THE IMPACT OF PAST LEARNING EXPERIENCES UPON THE STUDENTS' INHIBITORY LANGUAGE LEARNING BEHAVIOURS

GEÇMİŞ ÖĞRENME YAŞANTILARININ ÖĞRENCİLERİN KISITLAYICI DİL ÖĞRENME DAVRANIŞLARINA ETKİSİ

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Abstract

Language learning is not an easy process. It contains diverse variables within itself. As different individuals, students bring different features from their past into the context of current learning. These features shape their perspectives, feelings and personal theories as regards learning. One of these experiences constitutes the concept of inhibition resulting from an anxious attitude towards language learning, which holds a great place within the context of language learning. The level of anxiety-based inhibition plays a big role in determining students' success in language. Hence, the influence of students' past learning experiences upon their inhibitory language learning behaviours related with anxiety was explored in this study. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was administered to 45 freshmen students studying in Food Engineering Department at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University. Later, 10 students from the same group were interviewed to elicit their past experiences as regards foreign language learning. It was found that students seem to show inhibition in their speaking skill since they possess anxiety in speech, which stems from the fact that they lack practice in that domain. Their past experiences affected their stance towards language to a certain extent; however, they are open to change because university education has a positive effect on their perspectives on language learning. The study suggests that establishment of psychologically secure environment with positive and enjoyable atmosphere has a role in reducing their fear of language and fostering their eagerness to learn.

Key Words: Inhibitory Behaviours, Anxiety, Past Learning Experiences, Freshmen

Özet

Dil öğrenme kolay bir süreç değildir; içerisinde farklı değişkenleri barındırır. Farklı bireyler olarak, öğrenciler şu anki öğrenme ortamlarına geçmişten birçok özellik taşırlar. Bu özellikler, onların öğrenme ile ilgili bakış açılarını, duygularını ve kişisel teorilerini şekillendirir. Bu deneyimlerden bir tanesi de dil öğrenimindeki kaygıdan kaynaklanan kısıtlama kavramıdır. Endişe temelli kısıtlamanın seviyesi öğrencilerin dildeki başarılarını belirlemede büyük bir rol oynar. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmada, öğrencilerin geçmiş öğrenme yaşantılarının, kaygı ile bağlantılı kısıtlayıcı dil öğrenme davranışlarına etkisi incelenmiştir. Osmaniye Korkut Ata Üniversitesi'nde Gıda Mühendisliği Bölümünde okuyan 45 birinci sınıf öğrencisine Dil Sınıfı Kaygı Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Daha sonra, geçmiş öğrenme deneyimlerini ortaya çıkarmak için aynı

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gruptan 10 öğrenci ile sözlü görüşme yapılmıştır. Öğrencilerin, kaygılarından dolayı konuşma becerisinde kısıtlama gösterdikleri bulunmuştur, ki bu da konuşma alanındaki pratik eksikliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Geçmiş öğrenme yaşantıları dile karşı tutumlarını bir dereceye kadar etkilemiş; ancak, üniversite eğitimi bakış açılarında olumlu bir etki bıraktığı için değişime açık oldukları bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, psikolojik olarak güvenli bir ortamın oluşturulmasının, öğrencilerin dil korkularını azaltmada ve öğrenme isteğini arttırmada rol oynadığı saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kısıtlayıcı Davranışlar, Kaygı, Geçmiş Öğrenme Yaşantıları, Birinci Sınıf Öğrencileri

INTRODUCTION

Learning is not a one-dimensional process, and learners' personal traits influence this process in positive or negative ways. *"Personality can be conceived as stable traits or qualities in a person, as more dynamic moods that are related to the cognitive processing of emotions, or even as dispositions that have been learned through social experience"* (Ortega, 2013, p.193) As Marland and Edwards (1986) suggest, student thinking provides an insight into how teaching process influences the learning process students get through. Therefore, *"examining cognitive factors that are predictive of L2 learning success can help to illuminate the mechanisms that underlie the learning process."* (Kempe and Brooks, 2011, p.15). However, this process involves not only cognitive but also some affective factors. *"Affect refers to emotions, feelings and attitudes that individuals bring to the learning experience and the role these play in motivation* (Dörnyei, 2001, Hurd, 2008 in Valdivia, McLoughlin and Mynard, 2011, p.91). Therefore, affection gives shape to learning, and as Kim, Park and Cozart (2014) assert, when students have the sense of hopelessness their learning process easily ceases. Referring Isen (2000), Levine and Pizzarro (2004), the authors add that positive feelings such as enjoyment contributes to flexible usage of cognitive strategies and productivity while negative feelings paves the way for rigid use of strategies. One of these affective factors is inhibition in language learning, which stems from the sense of anxiety.

