

A CASE STUDY OF A TURKISH ENGLISH LEARNER IN AN EFL SETTING:
INVESTMENT, IMAGINED COMMUNITY, AND IDENTITY

PINAR ERSİN

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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INVESTMENT, IMAGINED COMMUNITY, AND IDENTITY

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Pınar Ersin

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Dissertation Abstract

Pınar Ersin, “A Case Study of a Turkish English Learner in an EFL Setting:
Investment, Imagined Community, and Identity”

The present study investigates the learner identity construction of one particular learner. More specifically, the study aims to examine the relationship between a learner’s English language learning and her learner identity.

The key participant was a 19-year-old learner, Gamze (pseudonym), enrolled in a one-year intensive English language program at a state university in Istanbul, Turkey. Qualitative data sources for this single case study were interviews with the key participant, interviews with the key participant’s instructors, the key participant’s language journal, video recordings of the key participant’s classes, stimulated recall protocols with the key participant and researcher journal. Thematic analysis was applied to the data in order to categorize emerging themes.

The analysis revealed that initially the key participant seemed to invest in English language practice in and outside the classroom to become a member of her imagined community. However, her investment appeared to decrease gradually, throughout the semester. Thus, her decreased investment seemed to be reflected in her shifting learner identity construction.

In conclusion, Gamze seemed to improve less and slower in the class because there were multiple reasons that kept her from investing enough, which influenced her learner identity along her language learning journey.

Tez Özeti

Pınar Ersin, “İngilizce’nin Yabancı Dil Olarak Öğretildiği Ortamda İngilizce Öğrenen bir Türk Öğrenci ile İlgili Durum Çalışması: Adanmışlık Seviyesi, Grup Algısı ve Kimlik”

Bu çalışmada bir öğrencinin yabancı dilde kimlik yapılandırması araştırılmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, bu çalışma bir öğrencinin İngilizce öğrenimi ve öğrenci kimliği arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi hedeflemektedir.

Bu niteliksel çalışmada bir öğrencinin kimlik yapılanması üzerine odaklanılmakta ve derinlemesine incelemeler yapılmaktadır. Bu bir kişilik uzun soluklu çalışmanın nitel veri kaynaklarını anahtar katılımcı ile yüz yüze görüşmeler, anahtar katılımcının öğretmenleriyle yüz yüze görüşmeler, anahtar katılımcının dil günlüğü, anahtar katılımcının derslerinin video kayıtları, anahtar katılımcı ile çağrışım tekniğine dayalı görüşme ve araştırmacı günlüğü oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmadaki anahtar katılımcı, 19 yaşındaki öğrenci Gamze (takma isim), İstanbul’da bulunan bir devlet üniversitesinin bir yıllık yoğun İngilizce programına kayıtlıdır. Toplanan verilere tematik analiz yöntemi uygulanmış ve ortaya çıkan temalar bu bağlamda sınıflandırılmıştır.

Analizlerin sonuçları, Gamze’nin, anahtar katılımcının başlarda hayali topluluğun bir üyesi olmak için sınıf içi ve sınıf dışı İngilizce öğrenme uygulamalarına yatırım yaptığını göstermiştir. Ancak, çalışmanın yapıldığı akademik yarı yıl ilerledikçe Gamze’nin, anahtar katılımcının, yatırımının zamanla , azaldığı görülmüştür. Bu durumun öğrencinin ikinci dildeki kimlik yapılanmasını olumsuz yönde etkilediği saptanmıştır.

Sonuçlar, Gamze’nin (anahtar katılımcının) sınıfta daha az ve daha yavaş bir gelişme gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Diğer bir deyişle, analizlerin sonuçları, öğrenciyi İngilizce gelişimine yeteri kadar yatırım yapmaktan alıkoyan önemli sebepler olduğunu (öğretmen, öğretme yöntemi, ders malzemesi, vs.) ve bunların dil öğrenme serüveni boyunca öğrenci kimliğini etkilediği ortaya çıkarmıştır.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Pınar Ersin
PLACE OF BIRTH: Uşak, Turkey
DATE OF BIRTH: 06 September 1976

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

Boğaziçi University.
Georgia State University. December 2008 - June 2009, research assistant.
Marmara University.
Hacettepe University.

DEGREES AWARDED:

Doctor of Philosophy in Foreign Language Education, 2014, Boğaziçi University.
Master of Arts in English Language Teaching, 2005, Department of ELT, Marmara University.
Bachelor of English Language and Literature, Hacettepe University.

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Learner and teacher identity, poststructuralism and identity approach, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) and ELF-aware language teacher training, portfolio construction in language teaching.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Instructor, Department of English Language Teaching, Marmara University, Istanbul, 2000-2015.
Research Assistant, Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A., 2008-2009.

PUBLICATIONS:

Ersin, P. & Bayyurt, Y. (forthcoming). Odak grup görüşmeleri. In F. N. Seggie & Y. Bayyurt (Eds.), *Nitel Araştırma: Yöntem, Teknik, Analiz ve Yaklaşımları*, Ankara: Anı Yayınları.
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Ersin, P. & Bayyurt, Y. (forthcoming). *A data-based approach to teacher identity development in an ELF context* The Sixth International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca. Rome, Italy.
Bayyurt, Y. & Ersin, P. (forthcoming). *The Social Construction of Teacher Identity in an ELF Context* The Fifth International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca. İstanbul, Turkey.
Ersin, P. & Camlibel Acar, Z.C. (2012). Autonomous English Activities of Prospective EFL Teachers. 3rd International Conference on Foreign Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics. Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Ersin, P., Abaylı, Z. S. & Bayyurt, Y. (2012). *English as a lingua franca in a Turkish academic context: The case of the third person –s* The Fifth International Conference of English as a Lingua Franca. İstanbul, Turkey.
Çamlıbel, Z. & Ersin, P. (2011). *Out-of-class English activities of Turkish EFL learners* International Conference on New Horizons in Education. Guarda, Portugal.
Ersin, P. & Kurt, G. (2011). *Turkish EFL pre-service teachers' characterization of language teachers* International Conference on New Horizons in Education. Guarda, Portugal.
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- Ersin, P. (2005). *The Effects of Keeping a Portfolio on Learners' Attitudes towards Foreign Language Learning and Carrying Out Research* anakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, 4th International ELT Research Conference. anakkale, Turkey.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Purpose of the Study

The reciprocal relationship between identity and language learning has been the focus in applied linguistics and the related fields such as psychology and sociolinguistics since the 1970s. Starting from the late 1970s, language learners' identities were studied based on their status as second or foreign language learners and teachers, expatriate learners, and so on (Bailey, 1983; Schumann, 1997). Much of this work saw the issues encountered by learners (e.g., anxiety, field dependence) as internal and psychological. Another approach to identity and language learning/use from the 1970s and 1980s drew on interactional sociolinguistics rather than psychology (Beebe, 1980; Gumperz, 1982; Zuengler, 1989). Sociolinguists used social categories related to identity, such as gender, race, nationality/ethnicity, L1 background, or socio-economic class and used qualitative discourse analytic approaches. Researchers such as Gumperz (1982) and Zuengler (1989) studied how identity manifested itself in everyday speech events such as job interviews or courtrooms and also how interlocutors - and especially minority group members, such as recent immigrants - may be socially and discursively positioned in various ways. In their analysis, they viewed identity as indicator of discourse or learning outcomes based on social and linguistic affiliation. In other words, they took identity as a preset category and an independent variable at the onset of their research. It can be concluded that prior to the 1990s, most research exploring the relationship between identity and language learning took what can be called as structuralist approaches which seek to establish

universal structures to explain subjects' fixed social identities, treating identity as a category (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004). These essentialist notions of learners and reductionist assumptions were seen as insufficient and indefensible because identity was not seen as a category within which language use could be explored; the language learner was a lot more complicated than that; language learning did not only involve one-way, direct, easy shift of identity from the learner to the user; and in consequence, the process of how a language learner constructed identity was an important area for investigation (Norton Peirce, 1995; Pavlenko, 2002).

From the 1990s onwards, the scholars in applied linguistics who criticized the structuralist attempts of categorizing identity-related variables and features of identity as fixed and static started to investigate identity as a combination of the learners' past, present, future experiences; the opportunities as well as desires reflected in learners' learning trajectories; and how all of these and maybe more influenced the construction of their identities (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Drawing on poststructural accounts, these researchers examined the contradictions, thoughts, feelings, and hybridity resided in the language learner's identity instead of trying to find out consistent and generalizable results (e.g., Kramsch, 2009). In contrast to structural and deterministic studies on genetic or intrinsic aspects of identity, continually negotiated, changing, dynamic and often contradictory identities - "nonunitary subject" - (Norton, 2000, p. 125) were the point of attention and investigation.

In recent years, the examination of identity construction has become an important issue of applied linguistics. This increasing interest in the investigation of the relationship between identity and language learning has become evident in the

research conducted with heritage language learners (Lee, 2005; Noels, 2005) as well as in the expanding body of second language learning literature (Kanno, 2003; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000). On the contrary, the studies investigating language identity abroad (e.g., Kinginger, 2004), more specifically, foreign language learner identity studies are limited in number. The few studies that examine learner identity in foreign language learning contexts such as Germany (Erling, 2007), China (Yihong, Ying, Yuan, & Yan, 2005), South Korea (Park, 2012), or Turkey (Tarhan & Balban, 2014) used quantitative research methods such as questionnaires or surveys as opposed to qualitative methods, a more commonly used methodology to have a deeper understanding of the shifting, multifaceted and contradictory nature of identity.

The major aim of this study is to fill the gap in the research context of identity studies by shifting the focus from English as second language learning contexts to English as foreign language (EFL) learning contexts. Specifically, the study aims at looking at the phenomenon under investigation through a purely qualitative lens. I believe that more studies should be done to reveal the link between identity construction and foreign language learning because identities that are either constructed by the learners or imposed on them in the classrooms can be either more conducive or more inhibiting to learning. As Yoshizawa (2010) also points out:

Current studies primarily focus on the identity issues in the core circle of English speaking countries, and very few treat learner identities in the context where English is taught as a foreign language...More studies must be done in the context where English is taught as a foreign language in order to examine how imagined communities are created and how such imaginaries affect the learners' identities and their language learning (p. 35). Based on the above discussion, the present single case study focused on the

identity construction of a language learner in the Turkish context. The following research question was addressed: “What is the relationship between a learner’s English language learning and her identity?”

The key participant was a 19-year-old learner, Gamze (pseudonym), enrolled in a one-year intensive English language program at a state university in Istanbul, Turkey. Qualitative data sources for the study were interviews with the key participant, interviews with the key participant’s instructors, the key participant’s language journal, video recordings of the key participant’s classes, stimulated recall protocols with the key participant and researcher journal. Thematic analysis was applied to the data in order to categorize emerging themes. The analysis revealed that initially the key participant seemed to invest in English language practice in and outside the classroom to become a member of her imagined community. However, her investment appeared to decrease gradually, throughout the semester. Her investment seemed to be reflected in her shifting learner identity construction.

The following chapters are organized as follows: Chapter 2 will explain the theoretical background of the study; that is, poststructuralism and a review of the related literature will be given in that chapter. Chapter 3 will give detailed information about the methodological design of the study. In Chapter 4, results and the discussion of the results will be presented. Finally, conclusions drawn from the study will be discussed in Chapter 5.

1.2. Definition of Key Terms

- EFL setting: It refers to non-English speaking countries where English is taught as a subject in schools but not used as an official language in government and is not a local medium of instruction.
- Identity: This term refers to “how a person understands his or her relationship to

the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2000, p.5).

- Investment: This construct refers to the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it (Norton Peirce, 1995).
- Imagined community: Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom people connect through the power of imagination (Kanno & Norton, 2003).
- Imagined identity: It refers to the envisioning of the learner becoming a member in an imagined community (Norton, 2001).

CHAPTER 2

THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study and an overview of literature review.

2.1. Theory

This study is informed by poststructuralism.

2.1.1. Poststructural Theory

Poststructuralism, in broad terms, has developed in response to structuralism. Structuralism is associated with unchanging, fixed universal laws of human behavior, and social phenomenon (Block, 2006). In applied linguistics and second language acquisition, structuralism is associated with the search for universals in second language acquisition, recognizing that despite geographical, interactional and interpersonal, and social variations and differences, all languages have common patterns and structures. This view was predominantly associated with the work of Saussure (1966), who made a distinction between speech (*parole*) and language (*langue*). From a structuralist point of view, language structure is an accumulation of signs that is composed of the signifier (sound-image) and the signified (the concept or meaning). According to Saussure, neither the signifier nor the signified preexists the other, the linguistic system of each community guarantees the meaning of signs, and each community has its own signifying practices that give value to the signs. As a result, for structuralists, signs have idealized meanings and linguistic communities are homogenous. Structural perspectives conceptualize “the world as consisting of homogeneous and monolingual cultures, or in-groups and out-groups, and of individuals who move from one group to another” (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 279).

Poststructural theory, on the other hand, aims at questioning categories that are fixed and stable, embracing contradictions, and it suggests the studying socially constructed and resisted (the site of struggle) nature of these categories (Pavlenko, 2002). Poststructuralists criticized structuralist view to language because it did not account for struggles over the social meanings. Poststructuralist theory puts forward that language is not only a linguistic system that consists signs and symbols but also a complex structure. The same signs can have different meanings for different people in the same linguistic community; therefore, for poststructuralists, signifying practices are sites of struggle and linguistic communities are heterogeneous in which claims to truth and power are continuously conflicting.

Pavlenko (2002), an advocate for poststructuralist approaches to SLA, criticizes structuralist applied linguistics. She notes that for structuralists, there is a reason and result relationship between motivation or attitudes and SLA, and culture is a fixed notion. On the other hand, poststructuralism views language as a tool that “allows for a more nuanced, complex and context-sensitive understanding of contemporary multilingual realities in which all language users have at their disposal multiple means of expressing themselves” (p. 286). According to her, language is “a site of identity construction” (p. 285) and struggle, L2 learning is socialization, and language ideologies mediate access to L2 communities and practices. Identities, similar to language, “structure interactional opportunities for L2 users” (p. 288) and facilitate or prevent access and serve as gatekeepers.

2.1.2. Studying Identity Using Poststructuralist Theory

Poststructuralism and identity are becoming central to current SLA research. A number of studies following poststructuralist theory investigated language teacher and language learner identities (Duff & Uchida, 1997; Clarke, 2008; Pavlenko, 2003;

Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnston, 2005). They mostly looked at how different aspects of identity such as native or a non-native speaker, race, gender, language proficiency, and professional identity are constructed and co-constructed in classroom settings. These poststructural accounts highlighted the emergence of identity in context rather than predetermination of learning outcomes based on some categories or identifications.

Identity, in the past, has been understood as a sense of one's alignment or affiliation with, or membership in, a particular social group and the emotional ties one has with that group and the meanings that connection has for an individual (McNamara, 1997). Identities have been ascribed to language learners including non-native speaker, student, immigrant, heritage language learner, generation 1.5, good learner, untalented learner, limited (English) proficient speaker, and so on. However, poststructural perspective resists these static categorizations and approaches them differently. It does not see identity as a fixed and decontextualized notion but sees it as a dynamic, ongoing process and 'not as something fixed for life, but as fragmented and contested in nature' (Block, 2007, p. 864).

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), from a poststructuralist perspective, describe identity as 'a dynamic and shifting nexus of multiple subject positions, or identity options, such as mother, accountant, heterosexual, or Latina' (p. 35). Norton (2000), influenced by feminist poststructuralist theory (Weedon, 1997) and critical sociology (Bourdieu, 1977) conceives of identity as 'how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future' (p. 5). Norton expands her argument as follows:

I argue that SLA theory needs to develop a conception of identity that is understood with reference to larger, and more frequently inequitable, social structures which are reproduced in day-to-day social interaction. In taking this position, I foreground the role of language as constitutive of and constituted by a language learner's identity. (p. 5)

In this view, learners negotiate and renegotiate a sense of self in relation to the outer world on each occasion they speak and they reorganize that relationship in different dimensions of their lives.

Thus, these scholars, unlike structuralists, emphasize the multiple possible social groups or roles that language learners may identify themselves with and how these identities are situationally and socially constructed through language.

Insights from social poststructuralism, critical theory, feminist theory, sociocultural theory, narrative inquiry, and more have affected research on identity and second language learning (Block, 2007; Duff, 2002; Kearney, 2004; Kramsch, 2009; Morgan, 2007; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2002). Research in related fields such as sociology, anthropology and psychology helped scholars theorize identity in language learning and how language learners represent themselves through their interactions in their communities.

When poststructuralism focuses on language learners' identity construction and their performance, it views them as individuals with multifaceted identities who can make choices about language learning based on their needs including the choice not to participate in classroom practices (Pavlenko, 2007).

Adopting insights from poststructuralism, Norton and McKinney (2011) view SLA as a process of identity construction rather than a mechanical act.

Poststructuralism can be seen as an umbrella term, taken up by many academic fields, and the identity approach is one of the approaches under the umbrella. Norton and McKinney helped clarify poststructuralism for researchers working in the areas of

applied linguistics and second language acquisition. As identity theorists, they assert that assuming that language learners can easily be defined as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited is a misconception because to use these binary terms is misleading. In an earlier study, Norton Peirce (1995) explicitly pointed out that ‘such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual’ (p. 12).

Drawing on poststructuralist theory, Norton highlights the following three aspects of identity that are relevant to SLA: (1) identity as multiple, non-unitary – everyone displays various identities and these identities are conflicting most of the time, (2) identity as a site of struggle, and (3) identity as changing over time. Multiple nature of identity is significant especially for language learners because they might struggle to speak from one identity position and this can reframe their relationship with the people they interact. As a result, they might reclaim alternative, stronger identities from which to speak.

Norton and Toohey (2001) argued that most of the theories that attempted to define good language learner have assumed that interaction options were readily accessible for the learners in a given target community and that these options were a function of the learners’ motivation. Drawing on social psychology, motivation is one of the attempts that was made to qualify a learner’s commitment to language learning. Gardner and Lambert (1972) introduced the constructs of instrumental and integrative motivation to the field. Instrumentally motivated learners are the ones who want to learn a second or a foreign language for utilitarian purposes such as to pass an exam or to find a good job whereas integratively motivated learners wish to learn a language to be able to integrate with the target language community successfully.

