişki de çalışmanın başka bir odak noktasını teşkil etmektedir.

Her ne kadar İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen kişilerin sayısı, ikinci dil olarak öğrenen kişilerin sayısından çok daha fazla olsa da, dil ve kimlik ilişkisini inceleyen çalışmalar ağırlıklı olarak İngilizceyi ikinci dil olarak öğrenen kişiler üzerine odaklanmıştır. İngilizceyi ikinci dil olarak öğrenme ile yabancı dil olarak öğrenme sebepleri arasında önemli farklar olduğu için, dil öğrenme ile kimlik ilişkisini inceleyen çalışmalar, hangi dil öğrenme ortamında gerçekleştirildikleri ile paralel farklar göstermektedir. Gao ve arkadaşları (2007) İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen kişilerin altı farklı kimlik değişimi yaşayabileceklerini saptamışlardır:

1. Özgüven değişimi: Kişinin dil öğrenme sürecinde ve sonrasında kendisine karşı duyduğu güvende azalma ya da artma.
2. Kazançlı değişim: Hem ana dile hem de hedef dile ait davranış biçimlerinin ve değerlerin kişi tarafından benimsenmesi.
3. Çıkarmalı değişim: Ana dilin ve bu dile ait kültürel öğelerin yerinin hedef dil ve hedef dile ait kültürel öğeler tarafından alınması.
4. Üretken değişim: Hedef dil ve ana dil bilgisinin birbirlerini olumlu olarak desteklemesi.
5. Ayrık değişim: Hedef dil ve ana dil ile bu dillere ait öğeler arasında çatışmanın kimlik krizine yol açması.
6. Sıfır değişim: Bireysel kimlikte değişiklik olmaması durumu.

Taylor (2013) ise kimliğin dört ana bölümde incelenmesi gerektiğini öne sürmüştür:

1. İdeal kimlik: Kişinin gelecekte kendisini nasıl görmek istediği.
2. Dayatılmış kimlik: Kişi için önemli bir yere sahip arkadaş, akraba, ebeveyn vs. kişilerin, kişiyi gelecekte nasıl görmek istediği.

3. Özel kimlik: Kişinin kendi içerisinde nasıl davranmak istediği.
4. Açık kimlik: Kişinin başkaları ile birlikteyken nasıl davrandığı.

Taylor, ideal ve dayatılmış kimliği muhtemel kimlikler kategorisinde ele alırken özel ve açık kimliği mevcut kimlikler kategorisinde ele almıştır. Bununla birlikte, her bir kişinin mevcut kimliklerinden muhtemel kimliklerine geçişi esnasında aşağıdaki benlik sistemi türlerinden birine diğerlerinden daha fazla maruz kaldığını öne sürmüştür:

1. İtaatkâr benlik sistemi: Dayatılmış kimliğin ideal kimliğe kıyasla daha baskın olması ve kişinin kendi isteklerinden ziyade başkalarının isteklerini göz önünde bulundurması.
2. Aldatıcı benlik sistemi: Dayatılmış kimlik ile ideal kimlik arasında derin bir fark olmasına rağmen, kişinin başkalarının istediklerini yapıyormuş gibi görünüp kendi istediğini yapması.
3. İsyankâr benlik sistemi: Dayatılmış kişiliğe karşı kişinin ideal kimliğine bağlı kalması.
4. Uyumlu benlik sistemi: Dayatılmış kimlik ile ideal kimlik arasında bir fark olmaması ve kişinin istediklerini yaparken çevresindekilerden destek alması.

Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışmanın yürütülmesinin gerekli olduğunu gösteren üç temel sebep bulunmaktadır:

1. Yabancı dil öğrenimi ile sosyal kimlik arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen çalışma sayısı nispeten azdır ve Türkiye’de bu tür bir çalışma henüz bulunmamaktadır.
2. Türkiye’de yabancı dil öğrenme sebeplerinin sınav geçme, iyi bir iş bulma, daha fazla para kazanma gibi maddi unsurlara dayanıyor olması, Türkiye’deki öğrencilerin dil öğrenme süreçleri ile yaşadıkları kimlik değişimleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesini gerekli kılmaktadır.
3. Çalışmada yer alan katılımcıların genç yetişkin döneminde (18-20 yaş) bulunmalarının, çalışmanın üniversiteye ilk başladıkları yıl gerçekleştirilecek olmasının ve yabancı bir dili en alt düzeyden öğrenmeye başlamalarının kimliklerini fazlasıyla etkileyebileceği düşünülmüştür. Bu etkinin araştırılmasının bu dönemdeki öğrencilerin dil

öğrenme süreçleri ile ilgili daha kapsamlı bilgi elde etmemizi sağlayacağı öngörülmüştür.