Inhibition

In general sense, inhibition means a feeling that makes one nervous and embarrassed, and unable to relax or behave in a natural way (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2000). Brown (1987, p.103) views inhibition as *"sets of defences to protect the ego."* Considering the inhibition from the perspective of language learning, it can be said that it is the state of nervousness, anxiety and shyness during the learning process. A learner who has inhibition withdraws himself from the activities done in the classroom. Because of the nervousness, he hesitates to answer, thus quits participating in the lesson. It is the negative affective factor in language learning. It gets in the way of success in learning. However, it does not stand alone; it is interrelated with other affective factors such as motivation, self-efficacy and self-confidence.

Inhibition, as written in its definition, has a close relation with nervousness and anxiety. When learners feel nervous and anxious, they begin to develop inhibition against language learning. That is to say, negative feelings result in the state of inhibition. Nervousness, and thus inhibition makes learner get far from learning. For this reason, it is worth saying that there is a parallel with language anxiety and inhibition. Higher level of anxiety induces more inhibition. Similarly, there is a close bond between inhibition and self-confidence/self-esteem. Learners with low self-confidence and self-esteem have greater tendency to become inhibited during the learning process. Mohseni and Ameri (2010) suggest that inhibition presents itself when the learner wishes to protect his self-esteem. However, their correlation is negative, unlike the relationship with anxiety. That is to say, more self-confidence and

self-esteem leads to less inhibition. Likewise, less inhibited learners are good risk-takers. They are willing to involve in the lesson without the fear of making mistakes. Lightbown and Spada (2003) state that inhibition deters risk-taking, which is required for improvement in language learning, and they remark that it constitutes a problem for adults since they are more self-conscious than young learners. However, inhibition gets in the way of these positive feelings. That is why it is better to prevent inhibition due to the fact that inhibitions affect language learning negatively, thus hamper success in language learning.

Inhibition constitutes an obstacle to language learning. It causes students not to involve in the lesson. Because of shyness and nervousness, students get reluctant to be an active participant in the lesson. This may cause students not to take pleasure out of learning a language. Therefore, they gradually become isolated from the learning process. They build guards to keep themselves safe and stay in isolation. It is closely related to Affective Filter Hypothesis by Krashen (1985, cited in McLaughlin,1987 p.51): *"...comprehensible input may not be utilized by second-language acquirers if there is a mental block that prevents them from fully profiting from it. The affective filter acts a barrier to acquisition..."* Similarly, inhibition hampers language acquisition. Inhibited students get so busy with the feelings of nervousness and shyness that they cannot absorb what they have been taught. They close the way for the input to enter. So, they have difficulty in producing the language. As a matter of fact, all these feelings are like vicious cycle.

Inhibition can be overcome by building psychologically secure environments. The sense of security makes students feel more relaxed during the learning process. In view of the fact that inhibition and self-confidence/esteem are related with each other, students should be supported to develop positive feelings about themselves. As Croft (1980) states:

> *"...the natural factors which will induce ego flexibility and lower inhibitions are those conditions which make the learner less anxious, make him feel accepted and make him form positive identification with the speakers of the target language (p. 239)*

All in all, inhibition hampers the success in language learning. Rather than keeping learner safe, it makes language learning more difficult for learners. Hence, when teachers establish positive environment in the classroom, respect students as an individual, show them making mistakes is natural, and good for learning, help them develop positive feelings and attitudes, teachers can pave the way for prevention of inhibition, thus effective teaching and learning.

Anxiety

Anxiety occupies an important place within language learning context since it forms one of the significant affective factors in learning which add a different dimension to the process. The sense of anxiety presents itself in the case of fear and concern. *"Anxiety is a state of undirected arousal following the perception of threat."* (Ohman, 1993 cited in Power and Dalgleish, 2003, p.206). According to Oatley and Johnson-Laird's Theory (1987) anxiety results from the general goal of self-preservation being threatened (Power and Dalgleish, 2003). Power and Dalgleish also refer to Beck's model relating to anxiety and state:

Anxiety-prone individuals possess latent danger schemata which contain information about danger and fear and can lead the individual to view and interpret the world in a

distorted, danger-related way. In the presence of a stressor, such danger schemata can become activated and the individual is seemingly locked within this distorted, anxiety-laden conception of existence (p.192).