However, motivation, as constructed like this, is not sufficient to explain the complex relationship between power, identity, and SLA. Even the recent attempts of Dörnyei and Uschiada (2009) in which they tried to accommodate new theories of identity in new constructs of motivation are not complementary because the motivation still is a psychological construct based on quantitative measures.

Theories of motivation assumed motivation as an individual learner difference that is intrinsic to the learner and if learners failed to learn the target language, this meant their insufficient commitment to the language learning process. Furthermore, theories of motivation undervalue the unequal relations of power between learners and native speakers of a given language. Being highly motivated does not always translate into good language learning. A learner may have high levels of motivation but may have little investment in the language practices of his or her classroom. The classroom practices may somehow be racist, discriminating, threatening, or unequal. Likewise, the learner's expectation of good language teaching methodology might clash with that of the teacher's in that specific classroom. The results of this are twofold. Firstly, this might result in the learner's exclusion from the classroom practices and the learner might be positioned or labeled as "poor" or "unmotivated" despite his or her high level of motivation. Secondly, the learner himself or herself might resist participating, which ends up in nonparticipation in the language practices of the classroom (Norton, 2013). To wrap up, a learner can be highly motivated to learn a language but not invested enough in language practices of a given classroom. On the contrary, a learner who is invested in the classroom practices might probably be a motivated learner.

Investment is a sociological issue that should be investigated within qualitative framework. Investment, as first introduced by Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995), refers to socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often-ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. In an earlier work, sociologist Bourdieu (1977) used an economic metaphor, “cultural capital”, to refer to the amount of knowledge and modes of thought that some classes have. He argued that cultural capital characterizes people’s or a group’s social status with differential exchange values. Norton, borrowing from Bourdieu’s work, put forward that if learners invest in the target language, they do so with a belief that they will gain more symbolic and material resources and learners also think that these resources will in return increase their cultural capital. Investment is helpful while trying to make a meaningful connection between a learner’s desire to learn a language, and his shifting identity.

Identity and investment are also linked to the imagined communities that language learners desire to be part of when they learn a language. For Norton (2001), imagination plays a central role in a “creative process of producing new images of possibility and new ways of understanding one’s relation to the world that transcend more immediate acts of engagement” (pp. 163-164). Imagination, here, should not be understood as misleading fantasy or withdrawal from reality but as producing new images of possibility. Imagined communities, then, are the group or groups of people that we cannot have immediate access but that we can connect to through our imagination (Anderson, 1991; Norton, 2001; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Communities that we have direct and concrete access to are the ones that we interact with in our daily lives. These communities include our neighborhood, our workplace, our school, or our religious groups. Although we have immediate access to and

tangible relationships with those communities and we involve in their community practices, these are not the only ones we have affiliation with. Wenger (1998) calls this relationship engagement and for him, engagement is not the only way to belong to a community. We can belong to a community through our imagination. Norton (2001) extended Wenger's work by introducing the construct of imagined communities with in relation to language learning and proposed that it would partially help language teachers understand and explain non-participation and resistance of their students in classroom settings. Imagined communities provide insight into imagined identities.

Anderson (1991), the researcher who first coined the term “imagined communities”, said that nations are imagined communities because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p.6). We imagine ourselves connected to other citizens across time and space so we feel a sense of community with them although we have never met them. An extended interest and focus on imagined communities in SLA enable teachers and researchers to learn more about learners' affiliation with such communities and its effects on their learning trajectories. These imagined communities might include future, imaginary relationships as well as learners' existing affiliations, and they are as tangible and real as the communities that learners involve in daily engagement. Imagined communities might even have a more powerful impact on learners' identities and investments. An imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and investment (or lack of investment) in language learning practices can be interpreted within this context.

With all respect to what I have summarized so far, the identity approach to SLA is in line with my view that language learning is an ongoing practice that has effects on individual learners and their identities along the way.

2.2. Literature Review

A pivotal study of learner identity and language learning in the field of applied linguistics is Norton (2000) who worked with five immigrant women (Eva, Katarina, Mai, Felicia, and Martina) studying English in Canada. She explored the interrelationships between identity, power and English language learning and documented the level of success experienced by each woman. Eva, a young woman from Poland, invested in English in order to improve herself and go to the university. She had a job at a fast food restaurant and was marginalized at work in the beginning but through persistence in “she managed to penetrate the social network” (p. 65) and achieved success in that she was accepted by her fellow workers in the restaurant where she worked. Mai, a young Vietnamese, lived with her brother and his family and became entangled in a web of family relationships. After she left her job in a fabric factory, she married another Vietnamese and had little opportunities to continue with her English. Katarina, had an MA Degree in biological science from Poland and came to Canada with her professional husband and daughter. She had great investment in learning English and saw it as a way to regain the status she had in Poland; however, she was reluctant to speak English at home because she wanted her daughter to learn Polish. In the end she had an ambivalent attitude toward English: she saw it as a threat to her relationship with her daughter but also as a gateway to a higher social network. Martina also came to Canada with her husband; she has worked as a surveyor in the Czech Republic. Her investment in English was due to her identity as primary caregiver in the family. Although she was determined to learn

English, she did not come into contact with many native speakers in her job at a fast food restaurant. Felicia, a Peruvian, was the oldest of the women. In Peru, she was socioeconomically advantaged and it was difficult for her to “come down” and be seen as an immigrant. In the end, she stopped attending English classes.

In 2001, Norton further examined her data from her original study of the five immigrant women, focusing on the non-participation of Katarina and Felicia in an English as a second language (ESL) class. Katarina had been a teacher in Poland. In the ESL class, she felt that the teacher looked down on her, referring to her as an immigrant and saying that her English was not strong enough for her to take a computer course. Katarina was indignant and stopped attending the class. Felicia had been socioeconomically privileged in Peru before she moved to Canada with her husband. She felt that they had moved down in the world by moving to Canada. In class, the teacher has omitted Peru from an exercise stating that Peru “was not a major country under consideration”. Felicia also dropped the class. Norton argues that the women’s identities in their imagined communities came into conflict with the teacher’s view of them. Katarina, herself a teacher, may have seen herself as a member of the teaching community so when the ESL teacher discouraged her from taking the computer course, she “failed to acknowledge her professional history, positioning her as a newcomer” (p. 164). Felicia’s imagined community was her former community in Peru. When the teacher did not include Peru in the class discussion, Felicia chose non-participation in order to preserve the integrity of her imagined community.

In their study, McKay and Wong (1996) investigated how four Mandarin-speaking students in an American high school positioned themselves and were positioned in certain ways that affected their second language learning. One of the

four students, Michael, developed an identity as a successful athlete and a popular friend (to other Chinese and American students), which affected his success in oral fluency in English although he did not invest similar efforts in written English.

Mills (2004) produced an account of identity construction among mothers of Pakistani descent in the United Kingdom. She demonstrated that these mothers struggled with multiple identities partly shaped by their languages, trying to speak in Pakistani at home with their children to maintain their cultural and traditional values on one hand, and trying to speak in English with them to help their schooling and future educational lives, on the other.

Duff (2002) conducted a classroom-based study in Canada at a secondary school that had both language learners and native speakers. She collected data in a content course and found out that teachers showed respect to the cultural background of the learners. Some learners were afraid of being mocked because of their English; therefore, they remained silent to protect their faces, constructing a more silent and less participating learner identity. Native speakers interpreted this silence as a lack of initiative or wish and desire to improve their English. However, the classroom data revealed that learners were not unmotivated but it might be asserted that they were not invested in the classroom activities because the power relations between the native speakers and learners in that class was an unequal one, each party having different cultural capital.

Norton and Gao (2008) discussed identity of Chinese students in Hong Kong who were drawn to the English Club, “an unusual social community where they could socialize as well as learn English” (p.111). Through the English Club, students developed “a sense of ownership of English” (p.111). Norton and Gao suggested that, for them, English was associated with an imagined community of Chinese elites.

Nelson and Temples (2011) analyzed participation, identity construction, and intercultural learning in an online learning community. Participants of the study were students enrolled in an international exchange program for one semester and were studying in a country other than their own; (they were from Canada, Mexico, and the United States). The course they were taking was intercultural communication. This study focused on two of the students. Data were collected from the participants and were analyzed through emerging themes following a grounded theory approach. Analysis demonstrated one student, Adrienne, held on to her identity during her semester in Mexico and was unable to negotiate a comfortable identity in Mexico even though she had a BA degree in Spanish and lived in the dormitory with Mexican roommates. The other student, Ines, was also frustrated when she first arrived in Canada from Mexico, but she moved past the frustration, using the online community for support as she negotiated identity in her new Canadian community.

Haneda's (2005) study explored two Canadian university students, Edward and Jim, in an advanced Japanese literacy class. Data were collected from mainly interviews with the participants. Using a theoretical framework building on identity and investment, she found out that these two student writers from different ethnolinguistic backgrounds engaged in writing practices in Japanese different ways with differential investment. Jim's investment seemed to be connected to his writer identity as a full participant in an academic community and in a tangible local Japanese community. On the other hand, Edward's investment was tied to an imagined community of businessmen to gain economic capital.

Similar to Haneda's (2005) findings, Skyrme (2007) found out that the two participants in her study, Mike and Saul, experienced the initial semester at the university differently. The study drew on two Chinese international students in a New

Zealand university examining them in one course and its assessment requirements. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted with each participant during the first semester and one follow-up interview at the end of the second semester. Results showed that the participants negotiated their identities as university students in their new setting differently. Although the first semester was challenging for both of them, Mike seemed to change his practice and negotiate a path through the challenges and difficult tasks. In contrast, Saul seemed to find no way in this new setting.

In the following studies researchers used single case studies as a research methodology in investigating learners' learning experience, portraying them as individuals with own histories, hopes, evolving identities and learning trajectories.

Marx (2002) attempted to address the question of second language (L2) and second culture (C2) acquisition by focusing on identity and accent. A first-person account of identity based on the researcher's own experiences as a Canadian English learner of German, this study tried to explain processes of L2 learning, L1 loss, and the construction and reconstruction of learner identity. While trying to develop a near-nativelike German accent, Marx developed a German identity upon returning to the first culture. As a result, some tensions between the two identities occurred and this led to the researcher's "need to resolve difficulties and reconcile both aspects of [her] self into some form of coexistence" (p. 277).

In another single case study, Day (2002) explored the relationship between learning, identity, and social membership. In this ethnographic study, Hari, a young Punjabi-speaking English learner, developed a second language learner identity through the process of interacting with his peers, teachers and at home. Using a sociocultural and poststructural framework, Day examined Hari's learning trajectory.

Kinginger (2004), for four years, traced the life of Alice, a highly motivated French learner, trying to learn French in Quebec and France. Data mostly consisted of Alice's diary entries showing incidents and contexts in which she negotiated her identity. Kinginger discussed how Alice tried to position herself as a capable speaker in an imagined community of fluent French speakers, how learning French affected her self-conception, and how she negotiated this learning experience.

Maria, the 15-year-old participant in a single case study by Bashir-Ali (2006), also chose to be a non-participant in her ESL class. Maria took on an African-American identity in an urban school in the U.S. in order to be accepted by other students. She, like Katarina and Felicia in Norton's (2000) study, did not want to be perceived as an immigrant and she stopped going to ESL classes. In this case, the imagined community was the dominant African-American social group. She "went to great lengths to hide [her] true identity" (p. 636).

Tsui (2007) presented the narrative of one participant, called Minfang who was a Chinese teacher of English in China. The analysis of the narrative including interviews with the participant and the participant's diary revealed that he moved from one accepted identity to the next. He negotiated his way between a "marginal" EFL teacher to a "model" who used communicative teaching methodology. Tsui described this development in terms of Wenger's (1998) theory of learning as participation and provided insights on how Minfang constructed his identity both in his department and in the context of national policies.

In an EFL context, Hirano (2009), in a single person case study, studied a poor English language learner in Brazil. Her informant, Junior, had self-identified as a poor language learner since the sixth grade. At the time of the study, he was a grown man. In this case study, Junior expressed that teachers had not been interested in his

learning. He also seemed uncomfortable with his poor English student identity. His difficulty learning the language triggered the construction of his poor learner identity, and vice versa. As soon as Hirano realized this fact, instead of trying to come over Junior's learning difficulty, she focused on his identity by providing pedagogical practices to improve the sense of competence and to help him reconstruct his learner identity.

Finally, Nelson and Lu (2008) investigated the academic socialization of a Chinese doctoral student, Yanbin, to a doctoral program in the United States over a two-year period. When she first arrived in the United States, she claimed the identity of a Chinese student. Data consisted of interviews with Yanbin, oral journals, stimulated recall interviews, interviews with three faculty members, and copies of the informant's online postings. The findings suggested that the student's participation in the practices of online posting and talking in class contribute to an additional or expanded identity as an Americanized doctoral student.

Despite the fact that there are many single case studies of learner identity in various countries, there is little about identity construction in Turkey as an EFL context. This issue was addressed in the present study through a scrutinized examination of one learner and her desires and goals in learning English, as reflected in her see-saw identity and imagined community.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

This chapter discusses the methods of inquiry, the setting of the study, the participants involved in the study, the research procedure, data collection and data analysis procedures employed in detail. The chapter ends with ethical issues related to the study.

3.2. Research Paradigm and Design

3.2.1. Qualitative Research Paradigm

The qualitative research paradigm was selected for this study. According to Strauss and Corbin (1997), qualitative research is “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 17). Merriam (1998) defined a qualitative study as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). In addition, Merriam (1998) noted that the findings are richly descriptive, unlike quantitative research, which often involves large-scale testing, deductive analysis, and numerical findings. Therefore, the present study attempted to present the findings as richly descriptive as possible.

For the researchers who work in the qualitative framework, the participant’s or the participants’ own voice and perceptions are essential for the analysis. Creswell (2007) discussed the voice of the participants as an important component of data analysis in a qualitative study so that the findings are representative of individuals or

groups. In addition to the focus on the meaning or perspectives of the participants, Creswell defined the other characteristics of qualitative research as follows: use of a natural setting such as the classroom, the researcher as the key instrument for data collection and data analysis, data collection presented as words or pictures, and the researcher acting as the interpreter of the findings. Merriam (2009) also emphasized the importance of the experiences and the perceptions of the participants in a qualitative study. According to her, qualitative researchers search for an understanding of experience, the meanings associated with the experience, and how people “construct their worlds” (p. 5). Moreover, she noted that a cornerstone of a qualitative study is the understanding of experiences in an attempt to answer questions about life and then apply those possible answers through rich, thick descriptions to similar situations.

Following the guidelines in the literature, the qualitative paradigm was preferred for this study because the aim was to understand, discover, and describe rather than predict and control, as in quantitative research. It gave an opportunity to observe the key participant during classroom interactions and to conduct interviews with the key participant to gain an in-depth understanding of her approach and perspective of language learning. In other words, the voice of the key participant was heard so that her perception of language learning process was given an opportunity to be explored. By this way, the nature of the phenomenon could be presented to anyone interested.

3.2.2. Case Study as a Research Design

The case study, a qualitative tradition, was chosen as the research design for this study. Several researchers defined case study in similar ways. Merriam (1998) defined a case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single

instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 27). Yin (2009) emphasized the importance of real-life context in his definition. According to him, case study research is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (p. 18). Similarly, Trochim (2006) defined case study research as an “intensive study of a specific individual or specific context” (p. 2). Emphasizing the importance of drawing boundaries in case studies, Creswell (2003) defined a case study as one that is “bounded” by time and place and that studies individual people, groups of people, programs, events, or activities and one, which uses a variety of sources for data collection. All these definitions guided me while constructing my research design.

As was discussed in Chapter 2, much of the research on identity and language learning has been done with single case studies. To better understand the complexities of a Turkish learner who is studying English as a foreign language in Turkey, I selected single case study design. By focusing on one student, I was able to study in depth, the many struggles, conflicts, and hopes of a language learner. Norton (2000) is critical of what she refers to as the “SLA canon” (p. 2) for categorizing “learners as inherently “good” or “bad”, as motivated or unmotivated, as users of better or worse cognitive and psycholinguistic strategies” (cited in Duff, 2008, p. 79). In addition, Norton wants to get away from categorizing students as, for example, “unmotivated” and instead, go deeper to understand their complex social histories and desires behind their observable behavior. By studying individual learners through case study methodology, researchers can better understand “the learners’ multiple, shifting subjectivities or social identities, their investment in learning; their often restricted

access to English-speaking social networks to practice English” (Duff, 2008, pp. 79-80). All in all, the research design used in this qualitative research study was that of single case study.

There are three types of case study, as Yin (2003) suggests: exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive. An exploratory case study is designed to explore and define the questions for a following study or to decide on the feasibility of research procedures. An explanatory case study discusses all the data in terms of cause and effect relationship and tries to explain how an event happened. A descriptive case study ‘presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context’ (p. 5). For the purpose of this study, a descriptive case study was used to describe the phenomenon; that is, language learning journey of a learner and its relationship to the learner’s identity, in detail. The present case study is descriptive because there is an abundant amount of information gathered from interviews and narratives to describe the findings of the study in its naturalistic setting. The information in prose and narrative forms allowed me to have an in-depth understanding of the particular context, which is the key participant’s language learning context described fully in the following section.

3.3. Context of the Study

3.3.1. The setting

The present study was carried out at the English Preparatory School of an English-medium state university in Istanbul, Turkey with the permission of the institution (see Appendix A for the institution’s consent letter). The study took place during the fall semester of 2011-2012 academic year. The average age of the students in this program was 18. Most students in the program spoke Turkish as their first

language (L1) and they were all learning English as a foreign language for academic purposes.

This one-year intensive English language program aimed to develop students' proficiencies in four skills, i.e., reading, writing, listening and speaking. The goal of the program was for students to be successful in the English-medium program in their future departmental studies and/or to be able to read, write and speak in English about their future fields.