Son olarak, çalışma dâhilinde yanıtlanması hedeflenen araştırma soruları aşağıdaki gibidir:

1. Farklı akademik performans seviyelerine sahip öğrenciler, yeni bir dil öğrenme sürecinde yaşadıkları kimlik değişimini nasıl tanımlamaktadır?
2. Öğrencilerin kendi algılarına dayandırdıkları kendi kişilik özelliklerinin ve gelecek beklentilerinin dil öğrenimindeki rolü nedir?

2. YÖNTEM

Bu tez çalışması nitel bir vaka analizi olarak tasarlanmıştır. Çalışma kapsamında Türkiye'deki bir vakıf üniversitenin İngilizce hazırlık programına en düşük yeterlik düzeyinde başlayan on bir öğrenci ve bir akademik yıl boyunca bu öğrencilerin dersine giren öğretim elemanları ile mülakat yapılmıştır. Programın yürütüldüğü bölümün yönetiminin öğrencileri dönem içindeki akademik performanslarına göre sınıflandırma politikasının bir sonucu olarak, öğrencilerin altısı en yüksek not ortalamasına sahip öğrencilerin bulunduğu sınıfta, geriye kalan 5 öğrenci ise düşük not ortalamasına sahip öğrencilerin bulunduğu sınıfta yer almaktaydı. Çalışma için gerekli olan veriler öğrenciler ve öğretim elemanları ile yapılan görüşmelerin yanı sıra, her bir öğretim elemanının 3 dönemde ikişer kez hazırladıkları değerlendirme ve performans raporları kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Yapılan mülakatlar yarı yapılandırılmış olup mülakat soruları, katılımcıların cevaplarını sınırlandırmamak adına açık uçlu olarak tasarlanmıştır. Mülakat sorularına hem çalışma öncesinde yapılan pilot çalışma ile hem de bu alanda uzman üç öğretim üyesinin görüşleri alınarak son şekli verilmiştir.

Toplanan verilerin analiz edilebilmesi için görüşmeler esnasında ses kaydı alınmış ve analizin ilk aşaması olarak bu kayıtlar yazılı hale getirilmiştir. Ardından, kayıtlar Maxqda uygulaması ile kodlanmış ve bu kayıtlar kullanılarak her bir katılımcı için vaka raporu hazırlanmıştır. Oluşturulan kodlar ve vaka raporları doğrultusunda araştırma sorularının cevaplarını oluşturan temalar elde edilmiştir. XMind uygulaması ile de kişilerin geçmiş yıllardaki ve program dâhilindeki dil öğrenim tecrübelerine dair verdikleri cevaplar ile gelecek planları arasındaki ilişkinin anlaşılmasını kolaylaştıracı kavram haritaları

oluşturulmuştur. Gerek ses kayıtlarının yazılı hale dönüştürülmesi, gerekse kodlama esnasında ortaya çıkan problemler ile ilgili olarak bazı katılımcılar ile tekrar görüşülmüş ve belirli ifadeler ile ne kastettikleri konusuna açıklık getirmeleri istenmiştir.

3. BULGULAR ve TARTIŞMA

Veri analizinin tamamlanması ve oluşturulan vaka raporlarının incelenmesini takiben yüksek akademik performansla sahip öğrencilerinin tamamının üretken değişim gösterdikleri görülmüştür. Hedef dil ile ana dilin birbirini olumlu olarak desteklemesi anlamına gelen bu değişikliğin öğrencilerin yüksek not ortalamaları ile ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu öğrencilerin tamamı İngilizceyi öğrenerek daha ileri düzeydeki amaçlarına ulaşabileceklerinin farkındaydı. Birçoğu, hazırlık programının ardından başlayacakları bölümlerinin öğretim üyeleri ile görüşmüş ve bölümlerinde başarılı olmalarının temel koşulunun dünyaca ünlü İngilizce kaynakları incelemek ve bu kaynaklardaki bilgileri edinmek olduğunu öğrenmişti. Bu durum öğrencilerin İngilizceye, yeterlik sınavını geçtikten sonra da ihtiyaçları olduğunu fark etmelerini sağlamış ve yeterli düzeye geldikten sonra onları ders içindeki kaynaklarından ayrı olarak otantik materyalleri takip etmeye yöneltmiştir. Bu ilginin bir sonucu olarak, bu grupta yer alan öğrencilerin tamamı ilk dönemlerinin ardından İngilizce yayın yapan haber sitelerini ve bölümde öğrencilere sunulan İngilizce gazeteleri takip etmeye başlamış ve bir kısmı da üniversite kütüphanesinde kendi çalışma alanları ile ilgili mevcut olan İngilizce kitapları edinip bu kaynakları okumaya yönelmiştir. Böylelikle, İngilizceyi sadece dil sınıflarında değil, günlük hayatlarında da kullanmaya başlamışlardır.