Anxiety stems from the presence of threat or unfavourable thoughts. There are different types of anxiety. One of them is *trait anxiety*, which can be described as an individual's possibility of getting anxious in any situation (Spielberger, 1983 cited in MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). It is not context specific. In contrast, *state anxiety* presents itself at a particular moment in a time (Spielberger, 1983 cited in MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). Daly (1991) also adds other kinds of anxiety such as *communication anxiety*, which refers to concern experienced during verbal interaction, and Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) mention *fear of negative evaluation*, which implies the worry individuals feel about what other people will think of them (cited in Andrade and Williams, 2009). According to the study carried out by Aydın (2008) with Turkish EFL learners, fear of negative evaluation constitutes a strong source of anxiety. However, anxiety does not stand alone. It is multi-dimensional and associated with different aspects like cognition and behaviour. They complete one another, and "the relations among anxiety, cognition and behaviour are best seen as recursive or cyclical" (Leary, 1990, Levitt, 1980 cited in MacIntrye, 1995). To manifest it better, MacIntrye provides a figure of this relation:
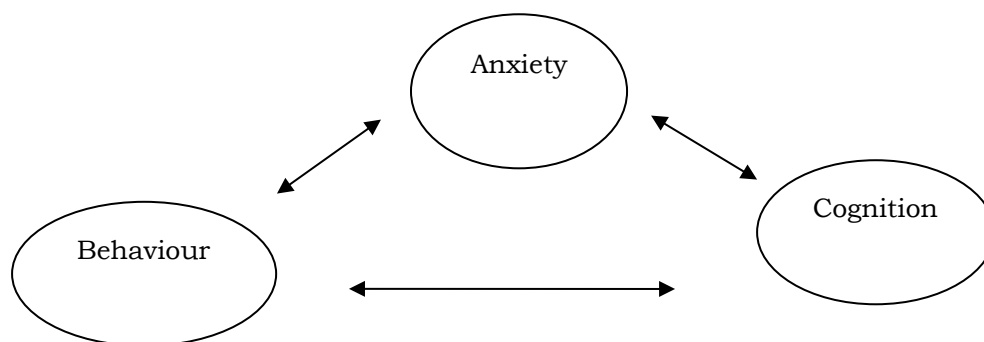

Figure 1. *The Interaction among Anxiety, Behaviour and Cognition*

When it comes to language learning, students' anxious cognitions lead to restricted behaviours. As Horwitz (2010) suggests, anxiety inhibits learning and production of a second language (SL). Von Werde (2003:1) refers to Krashen's (1985a, 1985b) notion that anxiety inhibits learner's skill to "process incoming language and short-circuits the process of acquisition", and she adds that an interaction is often found among anxiety, task difficulty, and ability, which interferes at the input, processing, retrieval, and at the output level. If anxiety impairs cognitive function, students who are anxious may learn less and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned.

Cognitive biases in anxiety is also related with social threat, which refers to being ignored, insecure, indecisive and humiliated, ashamed, despised (Power and Dalgleish, 2003). In accordance with this, Djigunovic (2006:11) asserts that anxiety arousal is thought to be associated with self-related thought that compete with task-related thoughts for cognitive resources. Due to the fact that information processing capacity in humans is limited, the self-related cognition emerges as a distracter or hindrance during cognitive performance.

Moreover, serious language anxiety may lead to other problems with self-confidence, self-esteem and risk-taking skill, and finally hinders proficiency in second language (Crookall and Oxford, 1991 cited in von Werde, 2003). To reduce this inhibitive effect, anxiety should be taken into consideration in learning process. *"For many learners, success and perseverance in foreign language learning to a large extent depends both on the teacher's ability to minimize the debilitating effects of classroom anxiety and the learners' ability to cope with the anxiety that cannot be prevented or avoided"* (Andrade and Williams, 2009: 4). As a consequence, solution to anxiety will lay the foundations for fruitful process in second language learning.

Past Learning Experiences

Past gives shape to future. What is experienced in the past has a role in identifying the current points of view. It gains importance in educational context, as well. Alves (2008: 6) propounds that People obtain their sense of self-esteem from past experiences with others and exterior world. Self-esteem or self-confidence related to a language learning experience may be regarded as a specific self-esteem which encompasses the acquisition of language in general and/or task self-esttem when considering one particular aspect of the process.