According to the regulations of the university, all students are given a proficiency test prepared by the testing office of the institution upon entry to the university at the beginning of each academic year. At the time of the study, the proficiency test was administered on September 13, 2011 and the same test was counted as a placement exam, as well. This proficiency/placement test consisted of 100 multiple choice questions aimed at assessing grammatical knowledge and reading skills of the students while lacking listening, writing and speaking components. Students who received 60 or higher out of 100 were accepted as proficient enough to carry on their studies in their departments. The students who could not pass this proficiency/placement exam – in other words, students who got lower than 60 – were placed at different levels, i.e. beginner (A level), intermediate/upper-intermediate (B level), or advanced (C level). 2542 students took this test and 1600 students passed, meaning they could carry on with their studies. The 942 students who did not pass were assigned to one of three levels of English. There were eight C level, 24 B level, and 39 A level classes. The students were given a chance of entering the mid-year proficiency exam of the same kind, which was administered on January 21, 2012. At the end of the academic year; that is, on June 4 and June 5, 2012, the students took a final exam that determined their eligibility to begin their departmental studies.

At the English language program of the university, each class had two different instructors that taught five different lessons. While one teacher taught grammar, academic listening and speaking, the other teacher taught academic reading and academic writing. Level coordinators were assigned to each level and they were the responsible instructors, who organized the syllabus and the materials to be taught at that level (i.e., beginner (A level), intermediate/upper-intermediate (B level), or advanced (C level). Every level had two level coordinators; namely, one for reading and writing (RW) and the other one for grammar, listening and speaking (GLS). They would hold regular meetings with the instructors that taught the related course to talk about the classes and the pacing. The two instructors that shared the same class were called partners.

At each level, different textbooks and the packs that were compiled and prepared by the materials office were used. At the advanced (C) level, *Active Skills for Reading: Book 3* (Anderson, 2008), *Reading & Vocabulary Skills* (Upper Level) (Eryoldaş, 2011), and *ABC Reading Texts* (Ergin, 2011) were used for the academic reading classes while *Effective Writing Skills* (Upper Level) (Eryoldaş, 2011) was used for the academic writing lessons. *Active Skills for Reading* is a five-level reading series that aim to develop learners' reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. It consists of thematic readings based on realistic passage types such as articles, journals, blogs, and interviews and it involves sections to encourage students to analyze the text and the author's intention as well as to help students improve reading rate and fluency. *Reading and Vocabulary Skills* (Upper Level) and *ABC Reading Texts* are booklets composed and compiled by the instructors at the institution. The former one includes thematically related reading texts with pre- and post-activities and vocabulary exercises while in the latter one, there are articles along with strategy-

training activities for reading texts and vocabulary exercises to reinforce the relevant vocabulary knowledge. Likewise, *Effective Writing Skills* (Upper Level) was composed and compiled by the instructors at the institution introducing the steps of writing a paragraph and the process of writing an essay as well as different essay types to the students.

For the grammar classes, *Live English Grammar* (Pre-intermediate and Intermediate) (Mitchell & Parker, 2005), *Traveller* (Intermediate) (Mitchell, 2009) and *Grammar Worksheet* were used whereas for academic listening and speaking lessons, *Listening Booklet* was used. *Live English Grammar* is a graded grammar series consisting of four books that adopts “an innovative approach to presenting and practicing grammar, which enables learners to acquire it naturally” (p. 2). *Traveller* is a seven-level coursebook series, which aims at demonstrating how English is used in real-life situations “thus enabling learners to use it in meaningful contexts” (p. 2). The book is organized in eight modules, each of which is based on a general topic. Throughout the module, students are presented with different aspects of the same topic and are given opportunities to cover vocabulary and grammar structures systematically as well as to develop all four skills with adequate practice. Both *Grammar Worksheet* and *Listening Booklet* are packs compiled by the institution. *Grammar Worksheet* includes mixed grammar worksheets; similarly, *Listening Booklet* includes listening texts and related exercises. Listening texts were mostly read aloud by the instructor and the students were expected to take notes while listening and answer the relevant questions afterwards.

The key participant’s section was one of the advanced level classes, C-08. There were 23 students placed in C-08 at the beginning of the semester. During the course of the study, two students failed due to attendance problems. Among the

remaining 21, four of them were male. Students in this class were from various departments such as Administrative Sciences, Business Administration, International Relations, Sociology and the Faculty of Dentistry.

3.3.2. The participants

As is typical in case studies, I have one key participant. Her pseudonym is Gamze. The other participants are the key participant's instructors.

3.3.2.1. The Key Participant – Gamze

Gamze was a 19-year-old C level (i.e., advanced) student at the aforementioned English language program. She was born in a town in the north of Turkey, where she and her family were originally from. She started elementary school in Western Turkey; then, her family moved back to the city where she was born, due to her father's military profession. After she completed her primary education at a different school from the school she had started, she took the high school entrance exam and she was placed in a state Anatolian high school. At the end of her last year in high school, she took the university entrance exam that was obligatory for all the students in Turkey to be able to start university. This university in which she was currently studying was her second choice in the university entrance exam choice list. Like all the other students who were placed in this university for the first time, she took the proficiency exam to be exempt from the one-year intensive English language program. However, she could not manage to pass it. She was placed at an advanced level class. After completing the English language program, she hoped to pass the proficiency exam at the end of the year, and she hoped to join the Department of Political Science and International Relations in the Faculty of Political Science.

Gamze came to Istanbul with her parents at the beginning of the academic year to settle down in a dormitory. It was not her first time seeing Istanbul. She had visited her sister at least four times while her sister was studying in Istanbul.

3.3.2.1.1 The Key Participant's Family and Roommates

Gamze is from a modest, middle class family. Her mother is a housewife who was a high school graduate and her father is a noncommissioned officer who has been working for the military. Her sister is six years older than she is. Gamze's parents do not speak English. For Gamze, her mother is a determined person who will finish whatever she starts. For example, if she decided to learn English, she would learn it successfully. Both of her parents want Gamze to learn English very much and they told her not to come back home without learning it. They think learning a foreign language is very important in life and they have a positive attitude towards English supporting Gamze in this sense. Although they are strict, Gamze said that they would coddle her more than they coddled her sister.

Gamze's sister was 25 years old at the time of the study and she was a graduate of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies at a highly reputable English-medium university in Istanbul. She was pursuing her master's degree at a university in Germany on Intercultural Communication and European Union. She went there with a scholarship that she was awarded by a Turkish nongovernmental nonprofit foundation and she had been in Germany for one and a half years at the time of the study. Her major aim was to get her degree as soon as she could. She lived in an apartment with two roommates whom she found through her search on the Internet. One of her roommates, Nelly (pseudonym), was a 23-year-old Russian graduate student who spoke English and

German along with Russian and the other one, Joe (pseudonym), was a 21-year-old German undergraduate who spoke English alongside German.

Gamze moved in a dormitory upon arrival to Istanbul. The dormitory that she lived in was a state one managed by the military, meaning the children of the military officers had priority in terms of finding a room. She shared her room with two other university students. One of them, Beste (pseudonym), was studying Statistics at an English-medium private university, whereas the other one was an International Relations undergraduate, Cemre (pseudonym), at a French-medium university. Gamze said that although Cemre was a very intelligent girl, she did not like languages (neither French nor English) and she was not good at either of them; thus, she was having a terrible year, suffering a lot. On the other hand, Beste's English was good and she offered help to Gamze when needed. Although Gamze appreciated this, she still avoided too much interaction with Beste because she was older than her and they did not have much in common. Secondly, Beste was a very talkative girl, "...when she starts talking, it is hard to stop her. She talks one hour," as Gamze put it in our third interview (3rd interview, November 15, 2011). Gamze said that although it was hard, she and her roommates got along with each other somehow. In the same interview (3rd interview, November 15, 2011), I asked Gamze if Cemre's negative attitude towards languages affected her. Gamze said no, it affected neither her attitude nor feelings towards languages; on the contrary, she tried to influence Cemre by saying that "Cemre, why do you do that? The language issue is something enjoyable. Moreover, it is French. You have opportunities, go to France".

3.3.3. The other data sources

3.3.3.1. The Understudies

My dissertation committee recommended starting off with two extra substitute key participants to avoid ‘mortality’ (Cook & Campbell, 1979 cited in Lynch, 1996) or attrition. Attrition is the drop out by the participant because of being too busy to continue, moving away, or having lost interest in the study (Duff, 2008). Since the present study involved just one person, it would be greatly jeopardized if anything happened to her. Therefore, I chose two other students as my understudies. They were Belemir (pseudonym), a Sociology student, and Emre (pseudonym), a student at the same department as Gamze, that is, Department of Political Science and International Relations. Coincidentally, all of them were in the same section, that is, C-08. These students were available if I needed, but I did not need them.

3.3.3.2. The Key Participant’s Instructors

The instructors of the key participant were a Turkish female teacher, Banu (pseudonym), who was designated as a grammar and listening instructor, and a native speaker male instructor, Michael (pseudonym), who was responsible for teaching reading and writing - at the same time allocating time for speaking practice in his class hours similar to Banu. Banu and Michael were partners sharing C-08, that is, the key participant’s section.

3.3.3.2.1 Instructor I - Banu

Banu was a 39-year-old Turkish teacher of English who had been working at the institution for 13 years at the time of the study. She graduated from the Faculty of Education, Department of English Language Teaching of the same university and prep school was her first experience as a workplace. She started working there as soon as she graduated. She had been married for eight and a half years and was the mother

of two sons aged seven and three. She did not hold either an MA or a PhD degree in any field. She attended a teacher-training course at British Council Istanbul in the academic year of 1996-1997. She once attempted to start an MA program at Faculty of Education of a state university in the department of Educational Administration and Supervision in 2003. However, she couldn't manage to enter the program as a result of her failure in the entrance exam.

Banu had taught reading and writing to mostly B (intermediate/upper-intermediate) level students at the prep school and she was the level coordinator of the General English group for three or four years. Then, she started teaching grammar at the General English level. She had been teaching grammar at C (advanced) groups for the last two years.

I had known Banu as a colleague for a long time although I had not had close contact with her except for the meetings and small interactions that we had from time to time. I called her on the phone after I decided to work with one of her current students as my informant. Banu was very cooperative and welcoming, even excited on the phone. I explained her the nature of my research and assured that this research would have had nothing to do with her in person or her teaching career (professional development). I also informed her about the confidentiality issues so she agreed to give her consent. She immediately asked me if she could learn which of her students were involved. I did not hesitate to share the key participant's name with her although I was surprised at her curiosity. Afterwards, when I thought about it, I would have been as curious if I had been in her shoes.

Banu defined her teaching philosophy as a teacher who tried her classes "not to be teacher-centered but student-centered" (interview, January 20, 2012) – spending a lot of time on improving the speaking skill of her students. She highlighted the

common problem of people's learning lots of grammar in vain because they could not manage to talk a word of English at the end. She added that she did not want her students to be like them. She said that these people could not be considered as English speakers. She defined herself as a teacher who is "not a fan of grammar teaching". She expected her students "to speak and write, to produce" (interview, January 20, 2012).

When I asked her opinions about this class of hers, she said she loved them describing them as "incredibly sweet" and she was "very happy" with them (interview, January 20, 2012). When she compared her class this year with the one she had previous year, she found her current students more interested in the lessons. She also said that these students attended regularly except for a few, they participated assertively, and 80 to 90 % did homework. In addition, she told me that they were sociable, as well; they did not only come and go to the classes but they also had connection to the outer world, unlike some other university students who would not go to the movies or who were unaware of the political developments around them and the like. She said that they were "conscious and equipped" following everything a lot (interview, January 20, 2012).

3.3.3.2.2. Instructor II - Michael

Michael was a 50-year-old English teacher who had been working at the institution for the last five years at the time of the study. He had been living in Istanbul, Turkey since 1990. He spoke fluent Turkish. He had been married to a Turkish woman for seventeen years and had two bilingual sons. He had a total 22 years of teaching experience. He did not have a master's or a PhD. He studied teaching history and civilization at Canterbury University in England. He told me that he was working as an English teacher in a language program in England when he met

somebody there who had just come back from Turkey and who recommended working in Turkey. Michael added that he didn't think about it again for about six months. Then the funding was withdrawn from the "Outreach" project that he was working on. This was a free course for immigrants who needed the language skills to live day to day in the UK.

He found himself unemployed and he started to think about what his colleague had said about working in Istanbul. That's how he decided to come to Istanbul.

When Michael first came to Istanbul, he found it quite difficult to adapt. He didn't know any Turkish, so he wasn't able to communicate with many of the local people around. He found a job quite quickly but he didn't keep it for very long. He said that most of the employers, especially on the European side of the city, were untrustworthy at that time, which is the beginning of 1990s. Later on, about a year later, he started working at a more reputable language school in 1991 that only employed native-speaker teachers mostly. The school offered accommodation and that made life a little easier for him. Then, he worked at various English centers in different parts of the city, both European and Anatolian. When he decided to stop and work at a university, the first university he worked at was a highly reputable large technical state university. After having worked there for three years, Michael started to work at the university where the present study was conducted. He taught at different levels at the Prep School of the institution. At the beginning, he taught mostly at A level, beginners, for two years. Then he moved on to C groups the year before the study.

Michael told me that he mostly liked his job. The one-year intensive English language program was "a bit too demanding" and he tried "to make it accessible" (interview, December 30, 2011). He considered himself to be a fair-minded and

tolerant teacher, but found it necessary in this kind of an institution to be very rigorous about the rules and the course demands. He was fully aware of his reputation as a strict disciplinarian, but found that he was able to “lighten up” occasionally and still keep the students on track. He mentioned that he was not very sympathetic toward lazy students or those who wanted to “just sit and chat”, thereby wasting valuable learning time (interview, December 30, 2011).

When I first met Michael to inform him about the study and to request his consent, he never asked me which student of his was involved in my research, a reaction particularly different from Banu’s. Therefore, throughout the semester, the participant was not known to him.

The nature of Michael’s contact with his partner, Banu, was a regular one, similar to other partner instructors’ contact. A regular relationship between the partners in the program is based on contacting each other not frequently such as every day or every week, but when needed. He said that they rarely met with Banu because they taught separately. They did not hold regular meetings because he found those meetings not to be absolutely necessary. Banu taught grammar and he didn’t. When he needed to check something about the syllabus, he sometimes asked students what Banu had been doing. When I asked him if they ever talked about students and their individual variables, he said that they did not. They wouldn’t usually talk about individual students since everyone was average, more or less. They would only talk about “lazy students or non-attenders” but they did not discuss much about this class as a whole (interview, December 30, 2011).

3.3.4. The researcher

I, the researcher of the present study, am an instructor at the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT, hereafter) at the university where the study was

conducted. I was introduced to identity studies in one of the courses I received at a university in the U.S.A where I went as an exchange doctoral student. Being a believer in the dynamic and contradictory nature of identity, in general, I was very enthusiastic in the idea of examining identity, especially learner identity, in language learning. It is, after all, through language “that a person negotiates a sense of self” (Norton, 2000, p. 5). The course I took in the U.S.A focused on the relationship between identity and language learning and teaching. Major theoretical frameworks used in identity studies, along with the data collection methods and analysis techniques in studying identity, were introduced and discussed during the course.

As an instructor who previously worked at the intensive English language program of the same university for a few years, I observed that identities were ascribed to language learners and learners were put into static categorizations such as motivated or unmotivated, good or weak, introverted or extroverted without considering that such affective factors are oftentimes socially constructed and co-constructed, changing over time and space, and probably existing in an individual in contradictory ways. This, I recognized, as one of the basic problems of classroom practices, negatively influencing rapport and interactions between teachers and students. In many instances, I witnessed that instructors were either happy or upset with the results of their section in tests such as progress or achievement, focusing on the overall success rate of the whole class but paying less, almost no attention to the social dimensions of learning at the individual level.

I reacted like these instructors then, until I started my master’s studies and became aware of the importance of the social theory of learning in addition to cognitive and linguistic processes and systems. Although afterwards I started working at the Department of ELT, I was in touch with my former colleagues for personal and

academic reasons in the English language program. In our formal and informal interactions, I had the idea that the instructors' approach to learner identity was still limited to the learner's being successful or unsuccessful instead of seeing identity not as something fixed for life but as a quality that is dynamic, multifaceted and interactionally produced.

While concerned with this problem of understanding factors affecting students' language learning at the English language program, I started to learn more and more about the importance of the identity in language learning as well as language teaching. I believed that exploring the issue, sharing it with the related parties, and developing awareness about this would offer a solution to the problem I had observed. Therefore, I decided to focus on it in my dissertation study.

This choice was a challenge for me owing to two reasons. First, the literature on learner identity did not present many examples on learner identity in formal, classroom learning environments and there were very few studies focusing on it in English as foreign language settings. Second, even though the identity studies class I received in my PhD program included examples of established qualitative research methods such as ethnography or interviewing, it did not provide me with detailed descriptions or planned implementations of each method. It was not a course in qualitative research and I had not taken one all throughout my PhD years. Such a challenge made me believe that this particular study would be valuable in its attempt to describe the importance of learner identity in language learning and teaching.

3.3.5. The research procedure

The key participant was chosen among the students who were enrolled in the aforementioned one-year long intensive English language program. The selection was based on 'purposeful sampling' (Duff, 2008, p.116). Purposeful sampling is a non-

random method of sampling where the researcher selects information-rich cases to be able to study it in depth (Patton, 2002). Information-rich cases are the cases from which a researcher can learn a lot about the most important issues for the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002). In addition, purposeful sampling enables a researcher to focus on a single case to maximize the thick description of the case (Duff, 2008). Therefore, purposeful sampling was used in this study to focus on the characteristics of a language learner that was of interest, which would best enable me to answer the research question.

Firstly, after having taken permission from both the principal and the academic coordinator of the program on September 27th, I contacted the C (advanced) level GLS coordinator on October 3rd and informed her about my project. The advanced level students were chosen as the focal group because the study called for an informant who had sufficient linguistic competence to practice English (or to look for opportunities to do so) outside the formal classroom setting, as well. I contacted the GLS coordinator because the day that I planned to administer the surveys was the teaching day of the GLS instructors. Then, on October 5th, a background survey designed in Turkish (see Appendix B for the English version and see Appendix C for the Turkish version) was given to all the students in advanced level (seven C level, 128 students) classes except for one C (advanced) level class that did not have any classes due to the instructor's excuse that day and three B (intermediate/upper-intermediate) level classes (50 students). A total of 178 students took the survey. The background survey was designed by me, the researcher, to learn how many advanced level students used English outside the classroom and how many of them would be interested in a research project. Thirty-seven students answered affirmatively to the question that asked if they would want to participate in a research project that would

last for one semester. Twenty-nine out of these 37 students were at C level and the other eight were at B level.