Yüksek başarı düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin en sık yaşadıkları diğer bir değişim türü ise özgüvenlerindeki artış idi. Bu gruptaki öğrencilerin önemli bir kısmı yabancı bir dil öğrenmenin kendileri için çeşitli maddi yararlar sağlayacağına inanıyorlardı. Bu yüzden de, İngilizceyi sadece geçilmesi gereken bir ders olarak değil, gelecekteki hayallerinin ilk adımı olan bölümleri ile aralarındaki tek engel olarak görüyorlardı. İlk dönem boyunca elde ettikleri puanlar sayesinde kurlarının en iyi öğrencilerinden oluşan sınıfta yer almaları sayesinde İngilizceyi öğrenmeye dair çabalarının boşuna olmadığını anlamışlardı. Fazlaca emek edip bu emeklerinin karşılığını çalışkanlıkları ile ünlü öğrenciler haline gelerek almaları özgüvenlerinin artmasının arkasındaki temel sebepti. Akademik

performanslarına ek olarak, öğrencilerin eğitim gördükleri okul ile olan ilişkileri de bu artışın sebeplerinden biriydi. Öğrencilerin birçoğu öğretmenlerinin kendi üzerlerindeki olumlu etkiden ve sürekli olarak onları motive etmeye çalıştıklarından bahsetmişlerdir.

Bu grupta yer alan öğrenciler arasında en az görülen kimlik değişimi kazançlı değişim olarak görülmektedir. Bu değişim türü öğrencilerin hedef dile ve bu dile ait kültürel öğeler ile davranış biçimlerini olan yakınlığını ifade etmektedir. Öğrencilerin yaşadığı değişimden örnek vermek gerekirse, katılımcılardan birisi, İngilizce bilgisinin hatırı sayılır düzeyde artmasını takiben Güney Koreli bir mektup arkadaşı edinmiş ve düzenli olarak bu arkadaşı ile yazışmaya, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde ve İngiltere'de çekilen dizileri takip etmeye ve İngilizce yazılan klasik edebiyat eserleri ile ilgilenmeye başlamıştır. Başka bir katılımcı da, programa başlamadan önce babasının yabancı arkadaşlarıyla kişisel bir bilgisi dışında hiçbir konuda konuşamamıştı ve bunun temel sebebinin onların kültürlerine ait hiçbir şey bilmemesi olduğunu düşünüyordu. Bu yüzden, İngilizce öğrenmeye başlar başlamaz sadece derslerinde başarılı olmanın değil, aynı zamanda başka yabancı insanlarla karşılaştığında onlarla konuşabileceği konular hakkında bilgi edinmek istiyordu.

Düşük başarı düzeyine sahip öğrenci grubunda ise daha az sayıda değişim yaşandığı görülmektedir. Bu gruptaki öğrenciler, yüksek başarı düzeyine sahip öğrencilerden farklı olarak, hazırlık programında geçirdikleri süre boyunca negatif değişimler de geçirmişlerdir. Bu gruptaki katılımcılar arasında en çok görülen değişim türü kazançlı değişim ve sıfır değişim idi. Katılımcılardan Kerem ve Mehmet geçirdikleri yıl boyunca hiçbir değişim hissetmediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Kerem siyaset bilimi bölümünde babasının isteği ile okuyan bir öğrenci idi. Kendi hayali ise, bir gün Almanya'ya taşınmak ve otomotiv sektöründe faaliyet gösteren bir firmada çalışmaktı. Siyaset ile hiçbir ilgisi olmadığı gibi bölümünde alacağı eğitimin kendisi için yararlı olup olmayacağı konusunda tereddütleri vardı. Dönem başında İngilizceyi öğrenmek konusunda istekli olmasına rağmen, birlikte vakit geçirdiği arkadaşları İngilizce ile hiç meşgul olmadıkları için kendisi de zamanla İngilizceden soğudu ve notları da zaman içinde sınıfının en düşükleri arasına girdi. İngilizceye karşı hissettiği soğukluk ve akademik performansındaki düşüş Keremin kişiliğinde bir değişim yaşamamasının sebebi olarak görülebilir. Murat ise hukuk okuyan ancak bu