It is as much important as teaching methods used in the classroom (Bailey, 1983 cited in Çakar, 2009). Çakar (2009: 23) quotes Wittrock (1977) that *"learners, especially their prior experiences, backgrounds, abilities, are crucially important in the equations for predicting learning"*. Students' past experiences may present them a direction. Past learning experiences are likely to determine the language learning beliefs (Fujiwara, 2012). Various language learning experiences have an impact upon students' thinking and behaviours as regards second and foreign language learning (Nakayama, Heffernan, Matsumoto and Hiromori, 2012). The nature of these experiences is certainly of great importance. Positive and negative memories influence learners' perceptions in different fashions. As Clark (2000) proposes, learners with good experiences will participate in the learning process with more positive attitudes than those with negative ones. Heiserman (2008) also touches upon the effect of past experiences on students' attitudes, and recommends encouraging students to voice their views and feelings about education so as to achieve a fruitful teaching beforehand. What language teachers do in the classroom goes on to shape students' thoughts and expectations about learning (Mori, 1999 cited in Sawir, 2005); thus, each experience students have in the classroom influences their stance towards learning a language. Consequently, gaining information about learners' past experiences without judging them negatively will enable teachers to restructure the second language lesson consciously and efficiently.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study descriptive research design was conducted. Impacts of past learning experiences upon students' inhibitory behaviours in learning target language were dwelled upon. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered from students sequentially. Quantitative data represent the statistical analysis of the questionnaire while qualitative side constitutes the interpretation of the interview results. Interview was conducted after obtaining questionnaire findings. Quantitative data were subjected to the content analysis. Through this study answers to the following questions were looked for:

- ✓ What is the anxiety level of freshman EFL students?

- ✓ How do freshman EFL students describe their past learning experiences in English?

✓ To what extent do past experiences influence their anxiety-based inhibitory behaviours in language class?

Participants

Freshmen students at the Food Engineering Department constituted the participants of the study. Since they mention their past experiences in relation to their learning patterns, complain about lack of background knowledge, get accustomed to conventional teaching and newly start university education, freshmen students were chosen in this study so as to reveal their perceptions about the role of their past experiences in their current learning behaviours, particularly inhibitory ones, that is why students were selected through purposive sampling.

Table 1.
Demographic Backgrounds of the Participants

		N	%
Gender	Female	27	60
	Male	18	40
Length of Previous English Study	Never	5	11.1
	Less than 1 year	1	2.2
	1-3 years	22	48.9
	4-6 years	9	20
	7 and above	8	17.8
High School Type	General high school	29	64.4
	Vocational high school	0	0
	Anatolian high school	13	28.9
	Super high school	1	2.2
	Private high school	2	4.4
	Other	0	0
Foreign Teacher	Yes	8	17.8
	No	37	82.2
Foreign Country Visited	Yes	2	4.4
	No	43	95.6
Study of Different Languages	Yes (German-12 / French-1)	13	28,9
	No	32	71.1

*Values sometimes may not equal 100 because of rounding

Out of 45 participants 27 of them were females, and 18 of them were males. Majority of the students had an average 1-3 year-English education in their previous school before coming to university. Five of them had never had English class before. Furthermore, most of the students studied at general high schools, and 13 of the participants attended Anatolian high school. A great number of the students were not taught by a foreign teacher. Only two students visited a foreign country. In addition, more than half of the students did not receive another foreign language apart from English. It seems that the participants did not get engaged in a foreign language much before university. They most probably took the English classes as a compulsory lesson at school.

INSTRUMENTATION

A questionnaire and a series of subsequent interviews were used for collecting the required data in this study. The questionnaire results were subjected to the statistical

analysis, which constitutes the quantitative side of the study. To support the questionnaire results, the participants were interviewed about their perceptions on learner autonomy, which represents the qualitative side.

Scale

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was administered to 45 freshmen students. It was developed by Horwitz et al (1986). Horwitz et al. made a detailed study of the measurement reliability and validity of FLCAS and stated that internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha was 0.93, based on a sample of 108 subjects, which shows the internal reliability of the scale. Test- retest reliability over eight weeks gave an r = .83 (p <.001). It had 33 items. The scale was separated into categories such as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, unwillingness and boredom, and non-anxious standpoints. This instrument was in the form of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire including the responses of strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The participants got the scale in their mother tongue.

Interview with the Students

In subsequent to conducting and analysing the scale, an interview was performed with the participant students on their past experiences regarding language learning. Ten students were randomly chosen for the interview phase. Semi-structure interview was carried out, and students' responses were tape-recorded and transcribed for the content analysis.

Data Analysis

Analyses of this study comprise of both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Quantitative data were analysed with SPSS program (SPSS 17.0 version for Windows), and findings were presented in tables consisting of scale items, frequencies and percentages. The interpretation of the qualitative data was performed through content analysis.

FINDINGS

The study involves both quantitative and qualitative findings related to language learning anxiety and prior learning experiences.