Between October 5th and October 12th, I got in touch with the 37 volunteering students either by phone or by e-mail, depending on the contact information they provided and told them that I would like to meet them in person on October 13th. The ones that I sent e-mails to (5/37) never replied to my e-mail. Fifteen out of 37 students did not hear my call and did not return the missed call. I sent text messages to them but they did not reply. The remaining 17 students agreed to meet with me.

On October 13th, 13 students showed up for the meeting. Before I interviewed them one by one, we gathered in a classroom and I gave general information about myself, the aim of the project and the duration of the study. Then, I interviewed them one by one in a different and a more private room. The purpose of the interview was to communicate the aim of the research project, to ask the students if they had enough time to participate in such a project, to try to understand why they were interested in participating in this type of a project, and to learn the amount and the function of their English use outside the classroom. Interviews were short (five to ten minutes long), informal in nature and were not audio-recorded; instead, I took notes while I interviewed the students. In the interviews, I emphasized the importance of the cooperation, consistency and availability of the participant and asked if he/she was willing to work with me for one semester. Three students did not want to take part in the study saying that they had misunderstood what it was, one student was not truthful (in terms of the information he provided in the survey), one student was less eager, and one student was not verbal enough. On October 17th I met with four more students who had not showed up for the meeting held on October 13. Three of them

did not want to participate in the study but one of them was very eager to take part in such a project.

As a result of our meetings and based on the interviewees' responses, eight students (out of 17) seemed to match the criteria. The criteria used while choosing the participant was based on the suggestions of Kvale (1996), that is, the participant's being cooperative, well motivated, truthful, consistent, verbal, easy to communicate with, and good rapport between researcher and participant. These were considered necessary traits. However, one of the students stood out from the rest. She was extremely motivated and willing to work with me. She was the only one who said that such a study would be beneficial for her progress as a language learner. I decided she, Gamze, would be my key participant. Among the eight students matching the criteria, I chose two more students, Belemir and Emre, as the understudies.

On October 18th, I met with all three participants and gave them notebooks to be used as language journals. I explained to them how they would keep the journals. I asked them to sign the participant consent form (two copies, one for me and one for each of them to keep until the end of the study) (see Appendix D).

I called the two instructors of the participants and informed them about my project and they agreed to cooperate. On October 19th I met with Banu, the GLS instructor, and asked her to sign the instructor consent form (one for me and one for her to keep until the end of the study) (see Appendix E). On October 21st I met with Michael, the RW instructor, and asked him to sign the instructor consent form (one for me and one for him to keep until the end of the study) (see Appendix E). All the participants were informed that in order to protect their identity, pseudonyms would be provided.

At the end of the study, both the key participant and the understudies were offered a gift certificate as reciprocity as promised.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

For the purposes of the present study, data were gathered from multiple sources including interviews with the key participant, the key participant's language journal, interviews with the key participant's instructors, video recordings of the key participant's classes, transcripts of stimulated recall protocols, and researcher journal (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1

Data collection procedure (for the key participant)

Eleven interviews with the key participant	Video-recording of a GLS lesson after the first three weeks of the classes	Stimulated recall meeting after the first GLS lesson recording (1 st Stimulated Recall)	Video-recording of a RW lesson after the first three weeks of the classes	Stimulated recall meeting after the first RW lesson recording (2 nd Stimulated Recall)	Video-recording of a GLS lesson one week before the semester ends
1 st interview: Oct. 27	Oct. 19	Oct. 26	Oct. 21	Oct. 26	Jan. 04
2 nd int.: Nov. 02					
3 rd int.: Nov. 15					
4 th int.: Nov. 23					
5 th int.: Dec. 09					
6 th int.: Dec. 23					
7 th int.: Jan. 13					
8 th int.: Jan. 18					
9 th int.: Feb. 08					
10 th int.: Feb. 15					
11 th int.: June 06					

Table 1 (continued)

Stimulated recall meeting after the last GLS lesson recording (3 rd Stimulated Recall)	Video-recording of a RW lesson one week before the semester ends	Stimulated recall meeting after the last RW lesson recording (4 th Stimulated Recall)	Interview with the GLS instructor one week before the semester ends	Interview with the RW instructor one week before the semester ends	Language journal by the participant	Researcher journal by me
Jan. 05	Dec. 30	Dec. 30	Jan. 20	Dec. 30	Oct. 18 – Feb. 08	Sept. 28 – June 06

Table 2

Data collection procedure (for the understudies)

Four interviews with the understudies	Video-recording of a GLS lesson after the first three weeks of the classes	Stimulated recall meeting after the first GLS lesson recording (1 st Stimulated Recall)	Video-recording of a RW lesson after the first three weeks of the classes	Stimulated recall meeting after the first RW lesson recording (2 nd Stimulated Recall)	Video-recording of a GLS lesson one week before the semester ends	Stimulated recall meeting after the last GLS lesson recording (3 rd Stimulated Recall)
1 st interview: Belemir:Nov.03 Emre: Oct.31	Oct. 19	Belemir: Oct. 28	Oct. 21	Belemir: Oct. 28	Jan. 04	
2 nd int.: Belemir: Nov.21 Emre: Nov.25		Emre: Oct. 31		Emre: Oct. 31		
3 rd int.: Belemir:Jan.13 Emre: Absent						
4 th interview: Belemir:Jan.20 Emre:Jan.20						

Video-recording of a RW lesson one week before the semester ends	Stimulated recall meeting after the last RW lesson recording (4 th Stimulated Recall)	Interview with the GLS instructor one week before the semester ends	Interview with the RW instructor one week before the semester ends	Language journal by the participants	Researcher journal by me
Dec. 30		Jan. 20	Dec. 30	Belemir: Oct. 18 - Jan.20 Emre:Oct.18 - Jan.20	Sept. 28 – June 06

3.4.1. Data collection sources

3.4.1.1. Interviews with the key participant

Interviews are used primarily to collect data about the insights or perspectives of research participants. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with the key participant, Gamze, every week for the first month and every two weeks for the remaining months of the semester. One final interview was carried out at the end of the academic year. The first interview was accepted as a trial one by the dissertation committee members so a total of eleven interviews, instead of the planned number of ten, were conducted. The first four interviews were carried out in my office at the university while the following interviews took place at more informal places such as a café in a mall close to Gamze's dormitory or the university's cafeteria. This unintentional shift of the places occurred naturally because of the convenience. In my opinion, this made Gamze more relaxed and the atmosphere friendlier and expressed her emotions and thoughts better. From time to time, I gave over some interview space to casual conversation about current events in Gamze's life. Indeed, this was a useful way of opening the interview to build rapport. All of the interviews were conducted in Turkish, the first language shared by Gamze and me. Prior to the interviews, I reminded her that she could use any one of the two languages of her choice but she did not find her English proficient enough to express herself fully. She used some English expressions from time to time during the interviews.

Guidelines suggested by Spradley (1979), the most-cited scholar for interview research, were very helpful giving guidance to me. He defines ethnographic interviews as 'a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants' (p. 58). Although Spradley writes about using interviews in ethnographic research, his

guidelines are commonly used in the broader category of qualitative research. He recommends that an interviewer be aware of three important ethnographic elements: explicit purpose (i.e. reminding the informant where the interview is to go each time the ethnographer and the informant meet), ethnographic explanations (i.e. repeatedly offering explanations to the informant about the project, the recording, etc.), and ethnographic questions (knowing and mastering the three main types of questions and their functions). He identified types of questions such as “Can you tell me/describe me...?” as descriptive ones.

In the present study, I conducted the interviews by following Spradley’s (1979) guidelines beginning with descriptive, grand-tour (i.e, broad) questions. An example grand tour question for beginning the interview was asking about the key participant’s (i.e. Gamze’s) experiences as a language learner (e.g., Could you tell me how/when you started learning English?). Over time, I moved to more narrow questions called descriptive, mini-tour questions to learn more about the smaller aspects of the key participant’s language learning experience; then to descriptive, example questions to learn a specific example about a language-related event that Gamze could identify; and finally to descriptive, experience questions to elicit atypical language-related events that Gamze encountered rather than recurrent, routine ones. An example of a mini tour is question asking about Gamze’s current language learning experiences (e.g., Could you describe a typical school day/an English lesson of yours? Can you tell me what you do here at the English language program?). Example and experience questions are best used after asking numerous grand tour and mini-tour questions; therefore, I did so.

Kvale (1996) categorizes interviews into three groups as structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Unstructured interviews allow the interviewees to address

their own concerns and/or interests without imposition by the interviewer; whereas, structured interviews allow the interviewer to ask each interviewee the same question in the same way. Semi-structured interviews consist of a series of pre-planned, open-ended questions based on the topic under investigation but provide opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to delve into some topics in more detail. This type of interview is flexible, allowing the interviewer the freedom to bring up new questions during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says or to ask the interviewee to elaborate a response. Semi-structured interviews were employed in this study.

As I mentioned before, eleven semi-structured interviews were carried out in the present study. One reason for conducting more than one interview with the key participant, Gamze, was to follow up on issues or to clarify uncertainties emerging from an earlier interview. The purpose was to seek clarity and consistency in interview data as well as an elaboration on significant topics. Another reason for conducting more than one interview was that the relationship deepened over time and as Gamze began to trust me, the interviewer, more and more, she was more forthcoming about the things she told me. The aim of the earlier interviews was to learn how the informant, Gamze, perceived herself and to learn things that she noticed in her use of English. The aim of the later interviews was to get her thoughts after time had passed.

The first semi-structured interview lasted 27 minutes and the following semi-structured interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes. This length, according to Duff (2008) is typical. All the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by me as soon as possible following each interview. The resulting transcriptions, as well as the section I wrote about Gamze, were sent to her for member checking (discussed in a later section). The transcriptions were translated into English by me to be sent to

my dissertation co-advisor. I tried to keep the flavor and the intention of what Gamze said as much as possible rather than a word-to-word translation. In other words, I made a sense-to-sense translation.

3.4.1.2. Interviews with the understudies

A total of four interviews at random intervals were conducted with the understudies. The nature of the initial interviews followed the same manner with the interviews I conducted with the key participant. The final one was more of an informal and a friendly meeting. Although the key participant was dedicated and accessible through the study, I did not lose contact with the understudies in case of an attrition problem until the end of my study.

All four interviews were digitally recorded but not transcribed. These interviews were neither used nor analyzed in this study.

3.4.1.3. Interviews with the key participant's instructors

In addition to the interviews with the key participant, Gamze, one semi-structured interview with each major English instructor, a total of two instructor interviews, were carried out. The instructors, Banu and Michael, signed a consent form. The aim of the instructor interviews was to get descriptive information about Gamze and her language use in the classroom. The reason for interviewing two instructors was to find out about Gamze as a language learner, as a student in class and what kind of student she was. I needed to know the instructors' opinions, thoughts and comments about Gamze to compare what she said to what the instructors said to get a fuller description of the 'truth'. Only one interview was conducted with each instructor because it was enough to get to know what they thought about Gamze as a learner in general. I was more interested in Gamze's own perceptions about her learning.

The interview with Banu, which was finally conducted after several re-arrangements, lasted 28 minutes whereas the one with Michael lasted for 23 minutes. Both interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by me.

Before the interviews, the instructors were informed that in order to protect their identity, pseudonyms would be provided. The interview with Banu was conducted in Turkish, the first language shared by the researcher and the instructor, to help ensure that she expressed her ideas and feelings as fully as possible. The interview with Michael was conducted in English. I translated Banu's transcription into English. Both the transcription of the interviews and parts that I wrote about the instructors were sent to them for member checking.

Since interviews are a person-to-person form of interaction, they were scheduled at a time and location convenient for the instructors. Depending on their schedule, I was more flexible. I went to the instructors' room, an open office that was shared by many instructors at a time, for the interviews. In neither of the interviews were we alone. There were some other instructors present in the room who were grading, eating, chatting or listening to songs on their laptops. In this rather big room, each instructor had his/her own locker along with two big rectangular tables, chairs located around them, four desktop computers with Internet access, noticeboards, a closet with extra materials such as the master copies of worksheets and board markers, and a water supply. Instructors would use this room in their break times during which tea, coffee, and snacks were served. Instructors who worked in the afternoon slot, that is, between 13:00 and 17:10, sometimes came earlier to get prepared for their classes, to meet with their level coordinators, or simply to meet with their partners. Some level meetings were held in this room. In addition to

academic purposes, celebrations such as birthdays or New Year's parties would take place there.

The interviews with Banu and Michael, Gamze's instructors, were supposed to be carried out one week before the semester ended. The fall semester ended on January 27th and I interviewed Banu on January 20th as planned. However, I had to interview Michael almost a month before the semester ended, on December 30th. Michael had to leave the institution before completing the semester because of some contract issues. His contract, which had been renewed at the end of every year for foreign instructors, was terminated. Another native speaker instructor, Jack (pseudonym), was assigned to his position for the remaining weeks of the fall semester as well as the whole spring semester.

3.4.1.4. Language journal

3.4.1.4.1. The key participant's language journal

The key participant, Gamze, kept a language journal noting down every time she used English either in or outside the classroom in a notebook I gave. She made a total of 60 entries. The entries were structured in that Gamze was asked to write about three topics. First, I asked her to write on what occasions she used English. Secondly, I requested her to explain why she chose to use English in that specific occasion. Lastly, she was required to describe the situation as well as her feelings. The entries could be written in Turkish, English, or both depending on the language preference of her. Gamze preferred to use Turkish in almost all of the entries. She shared what she wrote in her language journal as she wished or when a related instance or issue came up in the interviews. I collected the notebook composed of language journal entries in our last meeting at the end of the study. I translated all language journal entries into English.

3.4.1.4.2. The understudies' language journals

The understudies were also asked to keep language journals similar to the one kept by the key participant. I collected their notebooks in our last meeting but I did not use them in the data analysis because they were not needed, as Gamze had completed the study.

3.4.1.5. Video recordings of the key participant's classes

Video recording of classes is a technique used to preserve details of interactions and behavior of case participants in their natural contexts such as classrooms (Duff, 2008). Two lessons of each major English class, which were GLS and RW, by two different instructors, a total of four lessons were video recorded. Each video recording lasted 50 minutes, which was one class hour. The first two video recordings were done after the first three weeks of the classes started. The second two video recordings were done two weeks before the semester ended.

I asked a professional recorder to videotape the classes in order to avoid the possible negative effect of my presence as the researcher on the key participant's, Gamze's, behavior. Knowing that she was being observed by the researcher, she may not have acted normally. She might have been better prepared to participate in classroom discussions than usual resulting in a non-representative observed behavior (Duff, 2008). In order to video record the classes, I took permission from the key participant and understudies, the instructors and the administration of the institution.

The reasons of video recordings were twofold. Firstly, they allowed me as the researcher to see things that Gamze might have been unaware of, or that she was unwilling to admit or discuss. Secondly, video recordings in the present study allowed me to check the consistency between what Gamze said she acted like or did in the classroom and how she actually acted like or what she actually did in the classroom.

As Duff (2008) suggested, these videotaped observations allowed me to “better attend to nonverbal aspects of language interaction, such as gestures, *key participant’s* orientation to various media in *her* environment, eye gaze, and so on” (pp. 140-141, emphasis added).

3.4.1.6. Stimulated recall protocols

Stimulated recall protocols are one of the techniques of eliciting verbal comments from the participants. Dörnyei (2007) describes that stimulated recall is an introspective method to get insight into the participant’s perception of his/her class behavior. The goal in using this introspective method in this study was to elicit the key participant’s, Gamze’s, perception of her in-class behavior, and to learn what went on inside her head during the activities she had previously participated in her classes. In stimulated recall protocols, researchers typically provide the participants with some stimulus either in the form of recordings (audio or video) or transcriptions of those recordings (Gass & Mackey, 2000). In the stimulated recall protocols in the present study, both the key participant and the understudies received the video recordings of the classes as the stimulus. Each protocol lasted between 30 to 45 minutes.

3.4.1.6.1. The key participant’s protocols

After the classes were video recorded, I scheduled a meeting with Gamze. Although these meetings are usually and preferably held either on the day or one day after the video recording, due to the tight schedule of Gamze, we were able to meet one week after the first video recording of the GLS class and five days after the first video recording of the RW class. Second stimulated recall protocols were held one day after and on the day of the recording for GLS and RW classes, respectively.

On the scheduled days, Gamze and I viewed the video recorded lesson together. I invited her to comment on the parts of the lesson she wished to discuss at any point, pausing the videotape as necessary. I also stopped the recording when needed. In other words, both participant- and researcher-initiated pauses were used, following Gass and MacKey's (2000) suggestions. For further elaboration, I directed some key questions such as "What were you thinking here/at this point?" as well, again following the stimulated recall guidelines suggested by Gass and MacKey (2000). Stimulated recall protocols were digitally recorded and transcribed by me. I then translated the transcriptions into English.

3.4.1.6.2. The understudies' protocols

Since both of the understudies were coincidentally in the same prep section with the key participant, I used the same video recordings. I met with Belemir almost ten days and with Emre more than ten days after the first video recording of the GLS class. In addition, I met with Belemir one week and with Emre ten days after the first recording of the RW class. I did not arrange meetings for the second stimulated recall protocols because of my key participant's dedication to the study.

These stimulated recall protocols followed the same pattern with the ones conducted with the key participant. Similarly, these were digitally recorded but not transcribed. None of these data are used in this dissertation.

3.4.1.7. Researcher journal

A researcher journal is 'a systematic account of one's own research activities and reflections' (p.142) as defined by Duff (2008). According to Willis (2007), a reflective researcher journal is 'a record of your thinking as you collect and analyze the data' (p. 221). Keeping a journal is a helpful practice so the researcher can retrieve the information when it becomes harder to remember, especially towards the end of

the research project as details of time, place and the researcher's reflections have faded away. It is a common practice in qualitative research and many scholars kept journals of this sort in their longitudinal multiple-case studies for dissertations (Kobayashi, 2004; Morita, 2004; Yim, 2005).