alandan çalışmak yerine siyasete atılmayı ve başbakan olmayı hedefleyen bir öğrenci idi. Bir kimlik değişimi yaşadığını açıkça reddetmese de içinde bulunduğu ortamın bu türden bir değişimi tetikleyecek nitelikte olmadığını belirtmiştir. Zira Murat’a göre, bir kişinin yabancı bir dili öğrenebilmesi ancak ve ancak o dilin iletişim maksatlı kullanıldığı bir bölgede yaşamak idi. İçinde bulunduğu ortama karşı bu türden bir tutum geliştirmesi Murat’ın kimlik değişimi yaşamamasının arkasındaki sebep olarak görülebilir. Katılımcılardan Mehmet ise Türkçe’nin anadil olduğu bir ülkede İngilizce konuşmayı saçma bir aktivite olarak değerlendirdiğini belirtmiş ve bu sebepten hiçbir ders aktivitesine katılmamayı tercih etmiştir. Mehmet’in İngilizceye karşı geliştirdiği bu tutum kendisi adına bir krize yol açmış ve ayrık değişim yaşamasına sebep olmuştur.

Bu gruptaki öğrenciler arasında olumlu kimlik değişimi geçiren iki kişi bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle, bu iki öğrenci de verimli değişim geçirmişlerdir. Bu değişimi en net olarak Türkçede doğrudan karşılığı olmayan İngilizce kelimeleri öğrendiğinde yaşamış ve böylelikle kendisini daha donanımlı ve bilmiş bir kişi olarak görmeye başlamıştır. Vedat ise hem özgüveninde artış, hem de verimli değişim yaşamıştır. Her ne kadar veri toplama aşamasında en düşük akademik performansla sahip öğrencilerden oluşan sınıfta yer aldıysa da, Vedat önceki dönemlerde oldukça başarılı ve hocalarının takdirini kazanmış bir öğrenci idi. Son dönemde düşük performans gösteren öğrenciler arasında yer almasının sebebi ise, bir önceki dönem ortalamasını en fazla etkileyecek olan sınavın hemen öncesinde kız arkadaşı ile kavga etmesi ve sınav esnasında uyuya kalması idi. İngilizce öğrenmeye karşı çok istekli olmasına ve bu dili öğrenebilmek için oldukça fazla emek harcamasına rağmen özel hayatındaki bir problem sebebiyle akademik performansında düşüş yaşamış ancak yine de, olumlu kimlik değişimleri yaşamıştır.

Çalışma kapsamında ele alınan bir diğer soru da öğrencilerin kendi algıladıkları kimlik özellikleri ile gelecek hedeflerinin dil öğrenme süreci ile ilişkisini anlamaya yöneliktir. Daha önce de bahsedildiği üzere, Taylor (2013), mevcut kişilik türlerinden muhtemel kişilik türlerine geçişte herkesin farklı bir tecrübe yaşayacağına dikkat çekmiş ve bu süreci dört kişilik sistem türünde ele almıştır. Yüksek akademik performansla sahip öğrenciler arasında en çok görülen kişilik sistem türü uyumlu sistem türü idi. Bu öğrencilerin gelecek planları ile kendileri için önem arz eden diğer insanların, onlar için istedikleri gelecek arasında bir

fark yoktu. Bu durum, ailelerinin, akrabalarının ve arkadaşlarının kendilerini gelecek planlarına ulaşmaya giden yolda desteklemelerini sağlamış ve kendilerinin bu yoldaki cesaretlerini artırmıştır. Katılımcılar arasında aynı yıl içinde iki farklı kişilik sistem türü (isyankâr ve uyumlu sistem) tecrübe eden tek kişi, yüksek performans düzeyine sahip öğrenciler arasında yer alan Sevde idi. Sevde ailesinin tıp okuması yönündeki isteğine öncelikle itiraz etmiş ve uzun yıllar boyunca istediği mimarlık bölümüne kayıt olmaya karar vermişti. Daha önceki yıllarda İngilizce ile çok ilgisi olmamasına rağmen iyi bir mimarın ancak yurtdışındaki mimari açıdan önemli binaları yerinde inceleyerek olunabileceğini düşünmüştü ve bunun için İngilizce bilgisinin çok yararlı olacağına kanaat getirmişti. Ancak, muhafazakâr bir dindar olan babasının kendisinin tek başına yurtdışına çıkmaya müsaade etmeyeceğini anladıktan sonra gerek İngilizceden gerekse mimarlık hayalinden soğumuştur. Çalışmanın devam ettiği sırada ise Sevde mimarlık bölümünden ayrılıp ailesinin en başından bu yana istediği tıp fakültesine gitmenin planlarını yapmaktaydı.