Quantitative Descriptive Findings

Questionnaire items reflecting both positive and negative views as regards the language anxiety were divided into categories within themselves in order to render the results more understandable, concise and coherent. The findings of the questionnaire are propounded as follows:

Table 2.
Communication Apprehension

No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
1	Never being sure of oneself in speaking English	8	17.8	13	28.9	8	17.8	7	15.6	9	20
3	Trembling when it is time to speak	9	20	9	20	6	13.3	13	28.9	8	17.8

		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
4	Being afraid of not understanding what the teacher says	17	37.8	16	35.6	3	6.7	3	6.7	6	13.3
9	Panic when speaking English without preparation	12	26.7	15	33.3	6	13.3	8	17.8	4	8.9
12	Forgetting things due to nervousness	6	13.3	5	11.1	11	24.4	11	24.4	12	26.7
15	Getting upset due to not getting what teacher is correcting	7	15.6	3	6.7	11	24.4	8	17.8	16	35.6
16	Being anxious even when well-prepared	2	4.4	9	20	6	13.3	9	20	19	42.2
26	Being more tense and nervous in language class	5	11.1	8	17.8	6	13.3	17	37.8	9	20
27	Being nervous and confused while speaking English	3	6.7	8	17.8	9	20	17	37.8	8	17.8
29	Getting nervous due to lack of understanding	2	4.4	11	24.4	8	17.8	17	37.8	7	15.6
30	Feeling overwhelmed by rules of language	7	15.6	12	26.7	8	17.8	12	26.7	6	13.3

*Values sometimes may not equal 100 because of rounding

** f (frequency), % (percentage)

Table 3.2 indicates the communication apprehension students feel concerning the English language. Approximately half of the students were never sure of themselves while speaking English. However, one thirds of the students were not of the same opinion. The results show that student feel anxious while speaking; however, it is not a gloomy situation since roughly 46 % of the students do not hold the belief that they tremble when it is time to speak. Only minority of the students agree that they forget things due to nervousness. Their nervousness may stem from not the language itself, but from incomprehension of what is said because nearly 64 % of the students stated that they get frightened by not understanding what the teacher says. Only three students disagree with such kind of fear. Conversely, more than half of the students claim that they do not get upset due to lack of understanding, which seems contradictory to their previous responses, which is again manifested by the 27th item as only a quarter of the students believe that they get confused and nervous in language classes. However, it is clear that they get nervous, not sad owing to

incomprehension. It is also obvious that their perceptions about the fear of language have not been settled yet. The findings also display that their nervousness may get better through preparation due to that fact that roughly two thirds of the students panic speaking English without preparation done in advance. Likewise, approximately same number of students does not hold the opinion that they get anxious even when they are well-prepared. All these findings reflect that freshman students have anxiety as regards the language to a certain extent; however, their condition does not seem unhopeful since their nervousness appears to be solved.

Table 3.
Fear of Negative Evaluation

No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
7	Thinking other students are better	11	24.4	17	37.8	5	11.1	4	8.9	8	17.8
19	Being afraid of corrected each time by the teacher	2	4.4	5	11.1	9	20	15	33.3	14	31.1
20	Feeling heart beats when called to speak	6	13.3	8	17.8	10	22.2	14	31.1	7	15.6
23	Feeling other students speaking better	14	31.1	11	24.4	6	13.3	8	17.8	6	13.3
24	Feeling self-conscious when speaking in front of other people	4	8.9	10	22.2	11	24.4	11	24.4	9	20
25	Worrying about getting left behind	3	6.7	9	20	3	6.7	21	46.7	9	20
31	Being afraid of being laughed at	2	4.4	6	13.3	10	22.2	13	28.9	14	31.1

*Values sometimes may not equal 100 because of rounding

** f (frequency), % (percentage)

Table 3 presents freshman students' fear of negative evaluation and negative classroom experiences. The level of their fear seems not to be too high on account of the fact that only about one fourth of the students worry about getting left behind. Two thirds of the students (41%) do not hold such a concern. Similarly, only eight students are afraid of being laughed at while speaking foreign language. Less than a

quarter of the students assert that they are not afraid of being corrected each time by the teacher in parallel with the 15th item in Table 1 regarding the issue of correction. Even though they do not have serious concerns relating negative evaluation in language classrooms, more than half of the students view that their peers are better than them at language. Nevertheless, roughly half of the students (46.7 %) are not of the opinion that they feel heartbeats when called to speak, which implies that they are at least relaxed during lesson to a certain extent.

Table 4.
Test Anxiety

No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
10	Worrying about failing	19	42.2	16	35.6	3	6.7	1	2.2	6	13.3
21	Getting more confused due to studying more for test	11	24.4	7	15.6	5	11.1	17	37.8	5	11.1
33	Getting nervous due to the questions not studied in advance	4	8.9	16	35.6	5	11.1	11	24.4	9	20

*Values sometimes may not equal 100 because of rounding

** f (frequency), % (percentage)

Table 4 propounds the freshman students' perception on test anxiety. It is no wonder that a majority of the students are concerned with failing. Only one student disagrees with the worry of being unsuccessful in foreign language class. There is a nearly balanced distribution between students about the fact that more study for the test leads to more confusion. Only five students (11.1 %) have undecided view about the issue. As for the questions not studied beforehand, 20 students put forward differing perceptions; there is an equal distribution among the students who get nervous and do not get nervous owing to such questions, which hints at the individual differences among students.