In the present study, I kept a chronological journal based on the guidelines for higher degree research students offered by Monash University (Monash University, 2011). My researcher journal was not an interactive one that was shared by the advisors or peers but more of a private one in the form of a personal diary only seen and used by me. I kept it with me at all times, so it soon became my constant companion.

I recorded my ideas, impressions, questions, feelings and personal reactions along the research process. Furthermore, I recorded emerging themes, decision making, or any other issues that arose about the content as well as the process of the research during the study. At the end, there were more than 50 journal entries.

3.4.2. Conceptualization of validity and reliability in the qualitative paradigm

Like other qualitative methods, case study methodology relies on some other criteria other than validity, reliability and generalizability. The present study used the trustworthiness criteria conceptualized by Guba and Lincoln (1989), which consist of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Guba and Lincoln also proposed techniques to increase the likelihood of meeting these criteria, all of which will be respectively discussed in detail in the following section.

3.4.2.1. Trustworthiness criteria

3.4.2.1.1. Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1989) argue that, instead of internal validity, credibility should be ensured in establishing trustworthiness and they refer to it as “the match

between the constructed realities of respondents (or stakeholders) and those realities as represented by the evaluator and attributed to various stakeholders” (p. 237). In order to ensure credibility in the present study, the following techniques were employed: Prolonged engagement (Guba & Lincoln, 1989); triangulation (Lynch, 1996); peer debriefing (Guba & Lincoln, 1989); progressive subjectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989); and member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Prolonged engagement is the immersion of the researcher in the research setting and establishing rapport and trust with the participants in order to understand their perceptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). As the researcher of this study, I was in contact with my key participant from the onset of the selection procedure thus establishing rapport and trust with her. I sometimes interviewed her at a café spending some casual and friendly time before and after I used my digital recorder. This direct contact with Gamze allowed not only for a careful observation of her identity flow but also for a strong relationship with her.

Triangulation refers to “gathering and reconciling of data from several sources and/or from different data gathering techniques” (Lynch, 1996, p. 59). Qualitative research calls for triangulation as a measure of validity (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995) and it is used to ascertain multiple forms of interpretation (or multiple realities) (Stake, 2005). Patton (2002) reminds the researchers that they may end up in arriving inconsistencies across data sources while aiming to reach consistent results. In Patton’s view, in fact, these inconsistencies should not be perceived as a weakness but as an opportunity to dig the data deeper. Research methods may be triangulated (e.g., in mixed-method research), theory may be triangulated when the same phenomenon is examined through different theoretical lenses and from the standpoint of researchers in different fields, data collection techniques and results can be triangulated (e.g.,

observation, interviews), and so on (Duff, 2008). Data collection techniques were triangulated in this study by collecting data from multiple sources. Multiple-source triangulation can take different forms. The researcher can gather data (a) from various participants such as teachers, students, administrators, (b) from different settings such as inside and outside the classroom, and (c) from different times such as before and after examinations (Lynch, 1996). In the present study, multiple-source triangulation was achieved by collecting data from both the key participant, Gamze, and her instructors. In addition, the key participant was asked to comment on her feelings while speaking English both inside and outside the classroom. Several of her classes were video recorded and stimulated recall protocol sessions followed. Furthermore, data were gathered from Gamze all through the semester at certain intervals to better witness her identity journey. In this way, all three forms of multiple-source triangulation were employed in this study and both insider (emic/participant) and outsider (researcher) perspectives of phenomenon were incorporated to the extent possible.

Peer debriefing was also used to ensure credibility. It refers to the discussion of the study with ‘disinterested’ colleagues who are not directly involved in the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). During this study, such discussions were carried out with one of my colleagues who had recently finished her doctoral studies and my advisor and co-advisor, who were experts on the methods and the content of the study. Their comments and suggestions helped me see the flaws in the course of action, recognize my biases, and see my work more objectively.

Progressive subjectivity is the recording of the researcher’s initial and developing constructions during the research process to be able to compare them and avoid overemphasizing the initial ones (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The researcher could

record them through a diary or a journal and I did so. I kept a chronological researcher journal recording emerging themes, decision-making, or any other issues that arise about the content as well as the process of the research for one academic year. Related to progressive subjectivity, Patton (2002) suggests that background, qualifications and experience of the investigator are important in qualitative research as the researcher is considered to be the major instrument of data collection and analysis. Thus, in the present dissertation, I included personal and professional information relevant to the phenomenon under study.

Member checking is ‘a procedure used by qualitative researchers to check their reconstructions of the emic perspective by having field participants review statements in the researchers’ report for accuracy and completeness’ (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2005, p.551). For Guba and Lincoln (1989), it is an essential technique for increasing credibility. Participants read transcripts or written reports before they are published and then researchers incorporate their feedback or corrections. Or they are consulted in a recurring way during the analysis. Member checks are also known as member/respondent validation (Bryman, 2004 cited in Duff, 2008). They can enrich an analysis and help ensure the credibility of interpretations or the authenticity. In this study, the key participant, Gamze, was asked to read the interview transcripts and the written report before it was finalized and then I incorporated her feedback and corrections where necessary. In addition to Gamze, her instructors that were interviewed were asked to read the transcripts and the parts that were written about them. I made the necessary additions and revisions in the related parts.

3.4.2.1.2. Transferability

Transferability takes emphasis off generalizability, which is a common concept in quantitative experimental research. Generalizability aims to establish the

significance and external validity of findings for situations or people beyond the immediate research project (Duff, 2008). Some researchers (e.g., Dobson, Hardy, Heyes, Humphreys, & Humphreys, 1981) argue that it is impossible to generalize from a single case study. Others (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2000), on the other hand, state that the qualitative researcher does not wish to find out what is generally true for many others but instead wishes to understand one single case in depth. A thorough exploration of a phenomenon in one or more carefully described contexts will be of interest to others who may conduct a research of a similar nature elsewhere. Stake (2000) refers to it as ‘naturalistic generalization’ – learning from others’ experiences (cited in Duff, 2008, p.51). Transferability gives the responsibility to readers to determine whether there is fit or connection between the studied context and their own context. Qualitative researchers do not make the assumption for the readers of the research and do not seek one correct interpretation. Instead, they show other possible interpretations by providing rich data about the experiences of the studied case (or cases) along with the context. The readers of the research are expected to understand their own as well as others’ contexts and lives, through both similarities and differences across settings or cases (Duff, 2008).

Thick description is the technique recommended to accomplish transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and it is “an extensive and careful description of the time, the place, the context and the culture” (Geertz, 1973, p.241 cited in Lynch, 1996). By concentrating on the behavior of one individual case, it is possible to conduct a very thorough analysis; in other words, a thick or rich description of the case. For the achievement of transferability in the study, detailed histories about the key participant including her family background, previous education, and language learning, in addition to the detailed description of the context, were provided.

3.4.2.1.3. Dependability

Dependability refers to “the stability of the data over time” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242). Dependability audit is the suggested technique to ensure dependability. It is the detailed documentation of the processes in a study to help the potential readers grasp the data collection and analysis methods in detail, for further replications if needed. In the present study, the process of data collection and analysis was extensively described with the aim of achieving dependability.

3.4.2.1.4. Confirmability

Confirmability is defined by Guba and Lincoln (1989) as being “concerned with assuring that data, interpretations, and outcomes of inquiries are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the evaluator and are not simply figments of the evaluator’s imagination” (p. 243). Techniques for establishing confirmability are audit trail, confirmability audit, and triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An audit trail is a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of findings. This was done in this study to achieve confirmability audit technique which “assumes that the data and the process by which the conclusions were drawn are available for inspection by an outside reviewer” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 243). Triangulation was also used in the present study, as discussed above, to reduce the effect of researcher bias in the context of confirmability. Rather than seeing it as a method for validation or verification, triangulation was used to ensure that the account in this study was rich, robust, comprehensive and well developed.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

In the present study, qualitative data analysis was conducted. Data analysis began right after the first interview and continued after each interview. Specifically,

as an approach to qualitative analysis, thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis is a technique that moves beyond counting apparent words or phrases (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson 2007) and it is “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns [themes] within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.6). Thematic analysis consists of several stages of multiple readings of the qualitative data, coding, and categorizing emerging patterns or themes. Braun and Clarke provide a guideline for thematic analysis which consists of six phases: a) familiarizing oneself with data, b) generating initial codes, c) searching for themes, d) reviewing themes, e) defining and naming themes, and g) producing the report. These phases are applied in a cyclic but not in a linear format. In this study, I followed this six-phase framework, recursively reading through and coding data. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggest that as new categories emerge, previously coded data must be recoded to see if they contain any examples of the new codes. Therefore, I read and reread my data and finished coding when saturation was reached. As coding style for categorizing data, inductive coding was used. Inductive coding style is an iterative analysis often referred to as a grounded analysis.

Although the qualitative data analysis employed in this study is inductive and data driven, I anticipated some codes before analysing the data due to my prior knowledge on the topic. In order to find ways of making sense of various themes and the relationships among them to be able to interpret them, draw meaningful inferences and report on them in a coherent manner, I developed a priori codes. In other words a “start list” of codes by drawing on the theoretical discussions on learner identity and its relation to language learning was used. Some of the codes in my start list included power and identity, identity as a site of struggle, identity as changing over time, investment, imagined identity, language classroom as a ‘communities of practice’,

and so forth. I used the start list of codes in the analysis of the first two or three interview transcripts. During this stage of the analysis, the codes were modified and used in the subsequent analysis of the data.

Coding can be performed either manually or by the help of one of the widely available software programs, which are referred to as Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) (Duff, 2008, p. 169). As suggested by my committee members, I coded manually.

As mentioned above, I followed the six-phase framework that Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested. I read the transcriptions repeatedly and wrote down the parts that appeared to be relevant on separate, empty sheets of paper. Then, I put an appropriate “code” on top of the sheets of paper after consulting the start list of codes. I identified recurrent codes. To illustrate the point better, one recurrent code was the key participant’s “high motivation to learn English”. I went through the sheets indicated with this code and I modified this initially identified code into a theme, the key participant’s “personal efforts to learn and practice English”. This theme, along with other similarly identified themes, was then subsumed under a category, the key participant’s “investment” (see Table 3). In presenting and discussing themes, I used quotations from the parts I wrote on the sheets of paper. I repeated this process until all transcriptions were covered.

To allow for different perspectives on the data and to mitigate some of the inevitable researcher biases, my co-advisor also engaged in line-by-line coding.

3.6. Ethical Issues

Ethical issues should be taken into consideration seriously while conducting research. Ethical principles, suggested by Spradley (1979), such as considering the participants first, safeguarding their rights, interests, and sensitiveness,

communicating research objectives, protecting the privacy of the participants, and making reports available to them were kept in mind throughout the study. To be more specific, I followed the ethical guidelines suggested by Christian (2005). My main considerations included following five issues: voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, reciprocity and researcher bias. First of all, I informed all my participants about myself and the aim and the duration of my project. In the initial background survey, I included a section questioning if they would want to participate in such a project on the voluntary basis. Secondly, I took their informed consent saying that they could withdraw from the project at any time for whatever reason and that the information they provided will be used for research purposes only. They signed consent forms. Thirdly, to protect the privacy and the confidentiality of the informants, I asked each participant to provide me with a pseudonym of their own choice. I used those pseudonyms while reporting about them in this study. Fourthly, I compensated them modestly for their participation. Finally, to avoid researcher bias that might be the case with any research, as explained above, I invited my co-advisor to assist me in coding the data.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data from the interviews with the key participant, the key participant's language journal, interviews with the key participant's instructors, stimulated recall protocols with the key participant, and the researcher's journal. Based on the analysis of the data, a number of recurrent themes were identified. The recurrent themes were subsumed under three main categories, which were aligned with the study's research question. Specifically, these categories include: a) investment, b) lack of/decreased investment, and c) imagined identity/community (see Table 3).

Table 3. *Categories and themes identified in the data.*

Category	Theme
1. Investment	a. Personal efforts such as seeking help from her sister, listening to radio channels in English, reading books and newspaper in English, and watching movies in English b. Positive attitudes towards English c. Using practice opportunities in the classroom d. Using practice opportunities when abroad e. Being a responsible student
2. Lack of/Decreased investment	a. Self criticism b. Frustration with low exam scores c. Negative reaction to one of the instructors d. Disengagement with classmates and discontent with classroom atmosphere
3. Imagined Identity/Community	a. Sister as role model b. Wish to study abroad

The following section will include detailed explanation of the results organized by categories and themes across different data sources.

4.1. Investment

The first group of themes relates to the key participant's investment in language learning. Investment is what the learner views himself putting into and in return what he hopes to receive from learning a second or foreign language in specific situations (Atkinson, 2011). Norton and McKinney (2011) argues that if or when learners invest in the language they are learning, they do so to gain a wider range of symbolic and material sources. Five recurrent themes about investment were identified: a) personal efforts such as seeking help from her sister, listening to radio channels in English, reading books and newspaper in English, and watching movies in English, b) positive attitudes towards English, c) using practice opportunities in the classroom, d) using practice opportunities when abroad, and e) being a responsible student.

Personal effort

One of the ways that my key participant, Gamze, demonstrated her investment in learning English was the personal effort she put into English in order to be successful. She shared her experience about the use of English in her life as follows, including the incidents she used English with her Indonesian classmate who spoke little Turkish.

Normally I use English... I watch lots of foreign TV series. While watching, I use it in terms of listening. I listen to music a lot. I use it in songs. And also there is my friend Megan (pseudonym). While talking to her, I use English. It goes on like this: at first we start to speak in Turkish, then we shift to English. While talking to her, I use it . (1st interview, October 27, 2011)

One specific type of effort Gamze showed was seeking help from her elder sister and making use of the help that her sister offered. At the time of the study, Gamze's sister

was a graduate student abroad; therefore, the help she offered was through Internet. Gamze mentioned this by saying “I get support from my elder sister through Internet, too much” (3rd interview, November 15, 2011). In the same interview, she also mentioned other sources of help. These included her sister’s friends who were graduate students studying at different institutions in Europe.

One of them is an MA student in Netherlands. Another one is a PhD student at Oxford. Umm, before coming here, they told me they could help me if I wanted. They told me “write to us, tell us if you need something, we will help you”. (3rd interview, November 15, 2011)

In Gamze’s context, use of English was generally limited to the English courses at her university. Exposure to English language and culture was through media such as TV, Internet, movies and magazines. She listened to radio stations thinking that the sole exposure would be good for her.

I listen to BBC radio. Even though I don’t understand, I think it is good. I am exposed to it. I feel exposed to it. I become familiar with the language. I read newspapers in English. I am happy when I understand. If I understand some things in the paper, I feel very happy. (5th interview, December 9, 2011)

In addition, she tried to read books and newspaper in English. She again relied on her sister’s suggestions on this.

I read news. My sister e-mails me these things in order to make me aware of the things around the world. She says “there are Turkish translations but read them in English”. She says “check them when you get stuck”. She says “follow the news from these sites”. (2nd interview, November 2, 2011)

Another effort that she showed was reading books that her sister owned. She said: “There are already my sister’s books at home. I am reading Oliver Twist now” (2nd interview, November 2, 2011). Later on, she started reading the same book again showing an extra effort.

I started it again. I found out that I learned all these words that I didn’t know before. I mean I read twenty pages without checking any vocabulary... It is very satisfying. I mean I know them; I understand them all. It is amazing. Maybe you cannot believe but Oliver Twist’s sufferings gave me pleasure. (4th interview, November 23, 2011)

Watching movies in English was another effort she spent to improve her English. She sometimes watched them with English subtitles or sometimes without subtitles at all. She forced herself to understand them.

Besides, yesterday, I tried to watch a film without subtitles but it was so boring. I think so. I chose the wrong film. I have never dared to do something like that before. Actually, I felt lazy to download the subtitles. However, it takes only 2 minutes. I realized there was no subtitle but I decided to start to watch it. Then I kept on watching. Afterwards, I felt bored. It was such a boring film! Yes, I watched Casanova with subtitles. I did not delete its subtitles. It was already with subtitles. Then I watched it. (6th interview, December 23, 2011)

Gamze strongly believed that watching movies contributed to her learning.

I tried to focus by watching films one or two days. Actually, it does not sound as if I was wasting my time while I am watching a film. I feel it contributes me something. Therefore, I do not think watching a film as a waste of time as my work is with English. Apart from that, films that I watch are something, which contribute. (6th interview, December 23, 2011)

Following her sister's suggestion, Gamze watched TV series as well. Being able to understand them was a big motivation for her.

When I came back to the dorm, as my sister suggested, I started watching a TV series called "Modern Family" and I watched 2 of the 3 episodes without subtitles. To understand most of it made me really happy. (42nd journal entry, January 04, 2012)

One of the ways Gamze demonstrates her investment in English is by personal effort. She could be spending her time in a variety of ways but she chooses, at least part of the time, to invest in English by watching TV, reading books and speaking to an Indonesian in English.

Positive attitudes toward English

In addition to showing personal effort, another way that Gamze showed investment was her positive attitudes toward English. She envisioned English as a sign of "improvement" since high school. She expressed her enthusiasm towards learning a foreign language.

Indeed because I love foreign languages, I wanted to be in foreign languages department in high school. There can be a little bit impact of my sister on it. Actually it is inevitable... Hmm, I have already loved English and wanted to be in a department related to English. Learning a new language is improving me, learning a language is something important. I feel so proud of myself about it. I mean I am learning new things; I am learning a new language. (1st interview, October 27, 2011)

After receiving a low grade from a quiz, that is, 37 out of 100, her attitudes towards English had not changed.

I have to be good at English. It's still the same. My perspective is still the same. I love it, I mean it's something enjoyable, but I have to be good at it. If I take any, I have to be qualified for it. (4th interview, November 23, 2011)

As she stated in the last (the eleventh) interview, after having spent one academic year in the English language program, her approach to English had not changed. She saw it as a "cornerstone" for her future.