Düşük performans düzeyine sahip öğrenciler arasında en yaygın görülen kişilik sistem türü ise itaatkâr kişilik sistemi türü idi. Bu sistem türünü yaşayan kişiler kendi isteklerini bir kenara bırakıp kendileri dışındaki insanların hayallerini benimsemişlerdir. Bu gruptaki öğrencilerin ağırlıklı olarak bu sistem türünü yaşamalarının sebebi olarak akademik performanslarındaki düşüş dolayısıyla kendilerine yeterince güvenmemeleri, bunun yerine, belirli bir otoriteye ve güce sahip ebeveynlerinin kararlarının daha önemli olduğuna dair inanışları görülebilir. Çalışmada aldatıcı benlik sistemi yaşayan tek kişi, bu grupta yer alan Mehmet idi. Aynı zamanda çalışmanın ayrık değişim yaşayan tek katılımcısı olan Mehmet her ne kadar iktisat bölümünde okuyan bir öğrenci olsa da gelecek hayali İngiltere’de otomotiv parçaları satan bir mağaza açmaktı. Bu mağazayı Amerika’da açmasının sebebi İngilizceye ya da İngiliz kültürüne duyduğu yakınlık ve merak değil, İngiliz Poundu ile Türk Lirası arasındaki kur farkı idi. Ancak, Mehmet’in bu planından kendi ailesi haberdar değildi. Mehmet ise daha önce aldığı İngilizce bilgisinin orada yaşamak için, arabalara olan mevcut ilgisinin de bu alanda bir iş kurmak için yeterli olacağı görüşündeydi. Hal böyle olunca, bu konu ile ilgili ailesinin düşüncesinin kendisi için bir önemi yoktu.

Çalışmanın sonuçları kullanılarak üç temel eğitimsel çıkarıma varılmıştır:

1. Tüm katılımcılar olumlu ya da olumsuz en az bir tür kimlik değişimi yaşamıştır. Katılımcıların aynı anda üniversitede ilk yıllarını geçirmeleri, bir yabancı dil öğrenmeleri ve genç yetişkinlik döneminde olmaları bu yaşadıkları değişimleri tetiklemiş olabilir. Değişimlerin bu kadar sık yaşanması ilgili program yöneticilerinin, öğretim elemanlarının ve müfredatı hazırlamakla görevli kişilerin dikkatini çekmeye değerdir. Bu değişimlerin öğrencilerin akademik performansları ile ilişki içinde olması, onların geçmiş dil öğrenme tecrübeleri ile gelecek hayalleri arasındaki ilişkinin detaylı olarak incelenmesini gerekli kılmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, üniversite yönetimlerinin bu konularda öğrencilere destek olabilecek profesyonelleri kurumlarında bulundurmaları tavsiye edilmektedir.
2. Her iki gruptaki öğrenciler, aynı düzeyde oldukları öğrenciler ile benzer özellikler göstermektedir. Yüksek performans düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin aynı sınıfta toplanması hem okul hem de öğrenciler için olumlu sonuç vermiş gibi gözükse de, düşük performans düzeyine sahip öğrenciler arkadaşları tarafından olumsuz olarak etkilenebilme imkânına sahiptir. Bununla birlikte, bu durum öğrencilerin tembel ve başarısız olarak nitelendirilebilmelerine yol açmakta, geleceklerine dair hayallerinden vazgeçip ailelerinin kendilerine dair isteklerini benimseyebilmektedirler. Öğrencilerin sınıflandırılması konusundaki bu hususun okul yönetimleri tarafından dikkate alınması tavsiye edilmektedirler.
3. Çalışmanın sonuçları yüksek performans düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin çoğunlukla uyumlu kişilik sistem türünü, düşük performans düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin ise itaatkâr kişilik sistem türünü tecrübe ettiklerini göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda, ailelerin çocuklarına ne yapmaları gerektiğine dair onları zorlamaktansa, onlara etkili bir şekilde rehberlik etmelerinin ve onları desteklemelerinin, çocukları için daha yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Gelecekte bu konuda araştırma yapacak araştırmacılara, çalışmalarını daha uzun süre boyunca veri toplayabilecek şekilde tasarımları tavsiye edilmektedir. Zira veri toplanan zaman aralığı arttıkça araştırmacıların daha fazla kimlik değişimi fark etmeleri kuvvetle muhtemeldir. Bununla birlikte, aynı tasarıma sahip bir çalışmanın bir devlet üniversitesinde yürütülmesi de üniversite türünün ve üniversite tarafından sağlanan imkânların kimlik

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