Table 5.
Unwillingness and Boredom

No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
6	Thinking about unrelated things to the course during the lesson	3	6.7	3	6.7	8	17.8	16	35.6	15	33.3
13	Getting embarrassed to volunteer to answer	4	8.9	6	13.3	6	13.3	16	35.6	13	28.9

| 17 | Feeling like not attending language class | 5 | 11.1 | 6 | 13.3 | 7 | 15.6 | 10 | 22.2 | 17 | 37.8 |

*Values sometimes may not equal 100 because of rounding

** f (frequency), % (percentage)

Table 5 manifests students' tendency towards unwillingness and boredom in the classroom. Only six students stated that they find themselves thinking about unrelated things to the course during the lesson. Approximately 69 % of the students claimed not to be busy with unrelated things that they have nothing to do with, which indicates their inclination to attentiveness during the course. Moreover, less than one fourth of the students feel like not attending the language class. 60 % of the freshman students feel like coming to the language class, which signals their willingness towards lesson. Similarly, nearly two thirds of the students do not hold the belief that they get embarrassed to volunteer to answer questions during the lesson, which displays that they feel at ease in language classroom.

Table 6.
Non-Anxious Standpoints

No	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
2	Not worrying about mistakes	4	8.9	8	17.8	7	15.6	18	40	8	17.8
5	Feeling at ease to take more English	31	68.9	8	17.8	2	4.4	2	4.4	2	4.4
8	Feeling at ease during tests in English	6	13.3	13	28.9	9	20	8	17.8	9	20
11	Not understanding people's getting upset in English class	9	20	6	13.3	18	40	7	15.6	5	11.1
14	Not being nervous while talking to native speaker	7	15.6	8	17.8	16	35.6	9	20	5	11.1
18	Feeling confident while speaking	6	13.3	11	24.4	15	33.3	4	8.9	9	20
22	Not feeling pressure to get prepared	7	15.6	14	31.1	9	20	9	20	6	13.3
28	Feeling sure and relaxed	4	8.9	11	24.4	13	28.9	9	20	8	17.8
32	Feeling comfortable around native speakers	7	15.6	4	8.9	15	33.3	14	31.1	5	11.1

*Values sometimes may not equal 100 because of rounding

** f (frequency), % (percentage)

Table 6 presents the non-anxious standpoints of the students. Roughly a quarter of the students seem not to worry about mistakes. However, more than half of the students possess such a concern. A great number of the students feel at ease to take

more English. A line can be drawn with 13th item above in terms of feeling comfortable in the lesson. However, as for talking to a native speaker, this sense of comfort appears to reduce on the grounds that more students have uncertain and unsure perceptions about this issue. They seem to be uncertain about their own feelings as in the 14th and 32nd items. Nearly one thirds of the students are not of the opinion that they do not get nervous or feel uneasy around the native speakers, which reflects the decrease in their sense of easiness within such a context. Furthermore, they have uncertain standpoints about their sense of confidence and relaxation in their speech since about 30 % of the students posed undecided responses concerning the issue. However, they do not have so negative feelings towards foreign language due to the fact that 33.3 % of the students do not understand why people get upset in English class, which displays that they consider language class as meaningful although 40 % of the students responded indecisively as regards the 11th item. It is obvious that they own indefinite and non-constructed feelings, even though they have non-anxious standpoints relating the language.

Quantitative Findings

Table 7.
Interview Results

First thing that comes to mind	Fun (3) Dislike (1) Boredom (2) Effort (1) Games (1) Success (1) Good teachers (1) 4th grade (1) Teacher factor (1) Words (1)
Feelings towards language	-Eagerness and motivation to communicate in another language (2) -Desire (1) -Good to speak to new people with a different culture (1) -Not so important (1) -Boring (1) -Nice (1) -Curiosity in primary school, unwillingness in high school (2) -Nothing (no meaning) (1)