However, it was a nice year for me. Learning a language made me relaxed. It was an enjoyable and an easy year because I am interested in the language I studied. Experience is experience. Actually, I had an experience to learn a language, in the end; and it is an experience that you can't deny. It was a nice piece of experience. I lost a year. But it helped me gain a language. Well, certainly, English is an important cornerstone for my future. In fact, there isn't any change in my view about English. I always had positive attitudes towards English, and it is still the same. It is up to me, the rest is my responsibility. It depends on how much effort I spend on it. I will improve my English by reading books or watching movies. (11th interview, June 06, 2012)

Gamze's parents, along with her sister, had positive attitudes towards English. They influenced my key participant's positively.

Especially my dad encourages me to learn English, before going back home. I mean he is not generally doing the thing, but he is just joking. My parents give a lot of importance to language because of my sister. They were not the same with my sister, but now when I observe them, it is so obvious that they coddle me. This motivates me, though. (3rd interview, November 15, 2011)

Gamze's sister also encouraged and pushed my key participant by creating reasons to use English.

The language I am learning now is an international one. In the semester break, I am going to Germany, where my sister is. My sister tells me "Don't come here without learning English. I won't help you". While talking to people there, English will be advantageous for me. (1st interview, October 27, 2011)

Here Gamze provides one reason for her investment: she wants to speak English when she visits her sister in Germany. In addition to making the effort to watch TV and read books in English, she also maintains a positive mental attitude about learning English.

Using practice opportunities in the classroom

Gamze's investment in English revealed itself in her efforts in the classroom. Her efforts seemed to continue in the classroom and she was invested in the language practices of her classroom. She showed courage and enthusiasm to "speak" in the classes.

Um, before I started keeping my language journal, there was one incident: At that time no one was speaking in class. There was this one situation, that I cannot remember now, but it was the first time that I said "yes, I can do this" and started to talk to my instructor, in Banu's lesson. Everyone was like, everyone said "how did you speak?" They made me flattered. Because before that, I was always silent but then I spoke suddenly. No one expected it. (1st interview, October 27, 2011)

Similarly, another incident that Gamze was involved was her voluntary presentation. She made a presentation when no one volunteered.

I mean in this situation, I got nervous because I wanted to speak. Previously, when the other instructor asked us to talk about a movie, I hesitated. Therefore, this time, I wanted to speak. He wanted us to make a speech; I said I would. I volunteered. (2nd interview, November 2, 2011)

Although she felt nervous and tense while speaking, in other words, although she had speaking anxiety on some occasions, she still forced herself to participate in the lesson.

There, I plan to say something. Yes, I try to say something about social media and friendship through social media. I even have it on my mind, I mean. I am very nervous at this moment while I'm saying this ("People talk to their friends on Facebook because it is easy"). Actually, normally when I try to make a sentence, I would not be hesitant this much but I mean, but here I go like "umm umm umm". I said it and I am relaxed. If I say what I want to say, I feel relaxed. It feels like a burden on my shoulders. It goes off my shoulders. Michael says something about Twitter. Yes. Here, I'm holding my cheeks with my palms. Because I just said it and while I was saying it, I felt a blush, and I feel that my cheeks get all red, that's why I am doing that (gesture). (2nd stimulated recall, October 26, 2011)

Gamze used the opportunity to join the lessons in both instructors' classes even though she got nervous. She mentioned an occasion that her classmate experienced and similar to her, how the classmate also got nervous while speaking in a foreign language.

Banu again wanted us to do speaking. She wanted us to make a two-minute speech about "Environmental Problems and Sources of Energy". I was the only person who volunteered. I was so nervous. I wasn't very successful but I sweated a lot and I got so nervous. Plus, today they called Megan from the Registrar's Office. She wanted me to go with her, we went there together and I helped her because she, too, gets nervous while she is talking to a Turk, in Turkish. (9th journal entry, October 28, 2011)

Gamze gave another example on how she used English in the classroom.

In Banu's class, our book is Traveller. We are covering units from it. There are questions about travelling, hanging around and so forth. Banu made me do it this time, directly. I told what I did. I used... 'I like Roma the most.' I used this sentence. (10th interview, February 15, 2012)

Although Gamze is clearly anxious about speaking in class, she does speak, even surprising herself.

Using practice opportunities when abroad

Another way that Gamze showed investment was trying to use practice opportunities when she went to Germany with her mother. They went there to visit her sister, meeting her roommates and some of her classmates. Gamze talked about some occasions when she used English with one of her sister's friends who was half American, half German.

Then, we offered Samantha (pseudonym) to eat dinner with us at our place and we had dinner together. We had a conversation about Samantha's America plan. She said she would go to America and buy jeans for herself and it would be good to go to Levi's. We said it was very expensive in Turkey but she said she never remembered paying more than 20 dollars... She liked the food very much. Before that, I was so cold on our way back home. That night was very cold and it was dark while we were walking. It was so cold that I did not even feel my legs. It was so cold that my blood was freezing. I said 'my blood is freezing' and Samantha understood. Her earrings were so beautiful. We talked about them. She said she remembered her mom when she looked at those earrings. (9th interview, February 8, 2012)

Gamze explained another occasion when she spoke English with one her sister's roommates.

Then, the next day we were at home with Nelly (pseudonym). Nelly was going to make Russian salad that day, actually we prepared it together. We talked about the food and countries. And the Erasmus program. She asked in which countries the program was available. There was a big atlas in the kitchen; I used it to show the countries. Then we talked about different types of food and I learned how to make Russian salad. (9th interview, February 8, 2012)

Gamze also shared her opinions about how her sister pushed her to use the practice opportunities while chatting in her sister's apartment with one of her roommates.

Nelly asked me some questions. I noticed that my sister did not interfere on purpose because she wanted me to speak. I noticed that, I mean I was able to speak. That was good. (9th interview, February 8, 2012)

Furthermore, she did not hesitate to share her feelings with her sister's roommates as the following quotation illustrates the point.

I do not know, I think I am so shy to speak or I don't know, I am afraid of making mistakes. The following days, I told Nelly and Joe (pseudonym) about it. I said I was afraid of making mistakes and I was shy as I was new. And they said to me that I should not care about it and it was a good opportunity to practice English. (9th interview, February 8, 2012)

One of Gamze's reasons for investing in English is to study abroad and participate in the Erasmus program. When she was visiting her sister in Germany, she does speak English to her sister's friends.

Being a responsible student

Gamze defined herself as a responsible student and that she had been responsible as a student all throughout her school life.

But I am responsible; I mean I can say that. Since elementary school, I've been a responsible student. I know myself. I have the responsibility of studying. I am ambitious in terms of studying. I can say this. (5th interview, December 9, 2011)

She was aware that she needed to learn English as she emphasized by saying "I am in the intensive English language program. I have to learn this" (4th interview, November 23, 2011). She was angry with herself on the times and occasions when

she did not attend the classes. She took some decisions to be more careful with attendance and with her studying strategies in general.

No skipping the school, I said to myself. I put the rule. I will go. No skipping the lessons from now on.... However, I am good at lessons when I study. For instance, I did many things on Tuesday. I was bad that day; I did not feel good, because I was sleepy. It was related to that. I went to the library that evening and studied for 2 hours. I worked on vocabulary and did my homework. (6th interview, December 23, 2011)

She felt bad when she could not finish her homework. Attending the classes without homework was out of discussion for her.

My friends from my hometown were here, so I could not quite study (lessons) or anything. The previous day, I went to my dorm room at 11 pm and I had to write an assignment. I sat until 2 am and I wrote it. I did write it, of course, I wouldn't go (to school) without writing. So, that's what happened, I mean. I feel bad when I don't do my homework. Yes. I wrote an essay, cause and effect. About divorces. 2 causes, 2 effects. 7 paragraphs, I worked on it for 7 nights. (10th interview, February 15, 2012)

Gamze was careful about the assignments and she got upset on the occasions she made mistakes.

Anyway, today we tried to write an argumentative essay. The topics were very difficult, I chose "capital punishment". We brainstormed with Fatih (pseudonym). I worked on it a lot during the block lesson and the last lesson. And in the evening, I noticed that I wrote "criminal punishment" instead of "capital punishment". I got really irritated ☹ (33rd journal entry, December 22, 2011)

Gamze's being a responsible student was also acknowledged by both instructors. The following quotations illustrate her instructors' responses.

But as I said, she never shows up without doing her homework. I mean, there are times, where you can't do, make, and so forth. Maybe there were times like that but very rare. She can adapt the class well and fast. (Interview with Banu, January 20, 2012)

She is very attentive and she is one of the few who always does her homework. Sometimes even does extra work I think... Well, the unique thing about her is that on a couple of occasions she gave me an unprompted essay. One she had written herself, so extra work. She's working hard, probably harder than most of them. (Interview with Michael, December 30, 2011)

Investment was demonstrated by Gamze in several different ways such as showing personal effort, having a positive attitude toward the target language, using opportunities to practice English in and outside the classroom setting and being a responsible student. Gamze appears to want to learn English. She realizes that investing in learning English will lead to future awards (e.g., studying abroad, having an international life). Moreover, Gamze defines herself as someone who has been a responsible student since elementary school and who knows what she needs to do in order to achieve success in school (e.g., study, attend class). She does her homework, on occasion writes unprompted extra essay for class. In fact, both teachers comment on her diligence.

4.2. Lack of/Decreased investment

The second group of themes concerns the key participant's decreased investment in language learning. This group includes four recurrent themes: a) self criticism, b) frustration with low exam scores, c) negative reaction to one of the instructors, and d) disengagement with classmates and discontent with classroom atmosphere.

Self criticism

Gamze became critical of herself because she did not study as much as she thought she needed to. As the semester progressed, she knew that she needed to study. She wrote this in her language journal, "I am so behind in my lessons, I have to study" (13th journal entry, November 17, 2011). I noted this down in my researcher journal as follows: "Gamze does not study or maybe she *cannot* study, and she is well aware of it" (November 18, 2011). However, she did not study and this resulted in her being self-critical and questioning herself for the times she did not study. She asked herself why she could not study regularly or why she could not stick to her decisions.

She plans on studying in a more focused way. She constructed a seesaw, moody identity. She knew she needed to spend more effort on studying but she did not.

Quiz grade, yeah. Absolutely. It was the same while I was studying for the university entrance exam. I mean, for example, I wouldn't study. I would receive low scores from the practice tests. Then, I would study and study. I mean, it is something different for me. I mean there must be a trigger for me. I mean, I expect to get bad scores to study. I really did it. I don't know why I act like this. (4th interview, November 23, 2011)

Somehow she lost the motivation to study. Instead, because of the ennui, she did not study at all.

Before I started the week, I promised myself not to delay anything. But now, it is really hard for me to keep my promises. (24th journal entry, December 7, 2011)

The feelings of ennui and ambivalence were prevalent features in Gamze's comments while she was questioning herself.

I think my English is Tarzanian. I think I don't know... Umm, I don't feel myself competent enough for the proficiency exam (to be given at the end of the academic year). I have to improve it. I am looking for the ways to improve but I can't apply them. It is another issue... Yes, I can find methods. For example, I say I should read books to make things permanent actually. I should, yes, I should, I should read. But do I read? No. I have lots of books but I don't read them at all, I don't know. Is the time insufficient? No, but I don't know the reason why I don't. Actually, I am so eager but I just can't. It is about to be able to start. Once I start, I can read. (3rd interview, November 15, 2011)

Gamze's studying strategies seemed to be ineffective and she was critical about herself in terms of her strategies. Actually, this was what I thought as well. In one of the entries in my journal, I wrote it as follows: "She is unsuccessful in the exams maybe it is because she is rote learning. And maybe she is not even aware that she is using a wrong strategy" (November 20, 2011).

Vocabulary. Constantly vocabulary. I focused on vocabulary all the time. But I don't know enough words: I study for vocabulary, I mean I study and I learn but the second time I see the same word, I forget it. I say "What was that? What?" These all make me unhappy. I feel as if all things (the work) that I do is just a waste of time. You sit and try to learn and memorize it, but then forget. I don't know whether there is a problem with my memory or not. Or

maybe do I have to apply other methods? Actually, by reading, words are stored in mind better. (4th interview, November 23, 2011)

After a holiday break, Gamze went on blaming herself for not using her spare time efficiently.

I realized I didn't study hard and well enough. I just lay down all holiday long. I did nothing. Frankly. I had to study, but I didn't. Then I realized I don't know them all. (4th interview, November 23, 2011)

She also criticized herself for not using the spare time effectively when she was in the dormitory.

Compared to other rooms, others can study with their roommates. Their situation is different than mine. When I think about myself, I don't think I am a fully mature individual. But I am... I mean, I think I am more mature than my peers. I am not very old. Despite this, I am mature. So what I am angry about is this. Although I feel mature, I can't study just because I fit in the crowd... Then, I really got pissed off. I go to the study lounge, downstairs, to study. But sometimes I just stay in the room and I start chatting with my roommates. But I know that I should go to the study lounge and do my homework and so forth. Because I know that staying in the room will not give me anything. I know it. I am mature enough to know. But I can't sometimes (go downstairs and study). (5th interview, December 9, 2011)

Gamze's lack of personal efforts occurred to me as well. I questioned this in my researcher journal, "I feel like Gamze is not trying enough. She has sufficient free time, for example, to practice with Megan (*Gamze's Indonesian classmate who spoke little Turkish, but better English than Gamze*). I think this is a good opportunity, she can make *tandem* (*in English*) with Megan. It feels like she is not using this opportunity effectively" (November 29, 2011). Gamze's opinion that she was not good at time management was also noticeable in a later interview as the following quotation demonstrates.

...but have I improved myself? I don't think so. I had lots of free time but I didn't do anything, only went to the dormitory and slept (smiles). (7th interview, January 13, 2012)

Gamze feels that she is not good enough, she does not study enough, she does not remember enough vocabulary, she does not make enough time, she does not read

enough in English. Although, as we saw earlier, she seems to be invested in learning English, she also feels that she has not done enough to prepare for class.

Frustration with low exam scores

Gamze kept questioning herself and being judgmental after learning that she performed poorly in a recent exam. This was a source of frustration for her.

Unhappy. Because of the exam results. It is very low. Very low. Lower than I expected. Banu told me that she was not expecting this result. That made me unhappier. I just got lost. Disconnected. I questioned myself after the exam. After I learned the exam results. I investigated myself. I talked to myself aloud. I asked myself questions. Am I irresponsible? I came here (the university), don't I deserve this (being a university student)? (5th interview, December 9, 2011)

Gamze was frustrated again after receiving a low grade in another exam because she was not expecting such a low grade; that was 37 out of 100. She was very dissatisfied with the result.

When Banu saw me, she indicated she didn't expect me to get such a grade. I guess she expected much more from me. Everyone got shocked about my grade because in the class I am seen as if I was good at English. I got upset because of it. And then I got angry and wanted to study more. "Go to your dormitory and study," I said to myself; I was so ambitious. In order to increase the grade, I want to study... Everyone got high scores from Section A (of the exam) and that made me irritated. These people are getting high scores. I am going to study, too. I am going to study, search and learn as they do. I got angry and decided on this: "Go and study" (4th interview, November 23, 2011)

Likewise, Banu's opinions about Gamze showed that she had high expectations from her. Banu stated that she did not evaluate Gamze's underachievement by exam results only. For her, Gamze did not show any improvement in the lessons, either.

Gamze is moving forward less slowly than I expected. What I expected from her has always been a lot, but this was the electricity (vibe) that I received from her. For example, I have a student called Imge (pseudonym). She started from scratch. Truly from scratch so I tried to guide her. Now, she is one of the best in the class. She started at the very bottom, then she moved upwards, all the way to the top, almost. (Interview with Banu, January 20, 2012)

The most predominant feature in the interview with Banu was Gamze's being extremely "hardworking yet unsuccessful". The following quotation illustrates the point better:

Gamze has been the most interesting case in my teaching experience of 13 years! How did you find her?!!! Why? It is my first time seeing a student who attends the classes this often, who does her homework so regularly but who improves this little. Well, since she first started, she has taken maybe only one step forward. Maybe a little bit of vocabulary has improved. Grammar remains in its place. She still can't speak a lot, she participates into the classes a lot and so forth. Very interesting. She just couldn't improve. (Interview with Banu, January 20, 2012)

Gamze reflected her frustration and unhappiness in her language journal.

I am so unhappy. I wanted to start a nice week; however, grammar 55.5, listening 81. Why is this grammar like that? Why can't I just receive the benefit of my studies (why doesn't my studying pay back)? And I am really sad about it. My mean (GPA) is 60 but grammar is really upsetting. I could not focus on the lesson; I don't know what to do. I am going to talk to my elder sister. (22nd journal entry, December 5, 2011)

As a result of her frustration because of underachievement, Gamze did not want to be active in classes. This was an indicator of the decreased investment she made.

I did not want to participate in the lesson, not at all. I sat, I sat, then; I stood up when the class was over. The biggest reason of the decrease of my performance is of course the low grade that I got from the exam. (23rd journal entry, December 6, 2011)

Gamze's low exam scores seem to present a paradox. Her teachers say that she studies and does her homework and is, overall, a good student. She says that she wants to learn English and she has strategies for doing so, but she also believes that she does not study enough.

Negative reaction to one of the instructors

Another factor in Gamze's loss of interest and investment was her negative reaction to one of her instructors, Michael. Most of the time, Gamze regretted that she attended Michael's classes as she couple of times wrote it in her language journal:

"But I still went to school unwillingly. But I said I wish I hadn't gone." (18th journal

entry, November 24, 2011) in contrast “time passed faster” (24th journal entry, December 7, 2011) in Banu’s lessons in Gamze’s opinion. In addition, Gamze thought Michael’s classes did not contribute to her.

I got bored really so much and I think what we do in the class does not contribute to me at all. Nothing. The more I get bored, the less I try to understand. I just stare at Michael’s face. With empty eyes. This is what I do. I only do this. (27th journal entry, December 13, 2011)

The more Gamze thought Michael’s classes did not improve her, the more she lost connection to his lessons.

I didn’t go to school yesterday, I was late today. Last week, on Friday, Banu took Michael’s class, so this week, on Friday, I mean today it was all Michael. I got lost; I lost connection. I just gave up trying. I wish I hadn’t come. I got so bored; today did not contribute to me at all. (21st journal entry, December 2, 2011)

Gamze blamed Michael for her low motivation and decreasing concentration.