Liked Aspects of English Class	**Disliked Aspects of English Class**
-Conversation (3)	-Incomprehension (3)
-Learning new things (2)	-Overload (2)
-Reading (1)	-Fear of failing (1)
-Ownership of language through dialogues (1)	-Always same things (1)
-Games (1)	-Difficult questions (1)
-New Words (1)	-Many rules (1)
-Fun (1)	-Words with a lot of meanings (1)
-Songs (1)	-Boredom (1)
-Forward-looking gainings (1)	-Pronunciation (1)
-Cultural side (1)	-Negative teacher attitude (1)
-Ability of making sentences (1)	-Expensive coursebooks (1)
-Nothing (1)	-Silence in the lesson (1)

Coursebooks	Good (5) Bad (1) Having Foreign Publication (7) Having Turkish Publication (2) Used in the classroom (5) Not used in the classroom (3)		
Activities	Grammar (6) New words (4) Listening (4) Reading (2) Writing (1) Tourist once in a while (1)	Games (1) Slides (1) Film (1) Songs (1) Role-play (1)	
Effect of teacher	Yes (8)	No (2)	
Impact of Peers	Yes (8)	No (2)	
Changes in Views due to University	Positive (10) Negative (0) Neutral (0)		
Influence of Past Experiences	Yes (5)	No (4)	Little (1)

Students were asked different questions to elicit their views and feelings about their past learning experiences. When they were questioned about their previous English classes, the first thing that came to their minds differed such as fun (3), boredom (2), games, words, good teachers, dislike, effort, success and 4th grade teacher. Then, students were asked to describe the kind of feeling they had towards learning English. Two students felt eagerness and motivation to communicate in another language. The notion of speaking in foreign language apparently enhanced their keen on learning that language. Similarly, one student stated that it was good to speak to new people with a different culture. Some students had fluctuating emotions towards English since two students felt curiosity in primary school and unwillingness in high school, which reflects the transitional differences. In addition, the views that English was boring and no so important were among the citations students put forward regarding their previous feelings. Only one student found no meaning in learning English.

When it comes to defining liked and disliked aspects of previous English classes, students gave a variety of responses. Favourable aspects are conversation (3), learning new things (2), ownership of language through dialogues, games, fun, new words, comprehension, songs, cultural side of learning, forward-looking gainings English will bring, ability of making sentences. Only one student liked nothing as regards English class. In contrast, unfavourable sides of English class constitute incomprehension (3), overload (2), fear of failing, constant exposure of same things/topics, difficult questions, many rules, words with a lot of meanings, boredom, pronunciation, negative teacher attitude, expensive coursebooks and silence in the lesson. It seems that students are open to new things and they get most out of learning through enjoyable activities. However, inability to understand and overload reduce the pleasure they take out of learning.

As to the coursebooks, five citations were positive while only one citation was negative about the books. More students had foreign coursebooks. There were five citations expressing that those books were used in the classroom whereas three citations claimed that they were not utilized much in the classroom. When the activities were in question, students yielded a variety of responses such as grammar (6), learning new vocabulary (4), listening (4), reading (2), writing, role-play, games, slides, movies, songs and speaking to a tourist once in a while. However, it is obvious that most of the students experienced grammar-based instruction.

Apart from books, students were also asked about whether they had an English teacher who influenced them. Eight students had such an influential teacher in their previous learning experiences while two of them claimed that they did not witness such a teacher. Students who answered positively attributed teacher's influence to similar point of view, close relationship, positive attitude of teacher, motivation and support that the teacher provided. One student stated that sense of success and self-confidence as a result of good grade made him/her closer to the lesson. Furthermore, two students noted that their teacher influenced them in terms of endearing the lesson, not from a linguistic perspective. However, there was one citation asserting that teacher affected in a negative way. It is clear that teacher has a significant role to influence students from an affective perspective. Concerning the impact of peers, again eight students accepted peer effect on themselves. On the one hand, better peers affected them in that the students felt inferior in comparison to their peers, felt like studying hard and tried to be like their peers (3), asking for help and cooperation (2) and questioning oneself. They also specified that they sensed the inability to catch up the lesson. On the other hand, in the case of worse peers, there were changing views in terms of helping them, increase in self-confidence and learning better through teacher's repetitions for their peers.

After gathering information about their past experiences, they were asked about the changes in their views on English due to university. All of the students experiences changes in their opinions and feelings. Two students stated that they realized its necessity. One student remarked that s/he broke his/her prejudice and got more eager and motivated. Similarly, another student began to understand English better and got happy in the lessons. One student voiced his/her desire to be multilingual let alone learning just English. Moreover, another student noted that his/her plans about job and trips were intensified at university. According to one student, awareness in exchange programs like ERASMUS raised at university. It appears that their views changed for the better within the university context.

When it comes to impact of past experiences upon their current standpoints, five students believed there is an impact while four students thought those experiences are non-influential. Only one student claimed they have a little effect. In addition, one student claimed that lack of background knowledge leads to anxiety. One student remarked that previous dialogues with peers and teachers made him/her love English and not get frightened by it. One student maintained that s/he understood underlying meanings of structures at university, realized the difference with previous learning and loved more at university. In general it is inevitable that students bring things from past to their learning environment.

CONCLUSION

Analyses of the data mirror that students have a certain perspective towards English. Regarding inhibitory behaviours, students sense anxiety due to comprehension problems, which paves the way for communication apprehension. As Arnold (2005) claims with the advent of methods which focus on communication, and especially communication involving more personal aspects of one's being such as feeling, if care is not taken to provide an emotionally safe atmosphere, the chance for the development of anxiety-provoking situations can increase greatly (9)

The students also think that their peers are better than them, which also inhibits themselves and brings about the fear of negative evaluation. They are frightened by failing, as well. In parallel with this, Ellis (2003, p.522) remarks that *"anxiety arising from poor performance, communication apprehension, tests and fear of negative evaluation is likely to have a debilitating effect on L2 learning"*. Nevertheless, the students do not feel so much unwillingness towards lesson. They take pleasure from attending English classes. Even though they feel at ease in lesson, they experience the

sense of nervousness while communicating with native speakers. *"Language learners who are overly anxious about their performance are often less motivated to perform in ways that bring active attention to themselves in classroom or in natural language-use settings"* (Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford, 2003, p.323). Although speaking skill is crucial in sound verbal communication, it still stands as an obstacle to overcome. In a study conducted by Karahan (2007) in a Turkish context, students were found to desire being more fluent and accurate especially in English speaking skill. Regarding learners' oral competence, Şener and Balkır (2013) suggest that teachers should consider affective factors, encourage students to apply anxiety-decreasing techniques by taking positive attitudes, enhancing friendly environment and designing tasks that can improve self-confidence. However, they have uncertain views about their non-anxious behaviours in learning language, which indicates that their perceptions about the issue have not been settled enough, yet. They sense the effect of past learning experiences on their current perspectives. The interview results display that the students also experience a change in their views and feelings at university, which reflects the influence of university. Their views display differing perspectives just as they have differing notions when they remember their past experiences such as fun, games and success together with boredom and dislike. Most of them had a positive attitude before, and they continue to feel like improving the target language.

DISCUSSION

Both questionnaire and interview results show that students have learning concern towards English; however, they seem to be open to development. Negative teacher attitude may have an unfavourable effect on their approach to language since students voiced nice memories when they remembered positive side of their learning. *"Positive emotions and attitudes can make language learning more effective and enjoyable."* (Oxford, 1990:140 cited in Xiaoting, 2008). Hence, building psychologically secure atmosphere in the classroom may reduce their negative feelings towards language. Moreover, lack of practice in speaking in previous experiences may place an obstacle in front of them in talking to native speakers, which leads to inhibition in their speech. Likewise, the research done by Subaşı (2010) with Turkish EFL students revealed that previous experience is one of the sources of learners' anxiety in oral practice. Thus, through the inclusion of speaking activities into the lesson students may realize that they can use language for communicative purposes, which enhances their motivation. What is more, according to this study, incomprehension constitutes one of the significant concerns of students towards English, and most of the time it may stem from lack of background knowledge. Consequently, with the increase in the hours of English classes and simple activities at the beginning, students may realize that English is not something they must fear or something very challenging, which may also foster their self-confidence. As Ni (2012) posits, successful language learning occurs in an atmosphere in which learners' values and manners are supported, learners take a confident and enjoyable stance towards language and they utilize the target language comfortably. Apart from these, it is inevitable that students bring their experiences from past to their current learning environment. It is no wonder that positive experiences awaken positive feelings whereas negative ones evoke unfavourable points of view. That is why it may be beneficial to learn about their experiences before deciding their learning behaviours in language and to design the lessons accordingly. The study conducted by Fujiwara (2012) signifies that there is a relation between students' language learning beliefs and past experiences as language learners; hence, their beliefs could be changed via instructional classroom interactions since most of the students' learning experiences occurred in classrooms. Since beliefs might give elucidative and helpful insights into thinking mechanism and manners related with learning language (Davis, 2003), past experiences hold a great significance in uncovering different aspects of learning process. This way, individual

differences can be taken into account. Entwistle (1981, p. 247 cited in Wallace, 1991, p.23) lists these characteristics as *"previous knowledge, intellectual skill, types and levels of motivation, interests, level of anxiety, preferred learning style, expectations about what is to be learned."* History of students opens new doors to teachers, provides students with new opportunities, raises awareness and promotes better understanding of the situation, which contributes to effective teaching and learning in an inhibition-free atmosphere.

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