I should pull myself together in the lesson because I started to get lost towards the end of the lesson. Typical student psychology. It has nothing to do with the teachers but in my opinion it has something to do with Michael! (32nd journal entry, December 21, 2011)

Michael seemed to notice that Gamze sometimes lost her focus in the class. He described her as “sometimes seems a little bit lost in the classroom” (Interview with Michael, December 30, 2011). Since Gamze thought Michael’s classes did not contribute to her learning, she did not want to attend his classes. She already had a problem of getting up early. This issue frequently came up both in our meetings and in her journal entries. She noted that in the lessons she felt too “sleepy” to follow the flow of the instruction (7th interview, October 25, 2011) and she repeated this comment many times in different data sources. This issue caught my attention and I wrote about this in my researcher journal as well. In one of my researcher journal entries I wrote that I was surprised that she was sometimes late for school because she could not wake up, “her dormitory is close to the campus, she lives in a nearby dormitory. How come she can’t make it to school on time! Can it [her being late] be

because of something else?” (October 25, 2011). When her sleep problems were combined with her negative thoughts about Michael, she did not hesitate to miss his classes.

I didn't want to go to school getting up really early so I went to school one hour late. Particularly because it was Michael's class. (23rd journal entry, December 6, 2011)

In general, Gamze highlighted the problem of not being able to interact with Michael.

For her, as a whole class, they did not understand each other.

I don't really follow Michael's classes because he talks fast. Especially, at the beginning while I was trying to understand him, I had a lot of difficulty. I mean he talks fast for us (for our level). Normally, maybe he doesn't talk fast but of course, we, I mean, we just started (English). We hadn't studied English for a year long, last year, because of the university entrance exam and when we started (English this year) right away, we were puzzled. What does he say? Then, we got used to it gradually but still we could not fully understand him. Definitely we don't understand him, fully. That's why, there is a silence now (in the classroom). Now, he asks something, everybody looks at each other. Who is going to answer? Then, here, finally, he asked if we could get him or not. (2nd stimulated recall, October 26, 2011)

Gamze gave an example about a mutual misunderstanding that occurred between Michael and the class. Michael wanted the class to work on the exercises at the end of the unit. There were five exercises in total and he wanted them to do exercise number five in ten seconds. However, the class thought he wanted them to do all the exercises in five seconds. A misunderstanding occurred because of the use of number five in Michael's instructions.

A few days ago, something like this happened in the class. Everybody was supposed to do one exercise in 10 seconds and then give it to the person sitting next to him. Then, we are supposed to do exercise 5. He tells all of this in English, but some students misunderstood and tried to do all five exercises in ten seconds. Then he finally said “you are not going to do 5 of them. You are going to do only the 5th one. Not 5 of them” in Turkish. (2nd stimulated recall, October 26, 2011)

Gamze gave another more specific example of misunderstanding that occurred between Michael and her. She indicated her hesitation from time to time because Michael was a native speaker.

It is my first class with Michael after the break: I am sooo sleepy. I am trying to talk to him with simple sentences. There is a pronunciation difference between us and he doesn't understand me. For example, today when I said the word "vulnerable", he didn't understand me. (11th journal entry, November 15, 2011)

On the other hand, Michael said that his students had to speak English to him although they knew that he understood Turkish. They tried to understand what he was saying. They knew that he didn't speak Turkish during the class time. He thought that they felt they had to listen to him and deal with a different type of teaching. He said that when they didn't understand, he tried to be positive and encourage them by saying that they had to read before they spoke. As an instructor, he felt that they were doing fine.

They feel that they have to listen to me and answer questions deal with a different type of teaching. Sometimes there is a negative effect if they do not understand my questions. When they don't understand.... Openly. ... I try to be positive and encourage them. You have to read before you speak.... ... And they do fine. (Interview with Michael, December 30, 2011)

In a similar occasion of miscommunication, Gamze tried to say something but Michael did not hear her. Gamze thought it was either because of her inaudible voice or because of Michael's own voice – he was talking at that time. As she was viewing the videotape of the class, during a stimulated recall interview, she explained what had happened in an interaction with Michael. The videotape showed a scene in which Michael was expecting an answer from the class to his question about the relationship between people's frequent use of the computers and its effects on the people. Gamze attempted to respond to his question.

There, he [Michael] isn't listening to me. I try to make a sentence and try to say "people can't improve themselves in terms of computer skills" (*Gamze says this in Turkish*), something like that but he doesn't hear me there, yes. Umm, I try to say something like "the computer don't improve them" (*in English*). But he doesn't hear (laughs). And I don't repeat it. (2nd stimulated recall, October 26, 2011)

In the occasions when Gamze could not understand Michael, she became stressed. She was frowning in the videotape of this classroom, while writing down what was written on the board in her notebook. As we were observing the video together in the second stimulated recall meeting, she recalled the incident and explained why she was frowning: “Michael says something, at the same time I try to write down what is written on the board. Whatever he says, I already don’t understand. That’s why I’m frowning here again” (2nd stimulated recall, October 26, 2011). Gamze felt bad, as well, when she could not catch what Michael said.

Today I had a really big difficulty in understanding Michael today. I suppose I was very tired, maybe that’s why I couldn’t understand him. But when he looks directly in my eyes and talks, I feel bad because I can’t understand him. (13th journal entry, November 17, 2011)

Gamze found out a way to avoid Michael, which was “not looking at his face” because she “was afraid that he would ask [me] a question” (14th journal entry, November 18, 2011). In situations when Gamze was afraid of Michael’s asking her questions or when she did not understand him, she preferred to avoid eye contact with him.

I was late for the first lesson. Michael came to the classroom in the second lesson. He noticed my new hairstyle and he said “you have a new hair style” and I said yes. I did not understand what he said next but still I smiled ☺ I was so sleepy. Today, I didn’t get most of the things he tried to say. That’s why I didn’t look at his face on purpose ☺ (16th journal entry, November 22, 2011)

Gamze compared her instructors. In this comparison, she mentioned that Banu was approachable, whereas Michael would behave differently in a given situation. She would request for clarification from her classmates.

In class, when I don’t get anything, I ask Belemir or Megan (*the informant’s classmates*). Sometimes there are some situations that Megan cannot explain. I ask her like “what is meant here?”, she says she knows it in English, but she doesn’t know what it means in Turkish. So she cannot explain it, and then I ask Belemir. Or I get the meaning from another one from the class in Michael’s lessons. I say “what did Michael say?” I mean, if it were Banu, I could ask her what she had said, but when it comes to Michael, if I ask him

“Sir, what did you say?”, he would just stare at me. (3rd interview, November 15, 2011)

Gamze also compared Michael with Jim (pseudonym), the new instructor. Jim replaced Michael when Michael’s contract with the university was terminated. Her dislike of Michael continued when she believed she learned a word Jim taught: “For example, today in Jim’s lesson... He said a word, he said “noisy”, I don’t think I’ll forget it” (8th interview, January 18, 2012). Her dislike continued because she thought she did not improve in the skills that Michael was responsible for teaching.

In reading, I did not improve, I do not think so. For instance, it did not work with Michael, we did not make reading activities properly. He gave homework but he did not check them. Never. When he gave homework, he asked us to paraphrase the sentences. He said it was absolutely better. But we did this only for 2 days. I think it stems from the teacher. (8th interview, January 18, 2012)

Once Michael hit Gamze on the head with his book, which was a very significant occasion for her. She reacted to this negative behavior and she noted it down.

Today, I was irritated with Michael, really I am. He made fun of me for the things that I don’t know and he hit me by the head with his book, because I answered the questions in the answer-question section of the reading part incorrectly. I reacted by saying “what was it?”, he didn’t say anything but I got really really pissed off. (31st journal entry, December 20, 2011)

Gamze’s negative reaction to Michael’s behavior not only showed up in a journal entry but also in an interview that took place two weeks after the incident. In the interview, she was making overall comments considering the whole semester.

I got bored while I was listening to him. I also didn't like his mocking us. He hit my head with a book once! I got mad. I was sleepy, early in the morning; I got so frustrated. (7th interview, January 13, 2012)

Gamze shared her perception about Michael’s “mocking” them while we were watching the video recording of one of Michael’s classes toward the end of the semester. In the videotape, Michael asked Gamze for the synonym of “to achieve” to Gamze and she answered it as “success”.

The teacher asks for synonyms, (laugh) yes, he asked for them. Now I made just one mistake... Umm I have made a mistake now. I knew it would be false. I'm just making fun of... It was nonsense because of the reaction of the teacher. I'm just laughing at the reaction of the teacher because he acts as if you made the world's most nonsense and the biggest mistake. (4th stimulated recall, December 30, 2011)

One might think that perhaps Gamze had a bias against male teachers or native speaking teachers; however, a male native speaker, Jim, replaced Michael, and Gamze liked him. She comments on her positive to his use of the word "noisy", "today in Jim's lesson... he said a word, he said "noisy". I don't think I will forget it (8th interview, January 18, 2012).

Gamze does not seem to be able to learn in Michael's class. She does not understand his accent, she is fearful that he will call on her in class, she is frustrated because he does not grade their homework and does not hear her when she speaks in class.

Disengagement with classmates and discontent with classroom atmosphere

In addition to having difficulties with Michael, Gamze could not get along with her classmates, which resulted in her disengagement with the rest of the class. She constructed an identity as a "black sheep", as an outsider. I took notes about this in my researcher journal, too. In one entry, I wrote "Unlike Maria in Bashir-Ali's (2006) study, Gamze doesn't have any desire to be identified with some of her classmates" (December 25, 2011).

There is a disconnection between people in the classroom. Girls have a separate group but I generally hang out with boys because the girls do not appeal to me. For instance, when we go for a lunch, we are always together with Murat (pseudonym), Emre (pseudonym), Hakan (pseudonym) and Fatih (pseudonym). The girls' group consists of 6 or 7 people and their conversation sometimes gets boring and too much so I get annoyed and bored even in the lessons. (6th interview, December 23, 2011)

Michael, one of Gamze's instructors, found her to be a "popular" student among her classmates having a "nice personality" (Interview with Michael, December 30, 2011).

In contrast, Gamze's other instructor, Banu, agreed that Gamze did not get along with some of her classmates. In Banu's opinion, Gamze did not have a "best" friend but after she stepped back from her previous "all girls" group, she approached another rather successful and "talented" student who did not have a "best" friend either. Banu observed that Gamze changed groups and isolated herself from some of her classmates.

At the beginning, she was happier in the classroom and she was more extrovert and confident in the lessons. Now, she isolated herself a little bit. She had a group. She stepped back from that group. I don't know what happened, though. Now, they are disconnected. But I notice it in the classes that Gamze seemed upset about not getting along with the others. (Interview with Banu, January 20, 2012)

Gamze compared her current self with her previous self as a classmate. She said that, at the high school, she was a person who always had a lot of friends but now things were different at the university. As I also wrote down in my researcher journal, Gamze was angry about the fact that she could not make friends and she thought this was a bizarre situation for her (November 15, 2011). Within the class, she had some problems in terms of the class dynamics. She expressed that she just could not establish similar relationships with her classmates that she used to have at high school.

I had lots of friends from my class or from other classes. It was like that. I used to get along well with everyone. But I came here and I fell into a feeling of emptiness. There is no one around me. Then, umm, I mean everyone, plus, is it an instinct to protect yourself or not, I don't know, you really can't do the thing, you can't trust people. I think that's why I started selecting people. I mean I started thinking about them and their actions... Do you know what, I don't know anyone from other sections. I don't know, normally I am not such a person, but now I don't know anyone. (3rd interview, November 15, 2011)

She explained her feelings and insights about her classmates. She was disengaged with them. She mentioned that there were some students in her class that she found childish and immature.

I have turned into myself more than I used to. I shut myself up. I have no problems with the lessons but socially I am withdrawn, I only talk to the instructors. Yes, well, it is the truth. We will see what will happen. In the class, I will either punch someone on the nose or pull someone else's hair... I am really angry. I was not such a person. I was not such an obsessed person. It upsets me. (8th interview, January 18, 2012)

She explained the underlying reason of her disengagement with and anger to her classmates.

People in my class are so inclined to misunderstand to each other. There is such a thing. People misunderstand each other, I think. People in my class have a strong tendency to misunderstand and make fun of each other. One says something; the others make fun of him by saying something sarcastic. All this is because of grouping in the class. (8th interview, January 18, 2012)

In addition to the disengagement with her classmates, Gamze was discontent with the classroom atmosphere, and was disappointed with the university life in general. As she explicitly said, she could not get what she “expected from the university” (7th interview, January 13, 2012) and she just “could not like this university” (8th interview, January 18, 2012). Therefore, a strong feeling of “boredom” was apparent in her discourse: “It is still like high school. I got bored at school then well... I don't know...” (7th interview, January 13, 2012). She expressed her boredom and she knew she needed to overcome with it. Despite boredom, she knew she needed to attend the classes regularly because attendance was obligatory at the English language program. She knew that she would fail because of attendance problems, as two of her classmates failed couple of weeks after the semester started.

I am getting really bored at school, I don't want to come ☹ I am reactive towards the classes but there is this attendance obligation. (33rd journal entry, December 22, 2011)

During the semester, Gamze seemed to become increasingly discouraged and disengaged from her classmates and classes. Her perception of a change in her relationship with classmates is confirmed by one of her instructors, Banu.

To sum up, the amount of investment Gamze put into her language learning process decreased. She did not consistently demonstrate personal effort, she was frustrated because of low exam results, she showed a negative reaction to one of the instructors, and she was both disengaged with her classmates and discontent with classroom atmosphere.

4.3. Imagined Identity/Community

The third and the last group of themes relates to the key informant's imagined identity and the imagined community she wished to become a part of. Imagined communities are various groups or social communities that the learner envisions himself being able to join (Atkinson, 2011). Norton (2001) suggests that these communities are not immediately accessible, learners connect to them through imagination. Imagined communities provide insight into imagined identities. Two recurrent themes about imagined identity and imagined community were identified: a) sister as role model, and b) wish to study abroad.

Her sister as role model

Gamze's sister, who was six years older than she, had been a role model for her since her childhood. Gamze mentioned it multiple times in different interviews. She saw her as more hardworking, successful and ambitious.

And my role model has always been my sister. I find her hardworking. I can easily tell this. I mean, frankly... This is the truth (laughs). She is more hardworking than me. (5th interview, December 9, 2011)

Gamze admired and idolized her sister. In return, her sister constituted an imagined identity for her.

I worship my sister. I want to be like her. Her accent is great. Yes. She speaks fluently and also her accent is just great. I worship her. (3rd interview, November 15, 2011)

She talked about an incident that happened while they were traveling abroad. She mentioned how her sister took care of the situation.

We had maps and everything when we went to Rome. But we had some difficulty in finding a hotel around the terminal. In Italy, a few people know English. They certainly try to help. For example, we asked someone whose English was very bad but he tried to help us and he even offered to go with us and look for together. We searched the hotel together and found it. Of course, my sister asked all the questions in Rome, I certainly could not handle it. (9th interview, February 8, 2012)

For Gamze, her sister was a source of reference. When she needed advice, she wanted to consult her.

I can't focus on the classes. I don't know what to do. I am going to talk to my sister. (22nd journal entry, December 5, 2011)

Wish to study abroad

Gamze wished to become an Erasmus program exchange student and she also had a desire to be accepted by a study abroad program as a graduate student.

After this, when I finish this intensive English language program, I will study Political Sciences and International Relations. In addition, I want to have a master's degree on it, so I definitely need to learn a foreign language. I want to attend Erasmus Program and again I need to learn English. I have to use it in lots of fields. I need not one but two languages in order to improve myself, even more than two. So, I need English. (1st interview, October 27, 2011)

She repeated her desire in a further interview: "I want to go to Erasmus. I will do it, for sure" (8th interview, January 18, 2012). She shared this desire and target of hers with her sister's roommate.

I searched which schools our university had agreement for Erasmus program that day and Nelly asked me if I was thinking about that program. I said I was actually thinking of it and I just looked at the details that day. She asked in which countries the program was available. (9th interview, February 8, 2012)

Even though Gamze displayed a strong desire to study abroad and to be part of that community, interestingly she did not attend a meeting about study abroad programs.

She demonstrated a seesaw identity once more.

There was a meeting yesterday but I did not go. From 9 to 11. Then, there was teachers' meeting. Between 12 and 1 (p.m.), they said that they are going to have a one-hour class. But I didn't go to the meeting, I signed the attendance and left. (*Incomprehensible*) because I was so sleepy in the morning number one, secondly I said to myself 'am I going to endure this for one hour?' As far as I understood, it was not something really necessary. I think it was

something about studying abroad. They make you work and so forth. It did not take make attention so much. (10th interview, February 15, 2012)

On the one hand, Gamze appeared to want to study abroad but on the other she did not attend the study abroad meeting. It seems that something was stopping her from becoming a member of her imagined community.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

To understand Gamze's investment in English and the relationship between identity and language learning, it is important to understand her imagined community and the role of her sister in her life. Gamze's primary reason for learning English was to become a member of a community of internationals who speak English, can study abroad and can negotiate interactions in many countries (not merely English-speaking countries). Her sister was a member of such a community and Gamze worshipped her, saying "I want to be like her. Her accent is great. She speaks fluently and also her accent is just great" (3rd interview, November 15, 2011).

Although Gamze was disappointed that she had to take a year of English before beginning her degree program, she appeared to invest in English at the beginning of the semester. She watched TV programs, listened to the BBC on the radio, read English newspapers and books, listened to music in English and she spoke English with an Indonesian friend. Often she relied on her sister's suggestions, "my sister emails me these things in order to make me aware of the things in the world" (2d interview, November 2, 2011). Her sister also gave her the books she was reading in English.

Gamze's investment in this imaginary community of English speakers motivated her to try to do well in her English classes. According to both herself and her instructors, she consistently turned her homework in on time and she spoke and contributed in class. This effort did not, however, always translate into successful

exam scores. Both Gamze and her instructors were often surprised by her low scores and did not understand why she did not do better.

When she was in Germany visiting her sister, she occasionally spoke English with her sister's friends, but she was also reluctant to speak. She explained that she was, at times, too shy to speak and was afraid of making mistakes. In fact, Gamze was also critical of herself for other reasons. She felt she did not study enough, that she could not remember vocabulary, that she got sleepy while studying and in class, and that she was lazy and bored. Also affecting her investment was Michael, an instructor whom she did not like. In the beginning of the semester, she was friendly with other female students but as the semester went on, she distanced herself from them.

From a poststructural point of view, identity is dynamic, fragmented, contradictory, and multi-faceted. We can argue that Gamze's identity as a language learner appears to be both dynamic and contradictory. At times she was almost enthusiastic about learning English and at other times she was despondent and felt she could not learn. At the beginning of the semester, English was a goal that she appeared to work for willingly, which she saw English as part of her identity and as something internal to herself. In her imagined community, she saw her identity as 'an English language speaker' and a 'member of an English speaking community'. Gamze appeared to have an imagined identity and she wanted to be part of the imagined community. However, there was something keeping her or something was stopping her from becoming a member of her imagined community. However, as time went by, she started seeing English as a tool to enter her profession, something external to her. It became something *used by* her instead of something *of* her. What was going on with Gamze? She seemed to be invested in English, she studied, turned in her homework but did not do well on quizzes and exams.

It is easy to oversimplify the post-structural perspective of language learning as investment + imaginary community = effective language learning. In looking at Norton (2000), however, we see multiple factors that complicate this equation. Although all five of her participants have imaginary communities of English speakers that they would like to belong to, they ran into many obstacles. Because her participants were in Canada, they had expected to be able to interact with native English speakers but when they tried to interact, they were often rejected by them. They were ignored, seen as nuisances, and also negatively labeled as “immigrants”. Therefore, they had little opportunity for linguistic input. They also had difficulty to finding jobs. Eva found a job in a fast food restaurant, performing the lowest job, cleaning the restaurant and removing the garbage. Once they found jobs, they were often humiliated by their colleagues and sometimes even by their teachers. One of the participant’s teachers insulted her country and culture. Another made fun of a participant’s desire to take a computer course.

Gamze was in a foreign language setting and did not encounter many of the obstacles that Norton’s participants did. However, from her perspective, she did encounter different difficulties such as difficulty with one of her instructors, being upset about needing to take English, and feelings about not being as good as her sister. Like two of Norton’s participants, she also had trouble with a teacher. She strongly believed that Michael was not contributing to her language learning. He did not correct homework, he did not teach writing well, spending very little time on paraphrasing, he would not repeat himself and he spoke very quickly, and he would only speak in English.

The other difficulty was that Gamze was upset about needing to take one-year-long English course. She did not want to spend time and invest enough in the learning

process. She wanted to wake up and start to magically speak English. She wanted to wake up as owning the language, in her imagined identity. She saw the English program as a waste of time and she got “bored” from time to time.

A final difficulty for Gamze was her feelings about not being as good as her sister. At times Gamze compares herself to her sister; Gamze is the poor language learner who did not measure up to her sister, the good language learner. It may be that Gamze’s identity as a “less than” little sister was hindering her English development. Her anxiety about speaking perfectly might have come from her comparison of herself with her sister. Her self-criticism coupled with her low test scores. It may be that Gamze’s low test scores were an unconscious act to show her family (who want her to speak English) that they were right, she was not as good as her sister. It might have been that unconsciously she did not want to be like her sister and by not doing well in her English courses was a way; she was indirectly signaling her desires to her family. Again, as Block (2006) notes, there is much we do not know when trying to understand student behavior. Hirano (2009) hypothesized that learners’ “learning difficulty would also be affected by how they perceive themselves (i.e., their identity)” (p. 34). Gamze’s identity is composed of a person who is not as good as her sister. If her self-perception is that she is not a good language learner, then she cannot/will not be a good language learner. She develops her identity around the thematic context as far as her English language use.

How do we explain Gamze’s mediocre performance, often poor, in class? I would like to offer one possible explanation. Block (2006) discusses the case of Silvia. Silvia is discontent in class, in part, because she is in a less powerful position than the teacher. The teacher is, after all, “just a teacher” (p. 45). The teacher, the

object of Silvia's desires and efforts, is resented by Silvia. In an attempt to analyze Silvia's situation, Block draws on the work of Granger (2004). For Granger,

There is a conflict between 'taking in' [a teacher] and rejecting [her] [which] is rooted in the ambivalence of the learner's desire to [align with the teacher] and to refuse [aligning with the teacher] (p. 45-46)

It is possible that Gamze was angry and frustrated at having to take a year of English. She is resentful of Michael, perhaps both because he is a mediocre teacher but he also represents something she wants: English. This ambivalence between not wanting to be in the English program in general and not wanting to be in Michael's class in particular and yet, at the same time wanting to know English, has caused an inner conflict for her.

This type of analysis is getting close to psychology and to psychoanalysis and Block (2006) makes clear that he is not a trained or competent psychoanalyst. In an attempt to understand the reasons or background of students' behaviors, there is much that we cannot see or know. Block admits as much, saying, "I do not know" (p. 46) when contemplating answers about Silvia.

It is a fact that there are millions of students are sitting in English classes and learning English all over the world (Graddol, 2006). However, in most of the cases, a great majority of these students do not become adequate speakers/writers of English. In case of students' not being successful language learners, teachers refer to students as lazy, unprepared, and unmotivated. However, human beings are a lot more complex than that. An unmotivated learner does not continuously remain so. Teachers sometimes refer to the problem of being unmotivated, having learning difficulty and the like as an unchanging, stable learner characteristic precluding pedagogical action (Hirano, 2009). By labeling students as problematic or assigning these characteristics to students as intrinsic to them, teachers do not feel obliged to use alternative

classroom practices to help those students. Not only by looking at the tip but also seeing the iceberg underneath, teachers should focus on the learner identity and use pedagogical practices that aim at developing a stronger sense of competence in the learner and the reconstruction of learner identity.

Learner identity construction in educational settings is founded on participation in learning-oriented activities (Coll & Falsafi, 2011). Learners are more active if they are involved in activities in which they can share their own stories. This leads to their growth as individual learners with differing identities. Learner identity mediates the individual learner's processes of meaning making, sense making, and his or her attributions in his or her own learning. Thus, learners need more guidance to become aware of their identities. Learners might develop and change identities affected by outer environment. The reasons that trigger this change are important because identity has effects on the second/foreign language improvement and performance (e.g., McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 1995).

In addition, learners' identity must be understood not only in terms of their investment in the 'real' world but also in terms of their investment in possible, imagined worlds. The voice of the learners should be heard and listened to before excluding them from the 'real' world, classroom activities. Learners' investments should be recognized as an integral part of the second language curriculum and methods should engage the identities of learners in different ways. If the imagined communities of the learners are not acknowledged, the nonparticipation of the learners may be increased. At this point, this is the teachers' duty to encourage learners to think of themselves as living in different, multiple communities, including not only the classroom but also the imagined communities.

As the role of imagination should be considered, so are the interactions. Learners can be engaged in different and critical interactions with peers and the teacher, like Hari in Day's (2002) study. Powerful empowerment from the teacher can encourage learners to contribute to their learning. In contrast, lack of empowerment from the teacher can discourage learners, like Gamze. Since learners' identity construction or 'self-searching of identity' (Day, 2002, p. 5) is accomplished by interactions, the type and amount of interactions and positions by the interactions require particular attention.

The results of this study suggest that students' relationship with English learning is a complicated phenomenon, involving expectations from family members, expectations about self, conflicting feelings/thoughts about English, seeing someone as a role-model that turns out to be perfect and unattainable, lack of self-awareness of the learner (Bayyurt & Sifakis, in print), lack of self-knowledge and/or potential as a learner, the role that formal classroom setting plays in identity construction. To this end, teachers should broaden their understanding of pedagogic practices embracing learners' identity formation as well as their classroom performance and improvement. Similarly, teachers should acknowledge the complex relationship between language learning and learner identity and they need to develop an understanding of their students' investment in the target language and their changing identities. They should look beyond the classroom when assessing the learners. I strongly believe that findings of this single case study can be extrapolated to other EFL/ESL situations. This study has shown that by trying to build a bridge between the classroom context and the outside world, teachers can come to an understanding that learners' experiences and external factors affect their identity deeply reflected in their classroom behavior.

APPENDIX A

Institution's Consent Letter

..../...../2011

Dear Head of Foreign Languages Department,

I am an instructor at ... University. At the same time, I am a doctoral student at Boğaziçi University. In Spring 2011, I will begin my dissertation research, which focuses on foreign language learning experience and the Construction of identity. This research study will be useful for gaining deeper insights into learner identity and language learning in English-as-a-foreign-language contexts.

I am going to collect data through video recordings of an advance level English language classroom and interviews with one selected student and his/her instructors. The duration of the research is five months – from September 2011 to February 2012. The data and materials collected for the purposes of this study will be confidential and the names of the participating student and instructors will not be reported throughout the study. At the end of the study, I will share the results of the study with your institution.

I would appreciate if you will be kind enough to help me in this issue.

Sincerely,

Pınar Ersin

PhD Candidate at the Foreign Language Education Department,

Boğaziçi University, İstanbul, Turkey.

APPENDIX B

Background Survey

Purpose of the survey: I am a doctoral student at the Department of Foreign Language Education at Boğaziçi University and I am currently preparing my dissertation on foreign language learning experience and the construction of identity. This survey is part of my study. It will neither affect your school grades nor will be shared with your instructors. The results of this survey will remain confidential and will be used only by me, the researcher, for the research purposes. Thank you for your participation. Pınar Ersin.

Part I: Your Background

Please provide the following information about yourself.

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. High school you graduated from: _____
4. Nationality: _____
5. Your first language: _____
6. Your second language (if any): _____
7. Your hometown: _____
8. Where you live in İstanbul (Please circle the relevant option):
 - a) in a dormitory
 - b) in a flat by yourself
 - c) in a flat with flat-mates
 - d) in a flat with family
 - e) other (please specify) _____
9. Your major/department: _____
10. Contact information:
 - a) e-mail address (if any): _____
 - b) home phone number (if any): _____

c) cell phone number (if any): _____

Part II: Survey

Please answer the following questions.

1. How long have you studied English? _____
2. Do you use English outside the classroom? _____
3. If yes, how often do you use English outside the classroom? (Please circle the relevant option):
Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always
4. In what situations do you use English outside the classroom?

5. With whom do you use English outside the classroom?

6. Give a specific example of when or who you use English with outside the classroom.

7. Would you be interested in participating a research project, which will last for one semester? _____
 - a) There will be a total of 10 (ten) interviews during the semester at a place that is convenient to you.
 - b) You will keep a language journal.
 - c) You will be videotaped 4 (four) times in your classroom.

Note: If you participate, the benefits you will get will be:

- a) to learn more about yourself,
- b) to have opportunities to improve your English,
- c) to receive a gift certificate.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

APPENDIX C

Kişisel Bilgiler Anketi

Anketin amacı: Ben Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi bölümünde doktora öğrencisiyim ve şu anda yabancı dil öğrenme deneyimi ve kimlik yapılanması üzerine doktora tezimi hazırlıyorum. Bu anket tez çalışmamın bir parçasıdır. Bu ankete verdiğiniz yanıtlar ders notlarınızı hiç etkilemeyecektir ve sonuçlar hocalarınızla paylaşılmayacaktır. Çıkacak olan sonuçlar gizli tutulacaktır ve yalnızca benim tarafımdan bu tezin amacı doğrultusunda kullanılacaktır. Katılımınız için teşekkür ederim. Pınar Ersin.

Bölüm I: Kişisel Bilgiler

Lütfen kişisel bilgilerinizle ilgili aşağıdaki soruları yanıtlayınız.

1. Yaşınız: _____
2. Cinsiyetiniz: _____
3. Mezun olduğunuz lise: _____
4. Milliyetiniz: _____
5. İlk diliniz: _____
6. İkinci diliniz (eğer varsa): _____
7. Nereli olduğunuz: _____
8. İstanbul'da nerede yaşadığınız (Lütfen size uyan seçeneği işaretleyiniz):
 - a) yurttan
 - b) evde, tek başınıza
 - c) evde, arkadaşlarınızla
 - d) evde, ailenizle
 - e) diğer (lütfen açıklayınız): _____
9. Bölümünüz: _____
10. İletişim bilgileriniz:
 - a) e-mail adresiniz (eğer varsa): _____
 - b) ev telefon numaranız (eğer varsa): _____
 - c) cep telefon numaranız (eğer varsa): _____

Bölüm II: Anket

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları yanıtlayınız.

1. Ne kadar zamandır İngilizce öğrenmektesiniz? _____
2. Sınıf dışında İngilizce kullanıyor musunuz? _____
3. Eğer evet ise, İngilizce'yi sınıf dışında ne kadar sıklıkta kullanıyorsunuz? (Lütfen size uyan seçeneği işaretleyiniz).
Hiçbir zaman Nadiren Bazen Sık sık Her zaman
4. İngilizce'yi sınıf dışında hangi durumlarda kullanıyorsunuz?

5. İngilizce'yi sınıf dışında kimle ya da kimlerle kullanıyorsunuz?

6. İngilizce'yi sınıf dışında ne zaman ya da kimle/kimlerle kullandığınızı anlatan bir örnek veriniz.

7. Bir yarıyıl sürecektek olan bir araştırma projesine katılmak ister misiniz?

- a) Bir yarıyıl boyunca size uygun olan bir yerde toplam 10 (on) tane yüz yüze görüşme yapılacaktır.
- b) Bir dil günlüğü tutacaksınız.
- c) Sınıfınızda, toplam 4 (dört) kez görsel kaydınız yapılacaktır.

Not: Eğer bu araştırma projesine katılırsanız, kazançlarınız şunlar olacaktır:

- a) kendiniz hakkında daha fazla şey öğrenmek,
- b) İngilizce'nizi geliştirmek için olanaklara sahip olmak,
- c) bir hediye kuponu kazanmak.

BU ANKETİ DOLDURMAK İÇİN ZAMAN AYIRDIĞINIZ İÇİN
TEŞEKKÜR EDERİM.

APPENDIX D

Informant's Consent Form

I AM BEING ASKED TO READ THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL TO ENSURE THAT I AM INFORMED OF THE NATURE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY AND OF HOW I WILL PARTICIPATE IN IT, IF I CONSENT TO DO SO. SIGNING THIS FORM WILL INDICATE THAT I HAVE BEEN SO INFORMED AND THAT I GIVE MY CONSENT.

Purpose

This study is being conducted by the researcher, Pınar Ersin, as her PhD dissertation. The purpose of the study is to explore foreign language learning experience and the construction of identity.

Procedures

By agreeing to participate, I consent to the following activities:

- *keeping a language journal,
- *participating to 10 (ten) interviews when I am available,
- *being audio-recorded during the interviews,
- *being video-recorded in 4 (four) lessons.

Confidentiality

My name will only be known to the researcher. All references to me in conference presentations, papers, and articles will be used as a pseudonym. Only the researcher will have access to the videotapes and audiotapes produced by my participation in this study. I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time; if I do so, all video tapes and audio tapes on which I appear will be destroyed.

Contacts

If I have additional questions about the research, I can contact the researcher as follow:

Pınar Ersin, persin@marmara.edu.tr, 0532 XXX XX XX.

Use of Research

I give the researcher permission to use material from my consultation and interview as follows and have initiated those uses to which I agree.

_as data to be analyzed and reported in dissertation,
_as transcribed data to be presented in papers at professional conferences,
_as transcribed data in articles to be published in academic and professional journals.

I may withdraw permission for any or all of the above uses at any time and for whatever reason.

Authorization

Before giving my consent by signing this form, the methods, inconveniences, risks, and benefits have been explained to me and my questions have been answered. I may ask questions at any time and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without causing bad feelings. New information developed during the course of this study, which may affect my willingness to continue in this research project will be given to me as it becomes available. I do not give up any of my legal rights by signing this form. A copy of this signed consent form will be given to me.

Name and Surname _____ Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX E

Instructors' Consent Form

I AM BEING ASKED TO READ THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL TO ENSURE THAT I AM INFORMED OF THE NATURE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY AND OF HOW I WILL PARTICIPATE IN IT, IF I CONSENT TO DO SO. SIGNING THIS FORM WILL INDICATE THAT I HAVE BEEN SO INFORMED AND THAT I GIVE MY CONSENT.

Purpose

This study is being conducted by the researcher, Pınar Ersin, as her PhD dissertation. The purpose of the study is to explore foreign language learning experience and the construction of identity.

Procedures

By agreeing to participate, I consent to the following activities:

- *participating to 1 (one) interview when I am available,
- *being audio-recorded during the interviews.
- *being video-recorded in 2 (two) lessons.

Confidentiality

My name will only be known to the researcher. All references to me in conference presentations, papers, and articles will be used as a pseudonym. Only the researcher will have access to the videotapes and audiotapes produced by my participation in this study. I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time; if I do so, all video tapes and audio tapes on which I appear will be destroyed.

Contacts

If I have additional questions about the research, I can contact the researcher as follow:

Pınar Ersin, persin@marmara.edu.tr, 0532 XXX XX XX.

Use of Research

I give the researcher permission to use material from my consultation and interview as follows and have initiated those uses to which I agree.

_as data to be analyzed and reported in dissertation,
_as transcribed data to be presented in papers at professional conferences,
_as transcribed data in articles to be published in academic and professional journals.

I may withdraw permission for any or all of the above uses at any time and for whatever reason.

Authorization

Before giving my consent by signing this form, the methods, inconveniences, risks, and benefits have been explained to me and my questions have been answered. I may ask questions at any time and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without causing bad feelings. New information developed during the course of this study, which may affect my willingness to continue in this research project will be given to me as it becomes available. I do not give up any of my legal rights by signing this form. A copy of this signed consent form will be given to me.

Name and Surname _____ Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX F

Samples of semi-structured interview questions:

1. Could you tell me when you started learning English?
2. Could you tell me when you started learning English?
3. Could you describe a typical school day of yours at the university campus?
4. Could you describe an English lesson of yours?
5. Can you tell me what you do here at the English language program?
6. For what occasions do you use English outside the classroom?
7. Can you tell me about any specific speaking event of yours that you can think of and that recently happened in the classroom?
8. Can you tell me about any specific speaking event of yours that you can think of and that recently happened outside the classroom?
9. If I give you a sentence, how would you complete it? “I know English and ...”

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